



*A Guide to
Kiryu's
Cultural and
Historical
Institutions*

A GUIDE TO KIRYU'S CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONS

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ART HALL HOKO-ZA FESTIVAL STAGE (Yatai)

The stage was constructed in 1869. Like the festival float, the construction of the stage was sponsored by Isobe Shoshichi, a retailer who had profited in the silk market trade. It was his own idea and plan to build the stage.

There are 12 sliding doors and the stage itself is 7.5 meters wide, 7 meters high and 6.5 meters deep. It is a

truly large festival stage and takes on the appearance of a bird with outstretched wings. (There are at present other stages on the same scale preserved in each of the 6 blocks of the Honcho district.) The center stage revolves while there is also a lower level for a festival band. The construction is most unusual in that it includes a "hanamichi" or elevated passageway typically used in Kabuki performances. Under the floor of the stage near the wheels is a 20 cm square oak axle post around which the stage can revolve 180 degrees. This axle post alone supports the weight of the stage.

Like a Zen temple, the stage is constructed with unvarnished wood and adorned with ornamental carvings. The famous Yabuzuka craftsman, Kishi Matahashi (1791-1877) is responsible for the wood carvings which include a dragon, a lion, a dog, a peony, a rising

dragon and others among the 60 some small and large creatures. The stage was constructed by a local carpenter named Suzuki Kashichi.

The sliding door paintings are of two types and were painted by Shimizu Tokoku (1841-1907). Born in Edo (former name for Tokyo), he was trained in the Kano school of art at the age of 13 and was given the professional name of "Tamaryu".

One set of paintings is called "Cranes and Autumn Grasses" and is very reminiscent of the Kano school in that the colors are vivid and the painting is highly detailed. The other set of paintings is called "Basho" and is most unusual in that it employs a tropical plant, the banana, as a motif. Tamaryu was in the employ of Phillip Franz von Siebold, a German physician who twice visited Japan and was engaged in sketching Japanese flora and fauna. While in Nagasaki, Tamaryu studied oil painting and photography. These pursuits are reflected in this Western style painting in its bold design. He also opened a photo studio in Yokohama, later moving to Tokyo. The painting is a very valuable work of art.

The framed picture has calligraphic images on both sides. The front side is inscribed with "Rakkyo Kagan". It was written by the Tatebayashi calligrapher, Taguchi Koson. It was originally written for a stage which had been constructed in 1854. Taguchi was a great friend of the Kiryu designer, Ishida Kyuya, and was commissioned by him to do the work. The calligraphy was donated by Kaneko Kichiemon of Honcho 4 chome.

The reverse side of the work is entitled "Shigaeme" and was commissioned on the occasion of the completion of the stage by Isobe Shoshichi. Some of the wood carvings from an earlier stage built in 1854 were reused on the stage. This makes the stage the oldest one in Kiryu.

HOKO

(Festival Float)

Constructed in 1875, the Hoko was also sponsored by Isobe Shoshichi, through whose dedication it became a truly elaborate float.

In the Kanto area, such festival floats are typically called "dashi", however, because of the influence of Kyoto in Kiryu (through the textile industry), this float is referred to in the Kyoto style as a "hoko".

Two shrine floats were permitted to enter Edo Castle grounds during the Edo Tenka Festival. These floats were two storied and stood 7.5 meters tall. The festival floats extant in the Kanto area are all in this Edo style and, having been modeled on Edo floats, are of a grand scale.

The Kiryu 3 chome Honcho district also has a festival float which is entitled "Okiniboko". It is constructed in the Edo style and is simple in design. The main body of the float resembles the body of a shamisen. There is a collapsable upper deck which, when extended, is like the neck of a shamisen (a traditional guitar-like stringed instrument of Japan). The decor on the float is painted gold which is unusual in Kiryu.

The 4 chome Hoko is unique in the Kanto area for its size and originality. The float is a richly carved multi-storied artifact from Kiryu's past. It is enclosed on 4 sides with a curtain called a "mizuhiki" and when extended fully, stands 9.2 meters in height. The float has wood carvings on all 4 sides which were done by the master wood sculptor, Kishi Matahashi when he was 79 years of age. The frontispiece has two dragons - one ascending and one descending. The lower level has carvings of various objects and animals, including a lion, peony, squirrel, grapes, and cranes. In all, there are some 100 wood carvings.



