

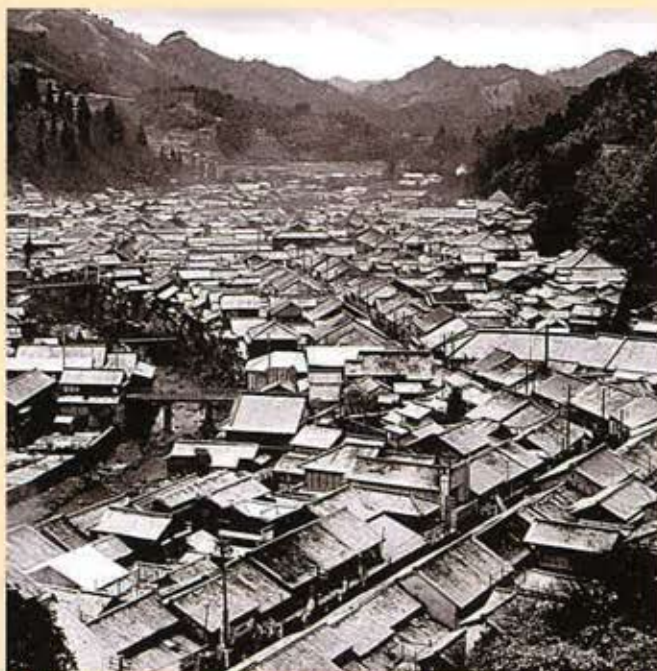


A townscape of merchant houses once flourished as a relay point of the old Ina-kaido Road.

ASUKE

Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings

Town Walking Guide



●Photo: Asuke townscape viewed from Mt.Kannon(the first half of the 20th century)

History of Asuke's Townscape

Asuke was a town of merchants that once developed and flourished as a relay point of the old Ina-kaido (Chuma-kaido*) Road, that connected the coastal area to the mountain area as an important route for trade and people traffic.

In the old days, salt was an important commodity that was carried to Asuke and repacked here for easier transportation (For this reason, the salt was called "Asuke Salt" or "Asuke Repacking").

It is not certain when the town was established, but it is known that most of it was burned down by the great fire of 1775. Soon after the great fire, the town was reconstructed and many of the buildings that were constructed around the 18th and 19th century can still be seen today.

Many of the buildings that were built in the early 20th century or in the post WWII period took on the traditional machiya (town house) style architecture and this aspect of the old townscape has been well preserved up to now.

The role of Asuke as a transportation hub started declining when the Chuo Line of National Railroad opened in 1911.

However, the town of Asuke never stopped developing as the centre of the Higashikamo district in Aichi.



●Row of Tsumairi** style houses

Architectural Characteristics of the Houses in Asuke

The houses reconstructed after the great fire of 1775 are two-storied with plaster covered walls. The development of a strong fire prevention awareness, led to the popularity of tile-roofed houses and those roofs were more steeply pitched (than the former styles, such as thatched roofs). Eaves are provided on the first floor, and many houses have traces of Shitomido (latticed shutters in traditional Japanese architecture), which is a characteristic of a Japanese merchant town.



Characteristics of Land Utilization and Townscape

In Asuke, rows of houses are spread on the river terrace, along the valley of Asuke River, sandwiched between mountains in the north and the south. Rectangular shaped housing sites line the main road. Main buildings are constructed facing the main road using the full width of the lot. On the back of the main building, a guest house and warehouse are built closely together. To secure housing sites in a limited area, houses are constructed on a developed housing site of cut and banked earth, or on a multi-layered stonewall. These characteristics create a distinctive landscape.

