

Discover Fukaya:

The birthplace of Shibusawa Eiichi and the founders of the Tomioka Silk Mill



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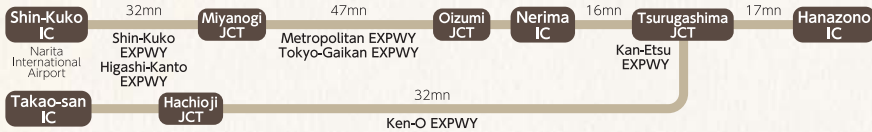
The birthplace of Shibusawa Eiichi and the founders of the Tomioka Silk Mill

Access to Fukaya City

By Train (From Tokyo)



By Car (From Tokyo)



Access from Fukaya Station

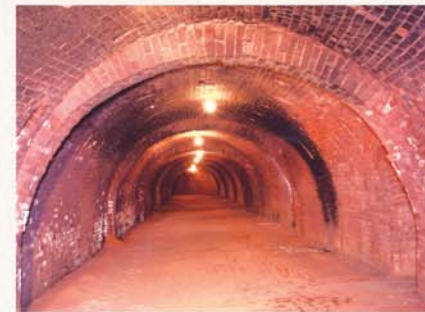


*These are the approximated distances and time required to get to each destination.
*In addition to going by car or getting there on foot, we recommend taking taxis or the Community bus "Kururin".

Publisher : **Cultural Promotion Division of Fukaya City**
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2015年3月 3,000部



Map of Fukaya City & Shibusawa Eiichi and Rongo-no-Sato Tomioka World Heritage Site and Notable People from Fukaya

- Shibusawa Eiichi / Odaka Junchu / Nirazuka Naojiro
- Tomioka Silk Mill / Tajima Yahei Sericulture Farm
- Takayama-sha Sericulture School / Arafune Cold Storage

Historic sites in Fukaya

- Former Residence of Shibusawa, "Nakanchi"
- Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Museum
- Odaka Junchu's Birthplace
- Seishido / Seifutei
- Former Japan Brick Manufacturing Company
- Former Office / No. 6 Hoffman Ring Kiln
- Former Substation / Bizenkyo Iron Bridge

Welcome to Fukaya City. I will show you around the historic sites related to Shibusawa Eiichi!



Fukaya City's mascot **FUKKA CHAN**



Tomioka World Heritage Site and Notable People from Fukaya



Shibusawa Eiichi
1840-1931

Shibusawa Eiichi coordinated the planning that contributed to the establishment of the Tomioka Silk Mill.



Odaka Junchu
1830-1901

Odaka Junchu took part in the construction of the mill and became its first head manager, paying special attention to the education of the female workers.



Nirazuka Naojiro
1823-1898

Nirazuka Naojiro coordinated the supply of building materials starting with bricks.

Tomioka World Heritage Site



Courtesy of Gunma Prefecture

Tomioka Silk Mill

The Tomioka Silk Mill was established by the Meiji government in 1872 to increase the production and quality of raw silk, which was a major export. French technology was introduced and female workers were gathered from all over Japan to be trained to use the Western technology of silk reeling. Afterward, the mill was sold to a private company and continued operating until 1987. The main brick buildings remain nearly unchanged today.

The "Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Industrial Heritage" is an ensemble of modern heritage located in Gunma Prefecture that has been inducted into the World Heritage Sites List. It represents not only the technological revolution that made the mass-production of silk (previously only made in small quantities), possible.



MAP 6 Tajima Yahei Sericulture Farm

Tajima Yahei is the designer who built the Tajima Yahei Sericulture Farm in 1863, and believed in the importance of natural ventilation for the raising of silkworms. The farm's main characteristic is its "yagura" which are ventilation windows under raised roofs. Depicted in his new theory of sericulture ("yosan shinron"), it became the prototype for many modern sericulture farmhouses all over Japan.



Courtesy of Gunma Prefecture

Takayama-sha Sericulture School

The Takayama-sha Sericulture School was founded in 1884 by Takayama Chogoro to promote the teaching of sericulture. He had developed the "seion-iku" (a technique combining ventilation and warming), which became the standard for modern sericulture in Japan.



Courtesy of Gunma Prefecture

Arafune Cold Storage

Arafune Cold Storage was a facility that stored silkworm eggs, making use of natural cool air. It increased the number of rearing cycles of the silkworms, which had been limited to once a year.



Courtesy of Gunma Prefecture

Shibusawa Eiichi



Shibusawa Eiichi (1840-1931) was born in Chiaraizima (located in present-day Fukaya) in a rich farmhouse that was used for farming, indigo production, and sericulture. At the age of seven, he studied the Analects of Confucius under his cousin Odaka Junchu who was 10 years his senior.