On the floor of the float there is a 10 centimeter oak axle post which supports the full weight of the float and allows it to turn 180 degrees, which is done manually.

In recent times such manually operated floats have decreased in number, however, these "hoko" are quite beautiful. The figure at the top of the float,

"Susano'onomikoto" was created by the Asakusa doll maker, Matsumoto Kisaburo (1825-1891) when he was 50 years of age. Matsumoto was born in Kumamoto. As a doll maker he made his way from Osaka to Edo (Tokyo) under the

tutelage of Shinmon Tatsugoro. At the request of the Tokyo University School of Medicine, he was commissioned to make models of the human body. His models were extremely realistic, even accurately displaying the body in dissection.

Matsumoto achieved great renown for his work. The float figure has bright piercing eyes and assumes the posture of a Kabuki actor. This hoko has achieved a rare artistic balance in terms of the excellently fashioned figure at the top, and the carvings and construction of the base. The beauty and richness of the unvarnished wood and overall superior design make it a most unusual festival float.



KIRYU GION FESTIVAL

Festivals fill people with excitement - it's uncanny the way everyone gets caught up in the frenzy. Festivals are essential events for the development of towns and villages in that they provide a driving force for citizens to gather together and share a common culture.

In earlier days, the Gion Festival was called "Gion-e" or "Tenno Sairei" and was held in honor of the god, Gozu Tenno. The festival was first held in Kyoto in the year 876, celebrating the beliefs of both Buddhism and Shintoism. The tutelary god of Gion Monastery was worshipped at Gion Shrine for his protective powers. This

custom spread throughout the country.

From the year 1591, the town of Kiryu was formed with the earliest record of a festival being held in 1656. This was the first "Kiryu Gion". At that time, a form of children's dancing using the hands was the focus of this simple event. Near the Honcho 3 chome housing apartments there was once a temple called Shusei-In. This temple worshipped the god Gozu Tenno.

Since Kiryu was a lively commercial center, a town shrine was erected (Tenmangu). Once the festival became a combined event (for Tenmangu and Shusei-In) it grew even more lively. From around the end of the Edo Period, festival floats were drawn through the town and it was not unusual

for there to be 4 or 5 floats in the parade. In addition, "Edo shibai", open-air dramatic performances took place in competition from district to district around the town and the festival went on through the night. This festival became the third largest night festival in the Kanto Plain.

These gaudy festivals were, however, prohibited from time to time. From around 1860, the six districts of Honcho combined together to build a festival stage. Not long after that the Meiji Restoration took place and Buddhism was officially separated from Shintoism. Gozu Tenno was no longer recognized as a tutelary god in Buddhism and was replaced by Susano'onomikoto as the festival god.

The conversion of Kanshin-In of Kyoto to Yakata Shrine became a trend which spread all over the country. In Kiryu as well, as a result of the division of Buddhism and Shintoism, Shusei-In was renamed Yakata Shrine in 1870. In 1908 Yakata Shrine was combined with Miwa Shrine and a storehouse for moveable shrines (o-mikoshi) was constructed.

Kiryu, an independent town, which had grown prosperous from textile manufacturing, combined the best of Tokyo and Kyoto traditions. As a result, an entirely new urban culture arose in the city. Because of its advanced commercial and cultural level, people involved in the arts all over the country were drawn to Kiryu.

It was this cultural and environmental context that gave rise to the Gion Festival with its colorful stages and floats. Gion Bayashi performances and other cultural artifacts such as the wood carvings, paintings and calligraphy, etc. are all examples of the wonderful performing arts associated with the festival. This cultural heritage which

has been entrusted to the citizens of Kiryu demonstrates the mindset of the people of the city in times past and serves to renew our affection for Kiryu.



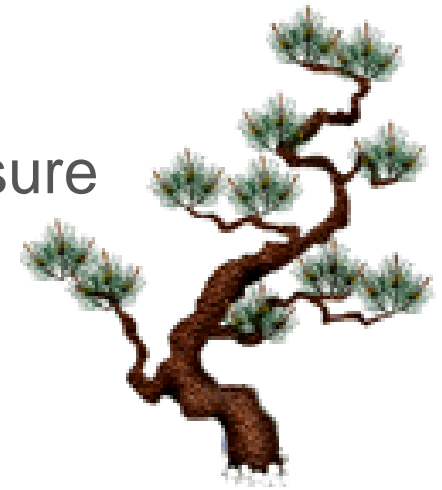


The Muromachi Period Garden

Hikobe Manor



A National
Cultural Treasure



The History of the Hikobe Family

According to Hikobe genealogical records the family is said to have an unbroken lineage dating back to the 7th century A.D. The founder of the family was Prince Takechi the son of Emperor Tenmu the 31st emperor, who lived during the latter half of the 7th century Since their removal to Kiryu the line has continued on for 13 generations .

