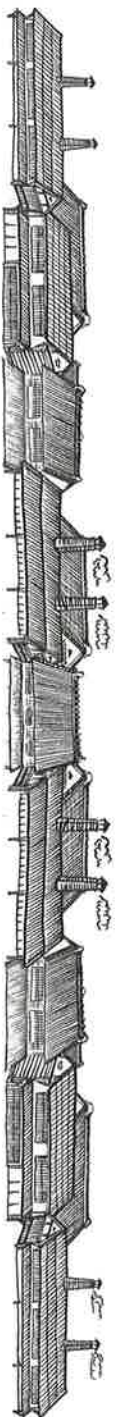
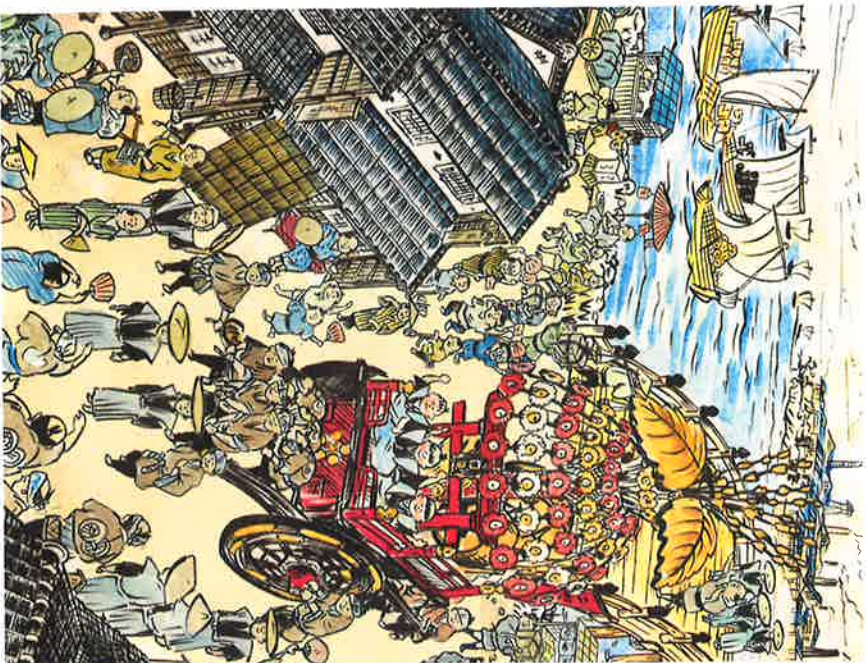


TAKAOKA

Our Ancestors, Our Rivals
Takaoka, A Town Formed from Spirit



Amatarashi Coast
On fine days, from the coastal city of Takaoka, visitors can take in views across the sea of the 3,000-meter-class Tateyama Mountain Range, among the world's most glorious sights. Since antiquity, the city has thrived as a hub of commerce and industry and as a port of call for merchant ships.



Takaoka Castle Remains
At this site, moats built 400 years ago remain in their original state. Castles with moats in their original form are rare nationwide and extremely precious. Dom Jusso Takyama is said to have designed this castle.

Designated a Japan Heritage site by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, is a major area of interest. Opened about 400 years ago, the city features a history and culture in which deep traces remain of a townspeople's culture, built through the efforts of ancestors. Soon after the opening of the city, the One Castle per Province Law led to the decommissioning of Takaoka Castle. Despite this and other setbacks, through the efforts of residents both renowned and unknown, Takaoka has miraculously and dramatically emerged as a city of commerce and industry. Even today, Takaoka retains some of its original rows of houses and traditional events. The pride of the city and of the people living here today is everywhere evident.

English

Takaoka (Toyama Prefecture): In the Spotlight as a Japan Heritage Site

In 2015, the Agency for Cultural Affairs registered the historical narrative of Takaoka, "A Flourishing Folk Culture Under the Rule of the Maeda Family of Kaga," on its Japan Heritage list. Opened by Toshinaga, the city is home to a thriving culture created by the efforts of countless predecessors. Rooted in the lives and hearts of the region, its history continues to shine brightly.

Japan Heritage is an effort to link the cultural properties found in each region with narratives to promote the charms and key features of the region, both at home and abroad. I'd like to draw your attention to the narrative of Takaoka, one of the 18 narratives selected as the first Japan Heritage sites.



TAKAOKA City.

Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, has a current population of about 175,000. Facing the sea and positioned near the center of Japan, it's a city of history and culture, located about two and a half hours from Tokyo by Shinkansen and about 15 minutes from Kanazawa.

