

Kurume History Walks

No.5 Teramachi Area Teramachi 寺町



Edo period.

Photo credit: Kimura Keizo (1975)

Seven or eight minutes by foot to the north from Nishitetsu Kurume Station, you will attain to Teramachi Area of the quiet atmosphere. Seventeen temples line up on both sides of the street. (‘*Tera*’ means temple, ‘*machi*’ is town.)

The construction of Teramachi started in 1621 under the direction of Arima Toyouji, who moved from the Tanba Province, Kyoto, and became the lord (*daimyo*) possessing property bearing 210,000 *kokus** of rice in the northern half of Chikugo Province.

*‘*Koku* 石’ was a volume unit for measuring the rice quantity and for evaluating the income of a samurai in feudal Japan. One *koku* is about 180 liters of rice, enough to support one person for a single year.

Just after his entry, Toyouji started the aggrandizement of the castle and moved the temples within the walls to the Teramachi Area. Also, he gave the ground to the temples around the domain or to the monks who accompanied him from Tanba. The construction took over 30 years and finished around 1656. These temples had served also as a defense line to protect the castle.

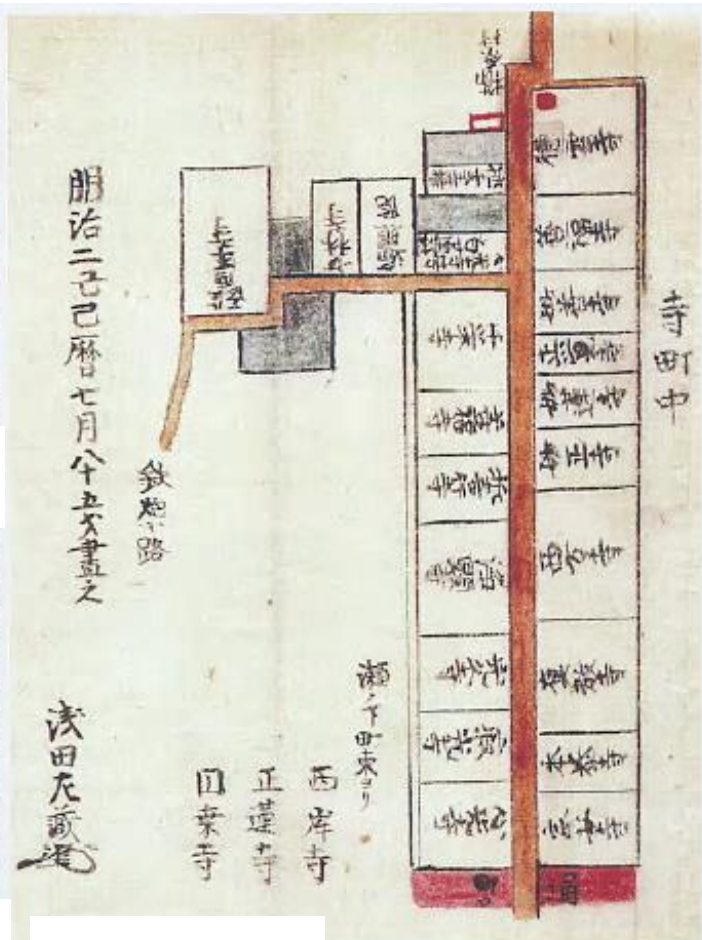
Over 370 years have passed, although here you can experience the time of the