During the Kamakura Period (12th century A.D.) the family adopted the name Hikobe from the name of the village in Iwate Prefecture (Hikobe Village Kikuta-gun Mutsu Province) where they were living as a samurai family .

The Hikobe Family was called upon during the Muromachi Period to serve the Shogunate and as a result ,in the 3rd generation of the family moved from the Tohoku area to take up residence in Kiryu on a huge tract of land granted to them by Lord Yura Narashige the local feudal lord reigning over the Kiryu - Ota area .

During the Edo Period the family engaged also in agriculture however textile production was beginning to thrive already at that time In particular during the early part of the 17th century the Hikobe family developed new technologies and engaged in painting and designing textiles The Hikobe family became an important part of Kiryu's textile manufacturing sector .

Since the end of the Meiji Period the Hikobe family dedicated itself to textile manufacturing and Komao Hikobe was chosen to be the president of the Kiryu Textile Weavers Cooperative Association .



The Hikobe Family Residence

About the Restoration of Hikobe Manor



In addition to the main residence other buildings on the compound include the winter residence the main entrance gate the documents storehouse and the granary all of which have been designated cultural treasures These buildings are all constructed in an architectural style characteristic of the Edo Period .

The restoration of the main residence began in October of and involved completely dismantling the structure The work was completed in June of As the family's lifestyle underwent change the building too was transformed Prior to reconstruction the site underwent strict and minute investigation by a private historical restoration firm which included a thorough excavation of the site This process made it possible to restore the building to a state which closely approximates its original condition

In order that the family can continue to live in the house while preserving it two rooms out of view of the earth-floored room have been left in the same condition they were in before the restoration began

The area protruding from the north end of the building was constructed during the Meiji Period and differs from the rest of the building Excavation revealed that the Hikobe Family had been engaged in dyeing textiles since the Edo Period and so this part of the building was preserved as well .

The other National Cultural Treasures were all restored as well . The work was completed in March 2000.



The Takesunoko-doko with its "irori" (a sunken hearth)