Our Ancestors, Our Rivals The 400-Year Story of Takaoka

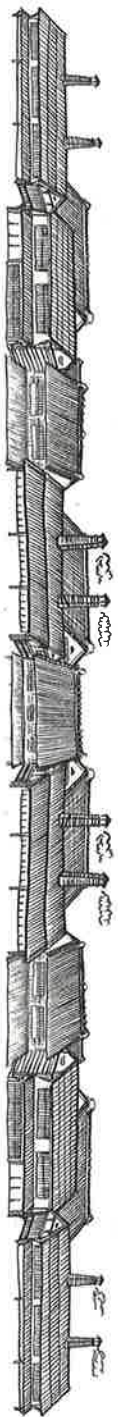
Easily accessible now from Tokyo thanks to the Hokuriku Shinkansen, Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, dates from 1609, when I, Maeda Toshinaga, the second head of the Maeda family and ruler of the Kaga Domain, built Takaoka Castle and opened the city. On this occasion, I brought in seven skilled casters, establishing Takaoka's metal casting industry. Even now, Takaoka holds the status of Japan's most significant copperware producer. Connoisseurs worldwide hold Takaoka's cast products in highest regard.

Takaoka retains many of its historic cultural properties, ranging from a national treasure to numerous rows of historical homes. Besides hands-on craft experiences, abundant seafood, and traditional festivals, visitors come to enjoy magnificent views of the Tateyama Mountain Range over Toyama Bay—an enchanting perspective reputed to have significant healing effects for mind and body.

Come take a closer look at the charms of Takaoka, a place where quality of life and rich cultural traditions thrive.



JAPAN HERITAGE



Seven Proud Casters Establish Takaoka's Tradition of Metal Casting

To promote industry in Takaoka, Toshihaga invited seven skilled casters to his castle town, conferring on them **land and tax exemptions**. Kanayamachi (literally, "casters' town") is where the seven casters settled. With its rows of houses and the ambience of bygone days, the town has been selected as an Important Traditional Historic Building Preservation District. This is the only town in Japan to be designated as a casters' town.

This is the birthplace of Takaoka's casting industry. Today, the city is one of Japan's leading copperware production centers. It's evolved into a center for casting products based on modern designs.

Goinsai Festival: A Festival of Gratitude in Memory of Lord Toshihaga Maeda

The streets of Kanayamachi are lined with traditional buildings featuring windows covered by beautiful slatted wooden frames called *senbon-goshi* ("thousand slat lattices"). Kanayamachi, also home to a casting museum and stores, is a popular tourist destination. On June 20 of every year, Goinsai Festival commemorates the



anniversary of Toshihaga's death and the founder's many virtues. The festival eve features a magnificent event, with a parade and dancers dancing on stone pavements lit by lanterns to the work songs of the casters.



Rows of storehouse-style townhouses in Yamachosuji Street (an Important Traditional Historic Building Preservation District). These houses, a fusion of Japanese traditional architecture and Western architecture, display a distinctive ambience.



Handed down from craftsmen going back some 400 years, the passion for product-making remains alive and vital here in today's generation. Kanayamachi is home to galleries where young artists gather. Every autumn, it's also home to an event that brings together craftworks from around the country under one roof.

Massive Storehouse-style Houses Following on the Heels of a Major Fire

Yamachosuji Street is a street built by Toshihaga as a commercial district to the west side of his castle. Five years after Takaoka's opening, the castle was decommissioned under the One Castle per Province Law. With the town facing a major crisis,

Toshitsune, successor to his paternal half-brother Toshihaga, implemented various policies to maintain the town's vitality. Townspeople responded to his plans, and Takaoka subsequently developed into a center for locally produced rice, salt, and cotton. It went on to thrive as a regional economic hub.

Yamachosuji Street experienced its second crisis in 1900, when a major fire reduced virtually all of the homes in the area to ashes. Thereafter, wealthy merchants in Yamacho built heavy storehouse-style houses that were more fire resistant. Some of these buildings remain standing to this day, giving us glimpses of the financial standing of the powerful merchants of that time.



The Sogano family residence is a stately, black-plastered storehouse-style building, designated a national important cultural property. The precious materials are used for the interior.



The building is distinguished by walls and doors plastered in many layers for fire control. The building conveys to this day the financial power of the wealthy merchants of that era.



Takaoka's Beautiful Culture of Sweets:

Confections Made from Traditions Dating Back a Century.

With its numerous Japanese confection shops, Takaoka is the birthplace of countless confections beloved by locals for more than 100 years. Even now, during seasonal festivals and on ceremonial occasions marking important events in life, we cherish the custom of sharing time together and exchanging confections like *manju*, *dorayaki*, and *mochi*gashi as gifts.

The origins of the confection-making traditions here may lie in the tea-drinking culture that eventually reached Takaoka, perhaps starting with Maeda Toshie, who learned the arts of the tea ceremony from Sen no Rikyu. We encourage you to try some of the elaborately crafted Japanese confections created by master craftsman—traditional tastes made with premium materials!



