

City-Designated Cultural Properties (Intangible/Folk-Culture)

Designated on December 12, 1972

Administrator: Funabashi City Fisheries Organization

### The Requiem Mass at the Great Statue of Buddha

This seated stone Shakyamuni Buddha was erected in 1746. Since then, it has been the site of the requiem mass at the great statue of Buddha every January 28 (every February 28 since the Meiji period).

From the early Edo period up through near the middle of the period, the seas of Funabashi were fertile fishing grounds called “Osaino-ura” (“Inlet of Food”) where catches of seafood were offered to the Shogunate family.

A major earthquake in 1703 triggered changes in the seabed topography that, in turn, destroyed the fertility of the fishing grounds. From 1704, offerings to the Shogunate family were made in cash rather than as seafood. Many a conflict arose over these fishing grounds with fishermen from neighboring areas (Horie, Nekozone, Yatsu and Saginuma).

In 1824, following ongoing disputes between the Village of Funabashi and the Village of Nekozone (now Urayasu City) over the boundaries of the fishing grounds, vessels belonging to fishermen from other villages invaded the fishing grounds occupied by Funabashi. One of those boats had hoisted the banner of the Hitotsubashi Family. The samurai on board were beaten by the fisherman, who seized that banner. Because of the seriousness of what took place, three fishermen representatives from Funabashi were imprisoned. One of them perished in prison; another died shortly after being released. A tradition that continues today, the requiem mass at the great statue of Buddha is to honor the fishermen representatives who protected the fishing grounds at the time as well as the fishermen and residents who lost their lives in tidal waves (resulting from tsunamis or storm surges).

On the day of honoring those souls, cooked white rice is pasted on the face and body of this great statue of Buddha (a seated stone Shakyamuni Buddha). This is said to console the fishermen representatives for their hardship during their imprisonment, when food was scarce. Erected on the west side of the great Buddha are tombstones of two of the fishermen representatives.