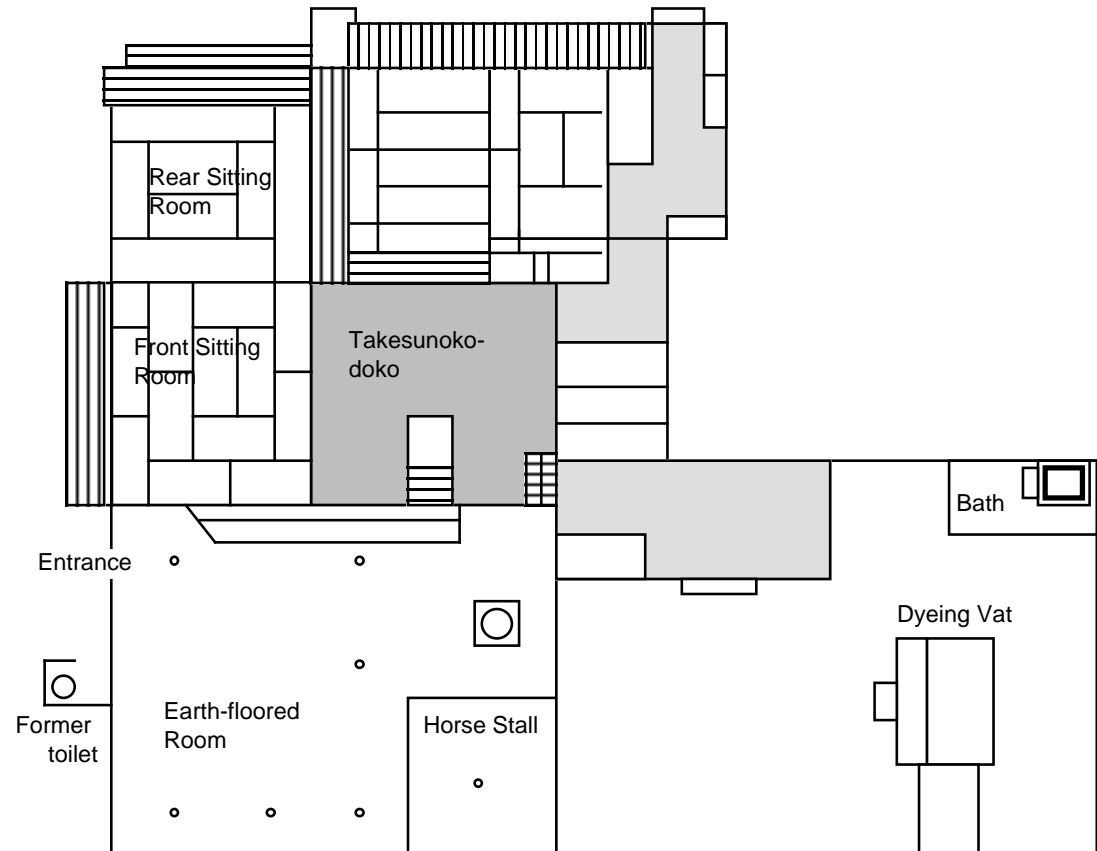


Special Characteristics of the Main Residence

During the dismantling of the building the various materials used in the pillars and beams of the structure revealed much of the technology and construction methods characteristic of the early modern period. All of the essential elements of an old private residence came to light. It was determined that the house was constructed in the early part of the 17th century. As such the building has a history dating back over 300 years. The outstanding special features of the structure are as follows:

- The sitting room pillars are placed about 4 ft apart (length of one tatami mat) with the distance between the pillars being about half the length of 3 tatami mats.
- The pillars are constructed of zelkova, chestnut, walnut and other wood. The diameter of the pillars is uneven.
- The alcove platform is particularly high with a thin board placed between the tatami mat and the alcove platform itself.
- The rafter beams are thin and spaced narrowly apart.

The layout is such that there are two rooms facing the earth-floored room, behind which are three rooms totaling five tatami mats in depth. The hall "Takesunoko-doko" is uncharacteristic of this area and is a unique feature of the house.



The Main Residence

The Main Entrance Gate

Centrally located the main entrance gate has an entranceway approximately one and a half tatami mats in width (about 3 feet). On either side of the entranceway are two large walls which enclose storage areas. The roof of the gate is typically Japanese-style "Yosemune-zukuri" or pyramidal style. The gate underwent repair in 1987 when it was declared a prefectural treasure. The restoration work has been completed.



The Winter Residence

The structure contains two tatami mat rooms and earth-floor room and a kitchen. The building is located on the east side of the gate. It closely resembles the "Ennendo Shujin Fuyuzumae no Zu" a drawing found on a fragment from an old document preserved by the family.

Restoration of this building has been completed.



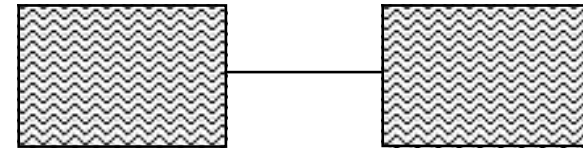
The Document Storehouse and Granary

The document storehouse is a two storey structure and is divided evenly into two rooms. Many old documents dating back to the Middle Ages and through the Modern Period have been preserved in this archive.

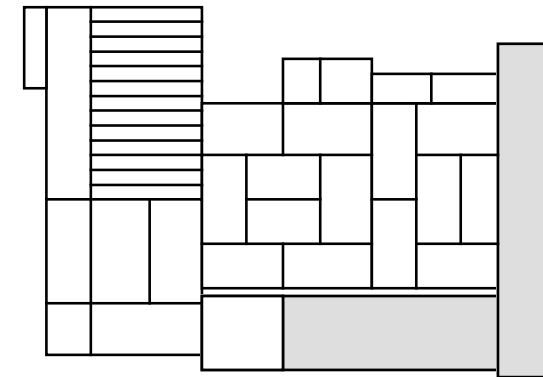
The granary is a one storey building of sturdy construction. It has also been completely restored.