When he was 22, he and his cousin Kisaku relocated to Edo for their studies. Shibusawa Eiichi also learned Japanese swordsmanship. At that time, Edo was the scene of confrontations between those in favor of the emperor and the expulsion of the foreigners, and those supporting the Shogunate and the opening of the country to foreigners. They were influenced by the radical ideas of "sonno-joi" (revere the emperor, expel the foreigners) and conspired against the Shogunate in 1863 with Junchu Odaka. The plot was canceled because of strong opposition from Junchu Odaka's brother Choshichiro and Shibusawa Eiichi fled to Kyoto with Kisaku to escape from his pursuers. So he left his hometown at the age of 23.

On his way to Kyoto, Shibusawa visited Hiraoka Enshiro whom he met in Edo and who was a close aide of Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu (who later became the fifteenth Shogun). They decided to go to work for the Hitotsubashi family at the strong suggestion of Hiraoka Enshiro. And, by working earnestly, their efforts became progressively recognized.

In 1866, Shibusawa began working for the Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu and was chosen as a member of the delegation led by Tokugawa Akitake (Yoshinobu's younger brother) who

attended the Paris International Exposition (#1). This experience would be very important for the rest of Shibusawa's life.

In 1868, as the Shogunate ceased to exist, Shibusawa founded the first joint-stock corporation in Japan. The next year, he went to work for the Meiji government and was involved in the introduction of many economic reforms that are still in use today. He resigned over a disagreement about the budget and, in 1873, founded the First National Bank (Dai-Ichi Kokuritsu Bank) which was the first private bank in Japan. He also took part in the establishment of over 500 companies. In every business, he believed he should work not for vain self-interest but for public interest and the common good. His aim was to promote the enrichment of the society as a whole. These ideas had their roots in what he learned from Odaka Junchu about "sincerity and consideration" spirit of Confucianism.



#1 Japanese delegation to the Paris International Exposition
Courtesy of The Shibusawa Memorial Museum



#2 Eiichi holding a blue-eyed doll
Courtesy of The Shibusawa Memorial Museum

In 1874, at the request of the Tokyo government, Shibusawa founded the Tokyo Yoiku-in, an institution that took care of orphans and the elderly. He served as its director until his death. Furthermore, he participated in the creation of over 600 social public enterprises and in the enactment of the Relief Law which helped the underprivileged by founding orphanages, hospitals, and schools. In 1929, despite dark clouds that were threatening relations between the United States and Japan, Shibusawa collaborated with Sidney Gullick, former American missionary in Japan to create the International Children Friendship of Japan. The project focused on the international exchange of dolls (#2). Shibusawa had a friendship with Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore and American president Ulysses S. Grant. Until his death at the age of 91, he devoted his life to philanthropic works, such as leading the organization that collected donations for the victims of the terrible China floods in 1931.

MAP

1 Former Residence of Shibusawa, "Nakanchi"

Tangible Cultural Property of Fukaya City



The main building was built in 1895 by Shibusawa Eiichi's younger sister and her husband. It has the shape of a typical sericulture farm with its "yagura" (ventilation windows under raised roofs). When Shibusawa Eiichi was in Fukaya, he used to stay in the innermost, ten-mat room which was made with refined materials. Four storehouses can still be seen near the main building: the first storehouse was the rice granary, the second was where production and storage of the indigo occurred, and the third was the toolshed. The fourth storehouse had a Japanese-style room on the first floor and a place to store valuables on the second floor. The annex (fukuya) was added in 1911 and was called the shop (o-mise) as this was where commercial transactions were made.

247-1 Chiaraizima Fukaya City Saitama Pref.
Tel 048-577-4501 (Cultural Promotion Division of Fukaya City)
Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm (Closed during the New Year holidays)

MAP

2 Shibusawa Eiichi Memorial Museum

This Museum displays many documents from the life of Shibusawa Eiichi including pictures and artifacts made by Shibusawa.



1204 Shimotobaka Fukaya City Saitama Pref.
Tel 048-587-1100
Hours: 9:00am-5:00pm
(Closed during the New Year holidays)



There is a bronze statue of the young Eiichi at "Nakanchi" and one of him in his later years at the Museum.