Created at the end of the Edo period (1603-1867), this soft, semi-baked Japanese confection is an exquisite combination of *monaka-dane* (ingredient for *monaka*) and sweet white miso paste. It's inspired by the reflection of the full moon on Toyama Bay.

Ede no Tsuki (江戸の月)
Shimamura Main Store (志乃原 本店)
1-9-28 Joto, Takaoka
TEL: 81-766-22-1020

This confection represents the stone pavements of Kanayamachi, the home town of casting. The evanescent flavor of almonds and mild sweetness emerge quickly and fade slowly.

Western-style Rakugan KANAYA
(洋風落雁KANAYA)

Nakaojigetsudo Takaoka Main Store
(中尾月堂 高岡本店)
2-1 Miyamachi, Takaoka
TEL: 81-766-25-0514



This *jo-namagashi* (a premium unbaked Japanese confection) takes everyone by surprise. Ask to have yours made into any shape you like.

Jo-namagashi (上生菓子)
Hikamijigetsudo Fushiki Main Store
(引網吉月堂 伏木本店)
1-1 Fushiki Minocho machi, Takaoka
TEL: 81-766-44-0585



Issued by Takaoka City Japan Heritage Promotion Committee
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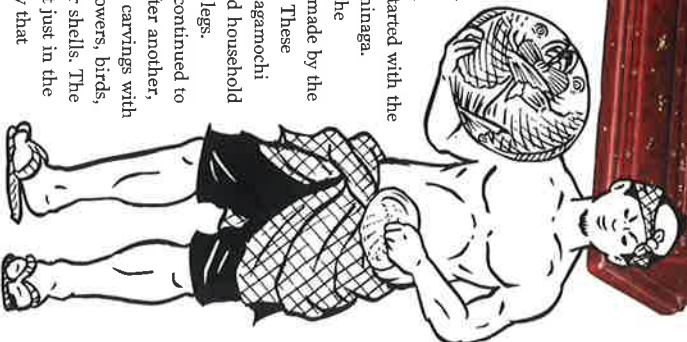
漆工 Japan



Unique Lacquerware

Techniques from the 19th C.

The history of Takaoka lacquerware, a designated national traditional craft, started with the opening of the city of Takaoka by Toshinaga. Takaoka lacquerware originates with the application of lacquer to the products made by the joiners brought to town by Toshinaga. These products included chests of drawers, nagamochi (oblong chests for storing garments and household goods), dressing tables, and trays with legs. Since then, Takaoka lacquerware has continued to evolve, incorporating one technique after another, including techniques for coating wood carvings with colored lacquer and for reproducing flowers, birds, and landscapes with abalone and other shells. The charm of Takaoka lacquerware lies not just in the lacquer, but in the dazzling complexity that emerges from numerous steps.



Aogai-nuri: A Traditional Takaoka Lacquerware Technique

Aogai-nuri (lit. "blue shell coating"), one traditional technique representative of Takaoka lacquerware, is commonly referred to as raden (mother-of-pearl inlay), a technique involving shells. Abalone and other shells are cut, combined, and fixed to a lacquered surface. The technique uses extremely thin shells (0.1 mm) that allow the color of the base lacquer to gleam through, giving the seashells a blue glow. Immense skill is needed to create the intricate patterns made by cutting fine shells with thin needles.



Taibon: A Chokoku-nuri Design to Represent Takaoka

Based on various local techniques, Takaoka has become a leading production center of lacquerware in Japan. The technique of chokoku-nuri (sculpture painting) involves three dimensional sculptures coated with lacquer. It's a distinctive Takaoka Lacquerware technique. Taibon (lit. "sea beam tray") is a type of tray whose design features two clasping sea bream, an auspicious symbol in Japan. Created in the 19th century, this tray is a long-selling product, features a design that's distinctively Takaoka Lacquerware. It's sold and believed to this day.



Innovation, the Key to Takaoka's Manufacturing Traditions

Making things no one's ever seen—that's the spiritual tradition of Takaoka. Traditional techniques and passion create products for today's lifestyles. A succession of innovations builds history. Drawing on traditional techniques, we're also expanding to tackle new possibilities, including efforts to work with different materials and designers.



