

Tracking the mystery and the true picture behind Ai-no-kata, the real mother of the third lord of Oka clan

The real mother of Lord Nakagawa Hisakiyo was from the Ai family of Ibaraki, Osaka.

Ibaraki in Osaka Kita-setsu, and Bungo-Oka. Geographically distant those two cities established historical and cultural sister city relationship for the first time in Japan. One of the reasons for this relationship is precious christian culture common to both cities. Apart from the Christian relics and ruins that they have in common, I would now like to stress that blood plays an important role on the relationship.

According to the Historical records the Nakagawa family, the third lord of the Oka clan Hisakiyo, was the child of the second lord of Oka Clan Hisamori Nakagawa and his wife. However, his real mother was actually a woman known as Ai-no-kata. We attempted to find the true picture of Ai-no-kata.

Ai-no-kata's real name was Shofuin Hatsu, and she was from the Ai family of Ibaraki, a prominent family of samurai warriors. (She was originally born to the family of Tobushi (Tobushi family of the Oka clan), another important family of samurai warriors in Ibaraki. Then She was later adopted by the Ai family, which had close ties with the Tobushi family.) The head of the Ai family, Ai Ryosa, was a *yuhitsu** to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and was also a Christian with the christian name of Simon. It is no wonder that Ai-no-kata to be a Christian if the leader of the family had been one. Ai Ryosa worked as a local magistrate at Ibaraki Castle after losing Takayama Ukon and Nakagawa Kiyohide respectively. To compensate for such a big loss, many Christians in Ibaraki must have put their faith in Ryosa.

I happened to find a very interesting book while searching for information about Ai-no-kata. It is titled "Settsu meisho zukai taisei" (translated as "The Picture Encyclopedia of Settsu"). This could be described as a tourism guide to Osaka during the Edo period, and contains an article that describes Ai-no-kata as the mistress of Toyotomi Hideyori. (In modern terms, she could be considered his concubine.) If this book had been a tourism guide to Osaka, it had probably been a well-known fact that Ai-no-kata was a concubine of Toyotomi Hideyori. On the other hand, Ai-no-kata is described as the real mother of Lord Hisakiyo, but the Historical records of Nakagawa family state her position as a maid to Hisamori. Would it really have been possible for Hisamori to hire her as his maid when she had been a mistress of his former master Toyotomi Hideyori? According to the Keigen-ki historical records, Ai-no-kata had locked herself in Osaka Castle together with Toyotomi Hideyori and Lady Yodo during the summer siege of Osaka. Moreover, Ai-no-kata had not been living in the second house of Nakagawa family in Fushimi, Kyoto, when Hisakiyo was born. The Nakagawa family had been an ally of Tokugawa during the summer siege of Osaka, so it is likely that they had little choice but to write the historical records in such a way. Then can Hisakiyo be the son of Hideyori, not Hisamori?

There is a supportive evidence to what, I just mentioned. There is a description in the "Xavier Code," which is now a recommended book for the festival of the 400-year commemoration of the Oka clan castle town of the book. This book was written based on ancient texts passed down from the author's family, indicating the main character rescued had rescued a woman and a baby from the burning flames of Osaka Castle and taken them into the Oka clan. These two characters had been unknown when the book was first published, but a public institute had found out what their names were. According to the research, the name of the baby was written as "Otsuku-sama (Tsuku-maru)". Tsuku-maru was the childhood name of Lord Hisakiyo, and the baby's date of birth was January 10th in the 20th year of Keicho (1615), which was between the winter and summer sieges of Osaka. Can this be a coincidence? Ultimate judgment can be made by you, but it is truly a mystery.

There is yet another mystery. This mystery lies in a portrait of Lord Hisakiyo. (Photo 2). The differences between his features and those of his father, Lord Hisamori, are obvious. Hisakiyo doesn't look like a Japanese he rather looks like the Portuguese captains who were often depicted by Japanese painters on folding screens. I wonder if Ai-no-kata would be mixed breed with Europeans. If the Ai family had been Christian, the possibility of mixed breed surfaces since, there had been so many foreign businessmen in Ibaraki at the time.

Nakagawa Hisakiyo, who was known as a virtuous ruler of the Oka clan, may have the blood of the Ai family, foreigners, or even the Toyotomi family. This is a mystery that links Taketa and Ibaraki over four hundred years.

