

City Designated Cultural Property (monument, artifact)

Designated February 22, 1966

Property of Ryōgen-ji Temple

Remains of Shōrō-dō Belltower, Japanese Clock, and Manuscript Verses by Shokusanjin

In the two decades after 1716, the Tokugawa shogunate established an artillery firing range in Funabashi. It is said that the battery mount was on a hill southwest of the main hall of Ryōgen-ji Temple, and firing tests were conducted facing pine forests and fields in the direction of Yatsu and Fujisaki. After the range fell out of use, the Shōrō-dō belltower was built in this place, and was authorized by the shogunate as the “bell of hours.” Until it was decommissioned in 1871, it rang out the hours throughout Funabashi.

A Japanese clock (wadokei) preserved at this temple was used to determine the standard for these “hours.” Made of brass, it is said to date to the 18th century. It features a “dual sounding governor” (nichō-tenpu) which rings the bell twice every half hour. The clock hands are fixed to the governor and the face itself revolves. It is powered by two different weights, and with an unusual device that spins two cogwheels with an iron chain, the clock was called a “self-sounding bell” at the time.

Comic manuscript verses by Ōta Nanbo (1749–1823, pen name Shokusanjin), composed on the occasion of hearing the bells while residing in Funabashi, are also preserved at Ryōgen-ji Temple on hanging scrolls.

Funabashi City Board of Education