

Kasamatsu Satayū Memorial

This monument honors Kasamatsu Satayū (1598–1673), a forward-thinking village headman who contributed to rice cultivation and papermaking in Aridagawa.

In 1619, shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu's son Yorinobu (1602–1671) was appointed to govern the Kishū domain (now Wakayama Prefecture). Under Yorinobu, Satayū became the first headman of what is now Aridagawa's historic Shimizu district. Rice was an important staple crop for the region, but the district's mountainous terrain limited where it could be grown. With his own funds, Satayū planned and built the roughly 3-kilometer-long Uwayu Irrigation Canal. This facilitated the development of many new rice paddies, including the Aragijima Rice Terraces.

Yorinobu ordered Satayū to establish *washi* (handmade Japanese paper) workshops in Kishū domain, but Satayū had no knowledge of the craft. He

traveled to Yoshino, a famous papermaking district in what is now Nara Prefecture, to learn the trade, but the artisans there refused to share their methods with him. Satayū arrived at a clever solution: he sent three handsome young men to Yoshino, where they eventually married local papermakers. The men returned to Shimizu (known then as Yamayasuda) with their brides, whose papermaking skills were adapted to regional conditions. Local papermakers then created a new variety of *washi* referred to as Yasudagami. The craft is still practiced today.

Satayū's contributions continue to benefit Shimizu and its surrounding

communities. In 1927, the residents of Aridagawa chose to honor their local hero with this monument, funding its construction and painstakingly transporting the 1-metric ton stone from a nearby valley.