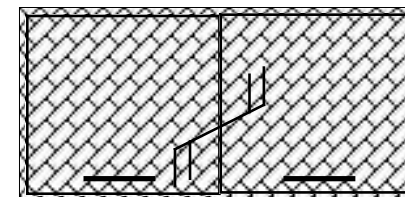
Main Entrance Gate



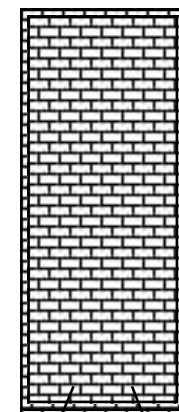
Winter Residence



Documents Storehouse



Granary





Kiryu City Performing Arts Center

The Kiryu City Performing Arts Center is located on a 28,000 sq. m. tract of land with an adjacent parking area for 550 automobiles. The building itself is approximately 18,000 sq. m. in area, with 4 floors rising to 30.62 m. above ground and with one level below ground. The basement is constructed of reinforced concrete while other parts are of steel frame construction. The roof of the structure resembles the shape of a cocoon, recalling Kiryu's long history of silk manufacturing.

The Kiryu City Performing Arts Center was constructed with several related goals in mind - it strives to serve as "an excellent facility for the appreciation of performing arts", "a center in which one's creativity can unfold", "a location for undertaking lifelong learning", and "a forum for exchange among various people." This new facility has been fully equipped with the materials needed to realize these goals. We hope that all who enter here will enjoy seeing the facilities and make full use of them in the future.

Special Characteristics



The most unique feature of the Silk Hall is its "acoustic shelter" stage for classical music located beneath the regular stage. In the case of most all-purpose performance halls, a special classical music acoustic sound stage is constructed for classical music performances. In the case of the Silk Hall, however, an acoustic sound stage is not constructed but rather, the regular stage is raised up in one piece to the ceiling (out of view of the audience), exposing the classical music stage which is stored in tact beneath it. This new system is unique to the Silk Hall and is most unusual in the world of performing arts centers. Because of this unique capability the Silk Hall stage can be transformed into a classical music stage. When not in use, the stage is preserved beneath the all-purpose stage, thereby preventing damage to it.

The triangular objects suspended from the ceiling at the back of the hall help to reduce the amount of echo in the hall and are called "echo adjusters". Since reverberation is desirable in classical music performances, the "echo adjusters" can be retracted into their storage position in the hall ceiling.

In addition, the stage can be changed into various shapes to accommodate various uses. For example, the "thrust stage" is a runway which juts out from the center of the regular stage and is positioned between the front audience seats. This stage is particularly useful for fashion shows.

For operas and ballets an orchestra pit is available and when not in use a "front stage" can be added on to the regular stage if additional space is required.

Finally, the actual stage width/height can be adjusted thanks to the "moveable proscenium stage." The stage left and right walls can be adjusted from 14 m to 18 m and the ceiling can be raised/lowered from 10.5 m to 8 m.

The loud speakers employ a "delayed speaker" system in which the rear speakers are timed to coordinate with the front speakers in such a way that the sound from both speakers reach audience ears simultaneously. In this way a clear sound is presented to the audience regardless of where one sits.

The Silk Hall lighting has a computer memory capacity for 1,000 scenes. The Silk Hall has been constructed with state of the art technology, with a view towards its use in the 21st century. It is hoped that outstanding performers from around the world who perform here will enjoy its superior facilities.

Small Performance Hall



The Small Performance Hall is constructed in the form of a cocoon and has a total area of 427 sq. meters. The seating varies from 276 seats for the regular stage, 220 seats for the thrust stage and 310 seats for a center stage. The stage size and position can be modified in 4 different styles to accommodate a wide variety of uses.

The wood (Japanese cypress) used to construct the flooring was taken from Kiryu's "Sangyo Bunka Kaikan", formerly located on the site of the new Kiryu City Performing Arts Center. The stage flooring was resanded for use in the new hall, providing continuity from the old performing arts center to the new.

The walls surrounding the hall are also constructed of wood. Their three dimensional design is intended to represent the trees in the forests surrounding Kiryu. In addition, the fluted design helps to promote good acoustics in the hall. The lighting above the hall has been constructed so that it can revolve around the hall and assume any position to coordinate with the various stage positions. The lighting has a computer memory capable of 1000 scenes. The sound system has a 32 channel capacity, placing the Small Performance Hall in the vanguard of recital theaters.

Because of its limited seating (approx. 300) and progressive design, the hall is an excellent location to challenge as yet untried, non-traditional stage performances.

Stage Curtain



The Silk Hall stage curtain was woven and assembled in Kiryu as a result of the local citizens' express desire to create it in Kiryu, a city with a long and proud textile tradition. The curtain was designed by the internationally recognized fiber artist, Sheila Hicks, and was woven and assembled under the auspices of the Kiryu Textile Manufacturers Union and through the efforts of many of Kiryu's textile manufacturers.

