

Gunsanjin(Navy base in Gunsan)

: A Millenary Harbor Safeguarding the Gateway in Gunsan

Part 1 : : A Safeguarding Land Undertaking to Guard the Gateway

Subject : A Millenary Harbor Has Become A Naval Base

From the end of Goryeo, Korean dynasty, to early the Joseon Dynasty, the reinforcement of naval forces was considerably needed because of damage from Chinese smuggling and illegal trading as well as Japanese pirates. It was at that time Gunsanjin was newly moved or established. In *The Annals of King Sejong*, it states that Gunsanjin, which was responsible for safeguarding the gateway, was built nearby current museum, as it puts it, "Gunsanjin is placed at the northern Jinpo of Okgu village". Gunsan, having had a myriad of mountain fortress as strategic hub for defense from Baekje Kingdom, had Defense and training facilities such as fortress, and beacon fire stations, archery fields. Positioned on the Sudeok Mountain, Gunsanjin played a pivotal role in protecting the gateway of Jeonbuk equipped with both Gunsanjin castle, enclosing Gunsanjin and beacon fire stations on Jeonbang Mountain, safeguarding the border of western sea.

Part 2: A way to Gunsanjin(Navy base in Gunsan) :Villages being together with Gunsanjin

While walking along the road to Gunsanjin which used to belong to Buk-myeon, Okgu-hyun, you can meet friendly old villages. Naeyoung-ri achieved the reputation of Gunchang (rice storage) were filled with rice from seven towns, Guyoung-ri (Jangmi-dong) and Gangbyun-ri(Youngwha-dong) where lots of ships were stayed to carry rice to Hanyang, were the nearest villages to Gunsanjin.

In outskirts of Gunsanjin, there were Dunyul-ri(Dunyul-dong) and Geoseok-ri (Gaebok-dong) where navy training center including archery field used to exist, Gyeongpo-ri(Jung-dong) which was called Seolae, especially Seolae port (Gyungbpo-ri) where ships leaving for Seoul, It was a quite big village filled with thatched houses. Next, there was Jukseong-ri (Jukseong-dong) surrounded by bamboo forest, which was called Jukseong port or Jaebo wharf, was positioned as a base of fisher inns. Like this, there were friendly villages around Gunsanjin and The story of the simple Gunsan people was unfolding in there.

part 3 : Live as Navy base / The power of Gunsanjin (Navy base in Gunsan)

The Gunsanjin had two duties: one is the defense against outside invasion and the other is the safe transportation of taxation. And Gunsanjin which was carrying out the same duties at the same time, was a legitimate government office responsible for the gateway of Jeollabukdo. Near the current museum, there were many buildings in charge of marine transportation such as a weapon warehouse named as keungi, sego, and chobokchung. Until the early of the Joseon Dynasty, it is said that there were eight fighting boats including Jungseon and Byulseon etc., and 461 sailors were stationed. At the end of Joseon when the west coast was infested with "Yiyangseon(foreign flag ships)", about 550 sailors stayed there, and under the supervision of "Cheomsa", they conducted various tasks, including gun training, weapons upgrades, fighting boat maintenances etc. Especially, in 1879, Gunsanjin was promoted to Dogjin(Independence military camp) from Okguhyeon bukmyun, and the role of Gunsanjin was more important as a center of "marine transportation" as well as a strategic spot in Jeollado and Chungcheongdo.

part4 : Meeting the new world/ the wind of change in Gunsanjin(Navy base in Gunsan)

A new wind began to blow at the end of the 19th century when Joseon, which had been overwhelmed by the reality. The previously neglected people grew up against the ruling class, who had been bent on maintaining their vested interests, The culture in which the people were at the center has emerged. Around this time, small and big movements took place in the areas of Donghak, Catholicism, and Christianity. Gunsanjin was in the same boat as this. Gunsanjin watched the activities of missionaries like Reynolds and Drew Jenkins, seeing the construction of the first memorial service in Gunsan closely. During the Donghak peasant revolution, the Gunsanjin was once a historic site where officials of Hanyang arrived on a transport ship to punish activists. The Gunsanjin, which had to face a fresh wind of change in the front line amid a volatile situation in which Japan was searching for an opening spot, remained firmly as a 1,000-year port.

Part 5 : The last path of Gunsanjin(Navy base in Gunsan) / Those who defended Gunsanjin

Gunsanjin was a place where confusion, conflict, frustrated and dream were intersected like contemporary history. Above all, Gunsanjin had to follow the passage of time because it might be get out of use. However, including official men, the naval forces and villagers tried hard to not be abolished the Gunsanjin to the end. The official men in Gunsanjin made an appeal stressing the importance of the naval forces and villagers also showed their firm determination by putting their petitions to the central government. Unfortunately, despite these efforts, Gunsanjin went through a process of abolition. Especially in 1899, with opening of Gunsan port, violent power from Japan was nestle. And the millinery port of Gunsanjin which was a home of people and also glorious has left as a legendary of history.