The design of this new product, which has uses in everyday life, incorporates the traditional Takaoka Lacquerware technique of aogai-nuri. /Mother-of-pearl inlay iPhone covers (Takaoka Lacquerware)

New fashion items with dazzling mother-of-pearl inlay applied to three-dimensional shapes. Traditional mother-of-pearl inlay works can be worn as jewelry, like brooches and rings. /Jewels, mother-of-pearl inlay brooches, mother-of-pearl inlay rings (Takaoka Lacquerware)

銅生 Metal work



Takaoka to Become Japan's No.1 Copperware Producer after the 19th C. Competition for Brilliance in Technique

The history of Takaoka Copperware began when Toshinaga invited skillful casters to the castle town he was seeking to establish at the time. Production of Buddhist altar fittings and temple bells began in the 18th century. Making Buddhist objects is a major cornerstone of Takaoka Copperware. Nearly all of Japan's temple bells are currently made in Takaoka. In the 19th century, master metal carvers of the former Kaga and Toyama domains applied superior techniques to create rich troves of artistic copperware, works that won acclaim at the World Exposition in Paris and subsequently enjoyed great worldwide popularity and wide exports. Takaoka Copperware is a designated national traditional craft.



Applying Traditional Techniques to Manufacture the Latest Products

Takaoka is currently Japan's largest copperware producer. The city's casting industry continues to expand to encompass not just copper alloys, like brass and bronze, but tin and aluminum. Takaoka is home to craftsmen whose exquisite skills at each step—from casting and polishing to metal carving—techniques that form the cornerstones of today's manufacturing.



This photo shows molten metal being poured into a casting mold created with an original mold. While smoke indicates that the temperature of the molten metal is close to 1,300°C, a key point in the casting process. Everything is decided in a moment; this is a process that plays out on the edge. Beautiful cast metal requires experience and craftsmanship at every turn.

Takaoka: Creating Uniquely Japanese Local Products of the Highest Quality

"The Wonder 500" project, in which professional commentators select 500 local products to embody the pride of Japan, selected more products from Takaoka than anywhere else other than Kyoto. Those looking for unique souvenirs featuring traditional craftsmanship owe it to themselves to visit Takaoka.

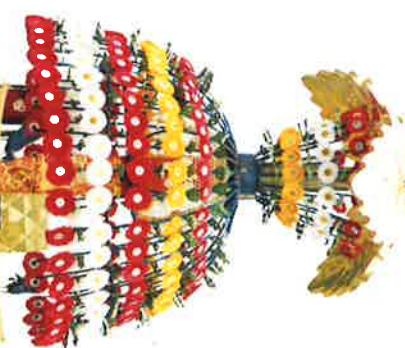


The thermal conductivity of aluminum makes this major hit spoon perfect for scooping up hard ice cream for immediate enjoyment. /15.0% Ice Cream Spoon (TAKATA Lemnos)

The shape of this soft produce, made of 100% tin, is readily altered by hand. /KAGO (Nousaku)

The cast surface, texture, and design of this popular product convey a sense of warmth. /Chopstick Rests, Bottle Opener (FUTAGAMI)

祭 Festival



Just Like Moving Art Museums: What's Takaoka's Mikurumayama?

On May 1, after the long winter and the weeks of cherry blossoms that follow, the Takaoka Mikurumayama Festival arrives. More than any other event, it's the festival people in Takaoka look forward to. Drawing on history of 400 years, Mikurumayama floats, created with the finest of Takaoka's techniques, are moving art museums. The sight of children on floats and the spectacle of prosperous men from Yamachosuji Street, all wearing the same formal men's skirt and straw hat, will take you back in time. Wearing the same happy coat, the residents of each town pull their float through the streets. The spectacular floats making their way down the historical streets is an eloquent reminder of the depths of Takaoka's culture and the pride of its people.



A Cherished Festival Handed Down for 400 Years

This Festival began in 1609 when Toshinaga opened Takaoka and presented the townspeople with a court carriage originally bestowed on his father, Maeda Toshie, by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Each year in the 400 years since then, townspeople have pulled the Takaoka Mikurumayama floats, designated important national tangible and intangible cultural properties, down streets and along fixed routes. This festival is one of five in Japan to be designated thus. Other festivals conferred this honor include the Gion Festival in Kyoto and the Takayama Festival in Gifu. Takaoka's parades feature seven floats decorated with various exquisite craftsworks, including articles made of metal, lacquered objects, and dyed and woven fabrics.



A Symbol of the Wealth of the Townspeople and the Craftsmen's Technique

One feature of the floats is their striking wheels. Each town decorates the wheels of their float in their own way, with elaborate metal fittings featuring patterns like dryscapemums, dragons, plum blossoms, and so on. People of Yamachosuji Street, an area that thrived as a merchant district, pour their spirit and energy into their floats to make them even more resplendent symbols of energy and prosperity.



Craftsmanship

Despite the splendid and elaborate dolls and decorations at the top of each float, even more noteworthy are the exquisitely crafted articles in metal and lacquer and the dyed and woven fabrics used at points like the handrails, the rearmost part, the horizontal pieces of timber, and the curtains. Not only the day of the festival, but you can also view this elaborate craftsmanship up close at the Takaoka Mikurumayama Museum in Yamachosuji Street, where the floats are on display throughout the year.