The curtain has been designed to reflect Kiryu's textile tradition and its beautiful natural surroundings. Unique in the world, it has a multi-colored background upon which butterflies are seen to dance and fly. The design is an attempt to project an image of a flowering future for the people of Kiryu.

Title: "Flowering Future"

Size: 235.75 sq. meters (width: 20.5 m, height: 11.5 m)

Weight: 850 kg.



Sky Hall



The Sky Hall is the largest reception hall in Kiryu, useful for conventions, research/training seminars, lectures, parties and wedding receptions. The seating capacity at tables for parties or receptions is 460. The hall can be divided into two separate convention rooms (A and B) for simultaneous use.

In addition to the hall itself, the floor includes ample facilities for food service and preparation for parties. Various lighting fixtures, video projectors and other forms of high-tech equipment are available for lectures, etc. From the Sky Hall's elevation of 24.5 meters one can get a panoramic view of Mt. Akagi and the mountains surrounding Kiryu to the north.

Exhibition Room



The Exhibition Room is used by Kiryu citizens to display works of art, calligraphy, photography and a wide variety of other arts and crafts. The moveable walls in the Exhibition Room allow for flexibility in the arrangement of exhibits. The ample lighting, separate exhibitor's room, storeroom, freight entrance, exhibit cases and tables and other equipment useful for exhibitions make the room a most convenient exhibition area. Soft natural light floods over the Exhibition Room from the first floor windows, making a most pleasant area for exhibition viewers. Floor area: 500 m²
Longest exhibit wall: 150 m.

Works of Art



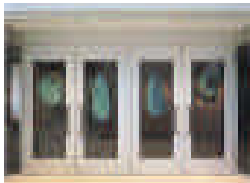
"Spinning the Wind" by Hiroyuki Kita
This metal mobile outside the main entrance of the Performing Arts Center symbolizes both the thread bobbins and machines which form an integral feature of Kiryu's textile history. The north wind blowing past the great cocoon (Performing Arts Center) blows the bobbin as the thread is wound onto it.



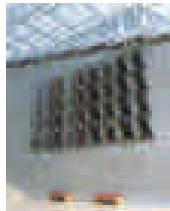
"Views of Scenery" by Keiji Ujiie
The white stone used for this sculpture originated in the former Yugoslavia and is white marble. The artist, Mr. Ujiie, was raised in Kiryu.



"Message from the Future"
by 16 women
Fiber artist, Junichi Arai, originated the stainless steel weave technique used in the construction of this sculpture. The stainless steel tapestry was designed by Eiko Takahashi with 15 other female fiber artists. It is the world's first completely metal textile tapestry.



"Mineral" by Junichi Arai
Pressed between the panes of glass in the entrance doors of the Small Performance Hall are Junichi Arai's textile creations. A completely new form of interior art, the fabrics resemble crystals or jewels. The material is polyester with aluminum coating and is dyed by a heat- pressed transfer process.



"Steelweave 1" by Peter Collingwood
width7.5mXheight5.0mXdepth0.6m
Mr. Collingwood, a British citizen, is one of the giants of the textile art world. His micro-gauze technique is unique in the textile world. This technique is combined here with Junichi Arai's stainless steel textile process.



"Spiral Cocoon" by Osamu Kido
width1.2mXheight2.15mXdepth0.9m
Using the motif of Mebius' ring and the threads of a cocoon, Mr. Kido has sculpted a monumental stainless steel work of art. This sculpture is located between the Performing Arts center and Kiryu City Hall.



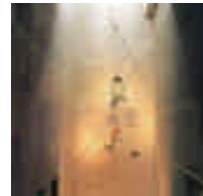
"Aplysia-Hikoboshi"
by Minori Yamazaki
width2.4mXheight2.4mXdepth0.4m
Mr. Yamazaki's works are representative of the Japanese Light Art Movement. His work here is an attempt to represent the mysterious aspects of the micro/macro loop between the universe and the existence of life.



"Drawing in the Air I & II"
by Hitoshi Morimura
width1.5mXheight1.5mXdepth0.5m (I)
width2.4mXheight3.0mXdepth0.5m (II)
Born in Kiryu, Mr. Morimura has created two stainless steel objet d'art. The stainless steel rods are coiled to form the sculptures which defy one's sense of weight and size.