Odaka Junchu



Odaka Junchu (1830-1901) was the son of the head of the Shimotobaka Village (present-day Fukaya). As he had always enjoyed reading books, when he was 17, he opened a private school in the family house to teach local children. Among them, was Shibusawa Eiichi who was greatly influenced by his teacher. Odaka was a longtime partisan of the emperor, and along with Shibusawa Eiichi, he planned to take over the Takasaki Castle and to burn down the foreign settlements in Yokohama. When the plot was canceled, Shibusawa fled to Kyoto but Odaka couldn't do the same as he was the head of the village and was arrested for a short time. As Shibusawa went to work for the Shogun, Odaka decided to also support the Shogunate.

In 1869, as the delegate of the farmers of the valley, Odaka presented a petition to the government on a matter of irrigation. It gave him the opportunity to have his character and eloquence recognized, which led him to work for the government. He was especially involved in the selection of the construction site of the Tomioka Silk Mill. He had to deal with the complexity of supplying building materials like brick and mortar which were unheard of in Japan. He asked Nirazuka Naojiro to make the bricks and local plasterers to improve upon a Japanese plaster.

After many failures, the construction of the silk mill was completed in 1873.

Moreover, Odaka faced the challenge of recruiting female workers as it was rumored that the French drank blood because of the red wine that they were drinking being mistaken for blood. So he came up with the idea of asking his own daughter, Yu (#1), to work as the first mill hand. This was effective in helping gather more workers. As first head manager, he also attached great importance to the improvement of the workers and maintaining discipline. He managed to earn his workers' trust through his honesty and they were proud to have his own daughter among them.

When he resigned in 1876, Shibusawa offered him a position at the First National Bank. Odaka was appointed as the manager of the Morioka branch in Iwate Prefecture, and he greatly contributed to the economic development of the northeastern area of Honshu.



#1 Odaka Yu
Courtesy of owner

MAP

3 Odaka Junchu's Birthplace

Tangible Cultural Property of Fukaya City



236 Shimotobaka Fukaya City Saitama Pref.
Tel 048-577-4501 (Cultural Promotion Division of Fukaya City)
Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm (Closed during the New Year holidays)

It is said that Nirazuka Naojiro was born in Odaka Junchu's house.



Nirazuka Naojiro



Courtesy of owner

Nirazuka Naojiro (1823-1898) was born to a family who worked in the Odaka farmhouse. He lived there until he was adopted by the Nirazuka family when he was seven years old. At the age of 19, he began working for the Odakas to learn farming and rapeseed oil trading. The next year, when Odaka Junchu was in charge of building the Tomioka Silk Mill, he asked Nirazuka to coordinate the supply of building materials. So Nirazuka went to live in Tomioka to better meet Odaka's expectations. The supply of bricks was especially difficult as a few hundred thousand of them were needed. So Nirazuka gathered tilemakers from Fukaya and started to look for a site to extract a clay that would meet the quality required by the French architect, Auguste Bastien. Fortunately, he found a site with suitable clay near Sasamori-Inari Shrine, which was very close to Tomioka. A kiln was built near the site and, after many trials and errors, it started producing the bricks.

In 1880, he devoted a votive picture (ema) of the silk mill to Eimei-Inari Shrine, which has been declared a Tangible Cultural Property of Fukaya City.

Seishido / Seifutei

MAP

4-A Seishido National Important Cultural Property

110-1 Okiai Fukaya-shi Saitama-ken Tel 048-571-0341 (Oyori Community center)
Entrance hours:9:00am-5:00pm (Closed during the New Year holidays)



Funded by the employees of the First National Bank, Seishido was built to commemorate Shibusawa Eiichi's 77th birthday. Shibusawa named it using words from a famous passage of a sacred book of Confucianism. The building was designed by Tanabe Junkichi, the best Japanese architect at that time who blended his own ideas with Shibusawa's wishes for a Western cottage of 100 square meters.

On the north side of the building, the characters "喜寿" (77th birthday) are written on a brick(*1). Images of nobleman, warriors and entertainers from the Han Dynasty in



*1



*2

China can be seen on the stained glasses of the reception hall (o-hiroma) (*2). They are believed to be bowing to Shibusawa Eiichi and celebrating his birthday.

On the ceiling are the characters 雲 (cloud), 鶴 (crane) and 寿 (long life), typical of Korean style buildings(*3). The antechamber (tsugi-no-ma) was designed in a Japanese style. The outside, however, was modeled after an English cottage. As such, the designer blended Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Western styles to produce a well-balanced result.

The building was appointed a National Important Cultural Property of Japan on May 30, 2003.



A beautiful weathercock can be seen on the roof of the Seishido with the cardinal points in kanji.



MAP

4-B Seifutei Tangible Cultural Property of Saitama Pref.