(NANBAN Culture Promotion Division / GOTO Atsumi)

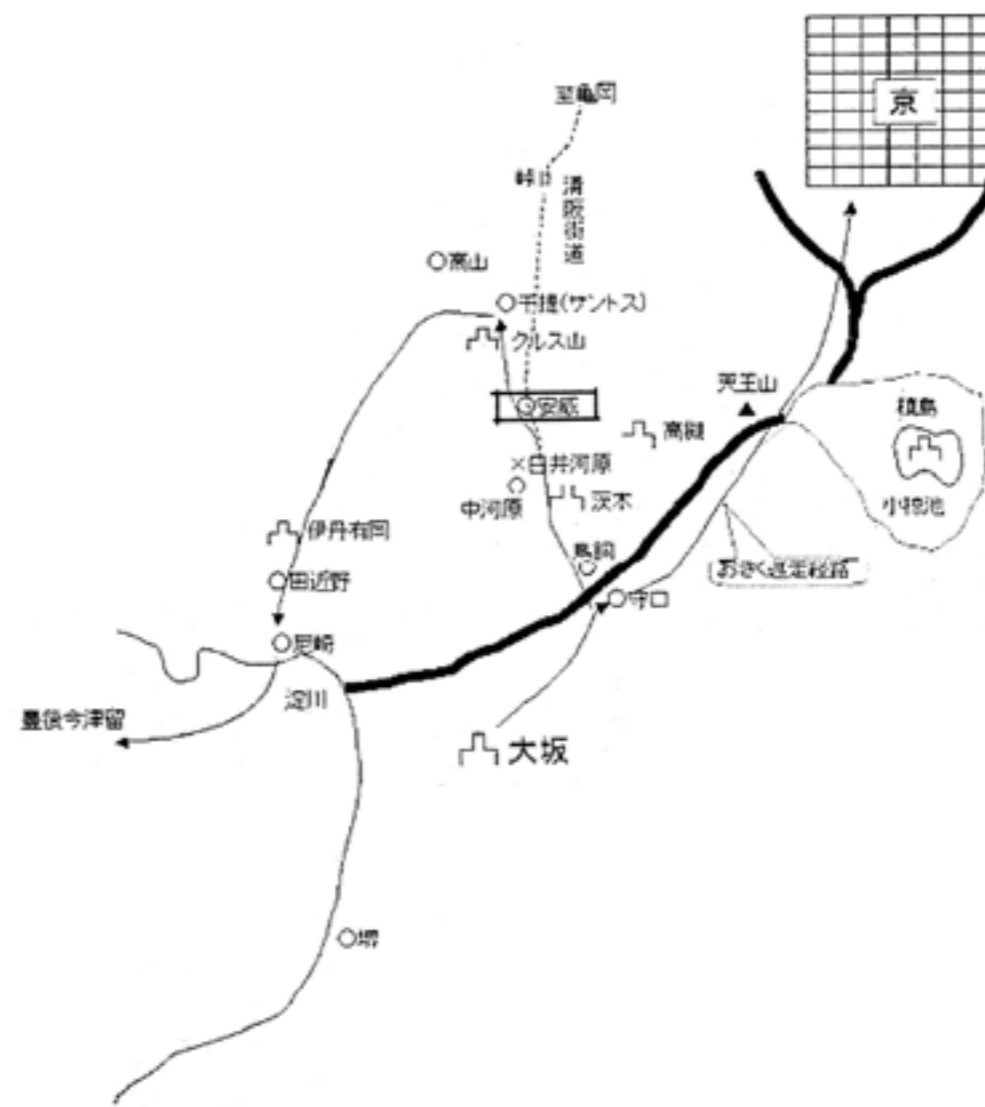
(Note) *Yuhitsu* ... A civil official who serves as a secretary and aide.

References: Akatsuki Kanenari "Settsu meisho zukai taisei" (translated as "The Picture Encyclopedia of Settsu") (1855~)

Taketa City Board of Education "Historical records of the Nakagawa family" (2007)

Kozan Ken "Xavier Code" (2012)

Hojo Ujinaga "Keigen-ki / The story of the winter and summer sieges of Osaka" (1890)



↑ Map of Settsu showing the various connections



(Photo 2) Portrait of the third-generation lord, Nakagawa Hisakiyo



(Photo 1) Portrait of the second-generation lord, Nakagawa Hisamori

安威殿坂
 古蹟門前の小坂をいふ一説と此
 傳云々 豊臣家の近臣安威殿守の邸ありし所なりと云又一説ハ此坂の北側の影敷に秀頼公の娶妻おあい
 殿と申せしが住給ひしゆへ斯の者くるよと此阿婆どのハ元和の亂に秀頼公の息女阿婆若君 阿婆どのの兩
 人新宮左馬之助といふ者はたつきを以て城内より逃れし後藤莊三郎頼朝も亦る細後京都東山松崎の土人又々類
 り幸り兩女ともに尼となし養をせけるにより命を保ち給ふと云 或云成やにて自害し給ふとも

↑ Descriptions of Ai-no-kata in "Settsu meisho zukai taisei" (translated as "The Picture Encyclopedia of Settsu")