

Though fires are tragic....

### Visit to Kurazukuri Museum

Walking on the street of Kawagoe, the city of Kurazukuri. Lined with well-preserved Japanese storehouses, the atmosphere of this city is very beautiful and agreeable to walk around. We visit one of them, the residence with store of Mr. Bunzo KOYAMA who was once a wholesale merchant of cigarette. His house is now opened to the public as Kurazukuri Museum. Inside the dignified clay-walled house, it has even a basement store room, which is amazing. Through out of the house there is a neat yard, where is being displayed a part of the roof. Touching it, we are surprised at its strong structure. In the yard also stand two more clay-walled houses where we can see a fire engine of old days. In 1893, just after the great fire of Kawagoe, Mr. KOYAMA modeled his residence on some other clay-walled houses which had escaped the fire. And one after another this type of architecture was spread out in the city. The black color of the walls was very popular in Nihonbashi in those days.

Kawagoe City suffered big fires many times in both periods of Edo and Meiji. Fires are tragic indeed, but as a result, they enabled the development of clay-walled houses. In the case of Kitain Temple, without a fire, Iemitsu wouldn't have ordered his vassals to move and reconstruct a part of Edo Castle in this temple. This reminds me of the case of Ryogoku City. Ryogoku, also, got its prosperity with Ryogoku Bridge being newly built after the great fire of Meireki in 1657. Quite impressive, indeed! Thinking of that for some time beyond time and space, I notice the Bell Tower seen behind the house. I think it's the best shot from this yard. Seeing this symbol tower of the city which has been telling the time for a long time, we leave Kurazukuri Museum.



Reported by Keiko NOGAMI