Built in 1926, Seifutei was funded by the employees of the First National Bank commemorating Sasaki Yunosuke's (who had succeeded Shibusawa Eiichi as President of the bank)(*1) 77th birthday. Known for his diligence and honesty, he played a large role in assisting his very active superior. Seifutei was designed by Nishimura Yoshitoki the best known designer of banks. It is a one-story concrete building of 168 square meters. The tiles on the roof(*2),



*2

the arches of the veranda(*3) and the stained glasses of the bow windows give it a Spanish style that was in fashion at that time(*4).

This building is a precious example of the change in architecture that occurred after the Great Kanto earthquake of 1923, when bricks were replaced by reinforced concrete. It was declared a Tangible Cultural Property of Saitama Pref. on March 23, 2004.



*4



*1 Sasaki Yunosuke & Shibusawa Eiichi
Courtesy of The Shibusawa Memorial Museum



*3

Relocation to Fukaya

The two buildings were originally located in Tokyo, but when a plan to demolish them arose in 1997, the city of Fukaya offered to acquire and to relocate them. Relocation of this kind of cultural buildings were very rare. A committee of experts was gathered to determine the best plan for transporting them. They decided to section the walls into large pieces and put them back together at the new location. Dismantlement begun in February 1998. The operation was completed in August 1999 and has welcomed many visitors since.



Former Brick Factory Facilities of the Japan Brick Manufacturing Company

In 1881, the Meiji government launched a project to set up the government office headquarters in Hibiya, Tokyo, of modern buildings that could rival those of the Great Powers. Building these Western-style offices required a large quantity of bricks. As the national budget was very tight, Shibusawa Eiichi was asked to create a factory that could mechanically produce bricks on a large scale.

So Shibusawa decided to build this factory located in Joshikimen village because of its tile making tradition, high-quality clay deposit, and the proximity of navigable rivers that could be used to transport the bricks to Tokyo.

The office was built in 1888, followed by the first Hoffmann ring kiln. All the machines, including the boilers, were imported from Germany. In September of the same year, the first kiln was lit. The next month, the company received the first governmental order of 220,000 bricks. Two additional kilns were completed the next year to increase production. A total of six kilns were in operation at the factory's peak of activity.

Hit by the decrease in the demand for bricks, the company ended its 120-year history in 2006.

MAP

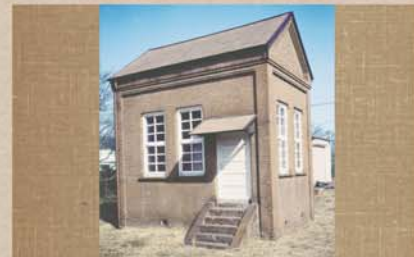
5-A Former Office National Important Cultural Property



This former office was built as a house and an office for Chize the German engineer who operated the factory. When Chize returned to Germany, it became the company office. It now functions as a museum exhibiting historical materials.

MAP

5-B Former Substation National Important Cultural Property



This former substation was built in 1906 to replace the steam engines with electric motors making it the first building in Fukaya to be connected to power lines.

MAP

5-C No.6 Hoffman Ring Kiln National Important Cultural Property



This kiln was designed by Hoffman to enable continuous production of bricks. Built in 1907, it was 56.5 meters long, 20 meters wide, and 3.3 meters high, and made of bricks. It had 18 rooms inside for the different stages of the brick-making process that included loading, preheating, heating, firing, cooling, and removing. It could produce 650,000 bricks per month and operated for over 65 years until 1968. The bricks it produced were used for great buildings like Tokyo Station and the Number One Mitsubishi Hall.

MAP

5-D Bizenkyo Iron Bridge National Important Cultural Property



In order to transport the bricks, a 4.2 km line was laid between the factory and Fukaya Railway Station. This was Japan's first private line. To cross the Bizenkyo Canal, a pownall plate girder bridge (British-style) was built with I-beam metallic sheets and piers made of bricks from the factory. The line was closed and is now a promenade to Fukaya Railway Station.

Information

- 5-A & B Open on Saturdays and Sundays 9:00am-4:00pm
(Closed during the New Year holidays) *B: Outside visit only
- 5-C Open only on special days or Advance reservations are required for visiting
*It can only be visited by groups of 10 or more during the Museum opening hours
- 5-D Can be visited at any time / Accessible from the promenade

The red bricks of the Tokyo Station or the Akasaka Palace were made here.



28-11 Joshikimen Fukaya-shi Saitama-ken Tel 048-577-4501 (Cultural Promotion Division of Fukaya City)
*For more information concerning the visit, please contact the Cultural Promotion Division of Fukaya City.