Jizo stone tablet of the Oei era (1394 -1428) in Io-ji Temple



The tomb of Inoue Den, inventor of Kurume Kasuri, in Tokuun-ji Temple



Teramachi Area in 1869



The main gate of Hontai-ji Temple



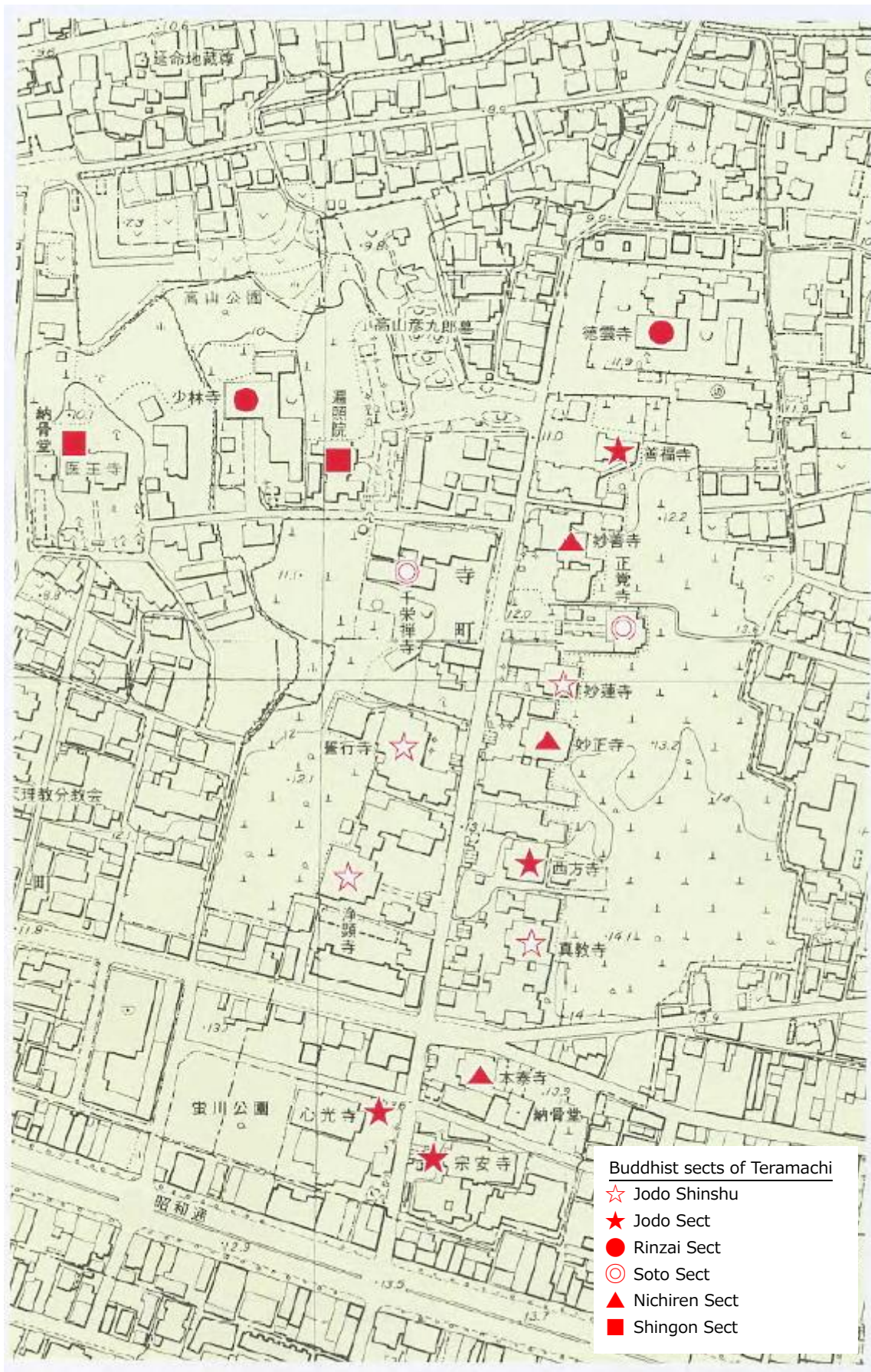
The main street of Teramachi Area

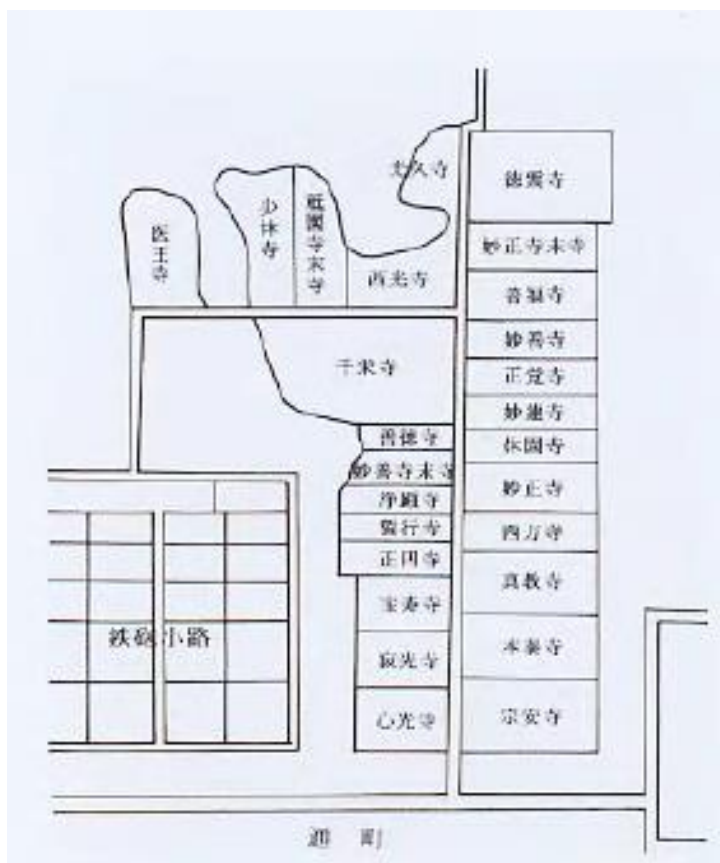


The main hall and the garden of Seigo-ji Temple



The main hall of Sen'ei-ji Temple





Teramachi in the Enpo era (1673-1680)

As a religious center

There used to be twenty-five temples in the 1670s just after the construction, twenty-two in 1830s, and seventeen today. Some have the tombs of people who contributed to the development of the city from the 17th century to the present time.

It would be a pleasure to visit the town seeking the description plates of each temple.

Architecture

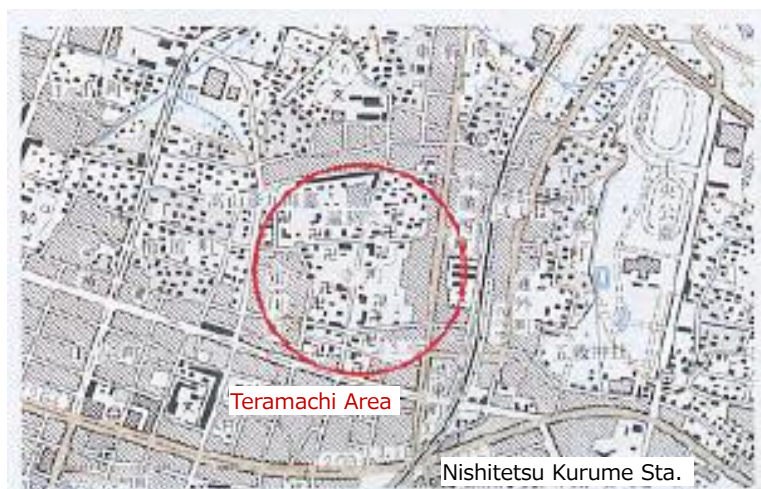
You can enjoy a various style of the temple architecture: the construction methods (wood or reinforced concrete), the design of the main gate (Chinese style or the one transferred from a samurai residence) and the style of the main hall (Christian church like; modern designed by a nationwide known architect; or beautifully harmonized with the garden).

When you observe each temple, you understand that the difference of the style depends on a Buddhist sect.

Treasury of Stone culture

Each temple has various stone objects such as five-ring pagoda (gorinto), tombstone for a monk (muhoto), a statue of Jizo, the Buddhist guardian deity of children. Among them, the oldest is the Jizo statue engraved on the stone tablet in the Io-ji Temple. It bears the creation year of 1398 and is designated a Municipal Cultural Property. Besides, there are other six jizos from the Middle Ages.

NOTE: Visitors are kindly requested to respect its sacred character.



ACCESS: 500 meters north from Nishitetsu Kurume Station

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