



Earthen Storehouse 蔵

The kura (蔵), earthen storehouses in Hinano-sato (ひなの里) were built more than 120 years ago for a doll shop. In 2013 the oldest storehouse in the facility was designated as one of the listed buildings of Saitama prefecture.

Traditionally, most of kura have been used for storing not only ingredients and products for business, but also family treasure and heirlooms, valuable goods and money, in order to prevent their loss from fire and theft. Kura is said to be “a symbol of wealth and status”.

The history of Japanese storehouses began by using wooden logs and then wooden boards around 3rd century BC.

Later stone houses were also used especially for storing guns and gunpowder.

For the purpose of keeping the best condition of ingredients and products, the wooden storehouse method introduced very thick plaster walls to maintain proper temperature and humidity during Edo era.

Nowadays the word “kura” usually means “earthen” storehouses. The basic distinct characteristics of earthen kura are being wooden-framed, plaster walls and with tiled-roofs.

The two kura in Hina-no-sato represent the history of the post-town “Konosu”, which prospered on the Nakasendo highway built by the Shogun government during the 17th century. The road was one of the most important and central highways in Japan for more than 300 years.