"Windy" & "Nazo-Nazo"
by Tomoko Konoike Windy (left)
width3.0mXheight2.7mXdepth1.0m
Nazo-Nazo (right)
width1.9mXheight2.1mXdepth0.1m



"Neiro" Type D, Type S
by Hideo Osumi Type D (left)
width2.7mXheight5.5mXdepth2.0m
Type S (right)
width2.2mXheight2.0mXdepth2.0m





KIRYU MEIJIKAN

A classic example of western-style architecture, this elegant white building, "The Kiryu Meijikan," was constructed in 1878. More than 100 years have passed since its construction, yet the building maintains its original western ambiance. Strolling through the interior one can observe the various distinctive features of pseudo-western construction characteristic of earlier times. Visitors will encounter traces from the past as well as a fresh impression of modernity. (Watercolor illustration by Shozo Suzuki)

MEIJIKAN HIGHLIGHTS

Distinctive Characteristics of the Building

The building is one of the few examples of early western architecture in the Kanto area. Rooms in the interior are Japanese-style while the external ornamentation is western. In this sense, the building is exemplary of pseudo-western style construction. The splendid harmony of western architectural motifs and traditional Japanese engineering and molding is one of the building's unique aspects.



FIRST FLOOR EXHIBITION ROOM

Since its creation as a hygiene office and medical school (in Maebashi), the building has been employed over the years in various capacities. Signs, wallpaper fragments, and documents relating to the relocation and preservation of the building are exhibited in this room.



CONFERENCE ROOM

A piano, organ, rickshaw, bicycle and other various antiques are displayed in this room. In addition, black lacquer furniture of the same style used by the Imperial Household Agency or the Imperial Family during the Meiji Period is exhibited here.

COFFEE AND TEA ROOM

Please take time to enjoy cake and coffee while listening to nostalgic tunes played on the gramophone or antique music box.



SECOND FLOOR CENTRAL PARLOR

The room is furnished with elegant black lacquer tables and chairs, inlaid with gold leaf. The chair cushions are padded with horse hair. This room is often used by Kiryu citizens for taking commemorative pictures of family members.



SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE / EXHIBITION ROOMS

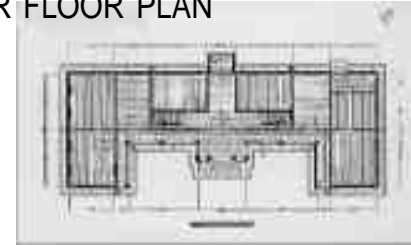
There is both a small and a large conference room. The Exhibition Room is used for regularly scheduled exhibits and can also be used by the public free of charge to exhibit private collections.



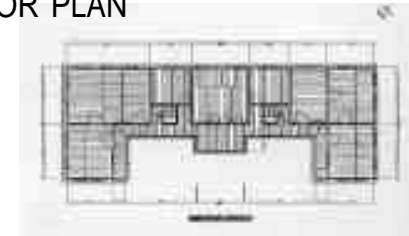
THE BUILDING AS A NARRATION OF FORMER TIMES

- The rooms are, for the most part, located symmetrically to the left and right of the entrance.
- The interior walls and ceilings are papered with white paper decorated with a gray mica motif. the original imported wallpaper can still be seen. Currently, some ceilings in the building are papered with indigo-dyed Kiryu washi.
- The pillar ornamentation varies from post to post.
- The doors to the various rooms are approximately 120 cm. wide. The doors of the main entrance and guest parlor are double, French-style doors. All of the windows in the building open vertically.
- Each room in the building is separate, and can, for the most part, be entered from the front porch or balcony.
- The roof is finished in stucco and tile with ornamental lightning rods and traditional Japanese "devil-tile" decorations which serve to ward off evil.
- The main gate, gateposts, gate doors, and bronze latticework on the second floor balcony were all restored to their original state based on photographs taken at the time of construction.
- Furnishings used when the buildings was first completed are unknown. Careful consideration has been given to the use of furnishings appropriate to the period. For example, the chandeliers, guest parlor and conference room furnishings are all typical Meiji style furnishings.
- Exterior walls are painted. The room baseboards were originally painted in a Bengal stripe motif. Colors have been matched to colors found on the building during restoration.

FIRST FLOOR FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR FLOOR PLAN



MEIJKAN CHRONOLOGY

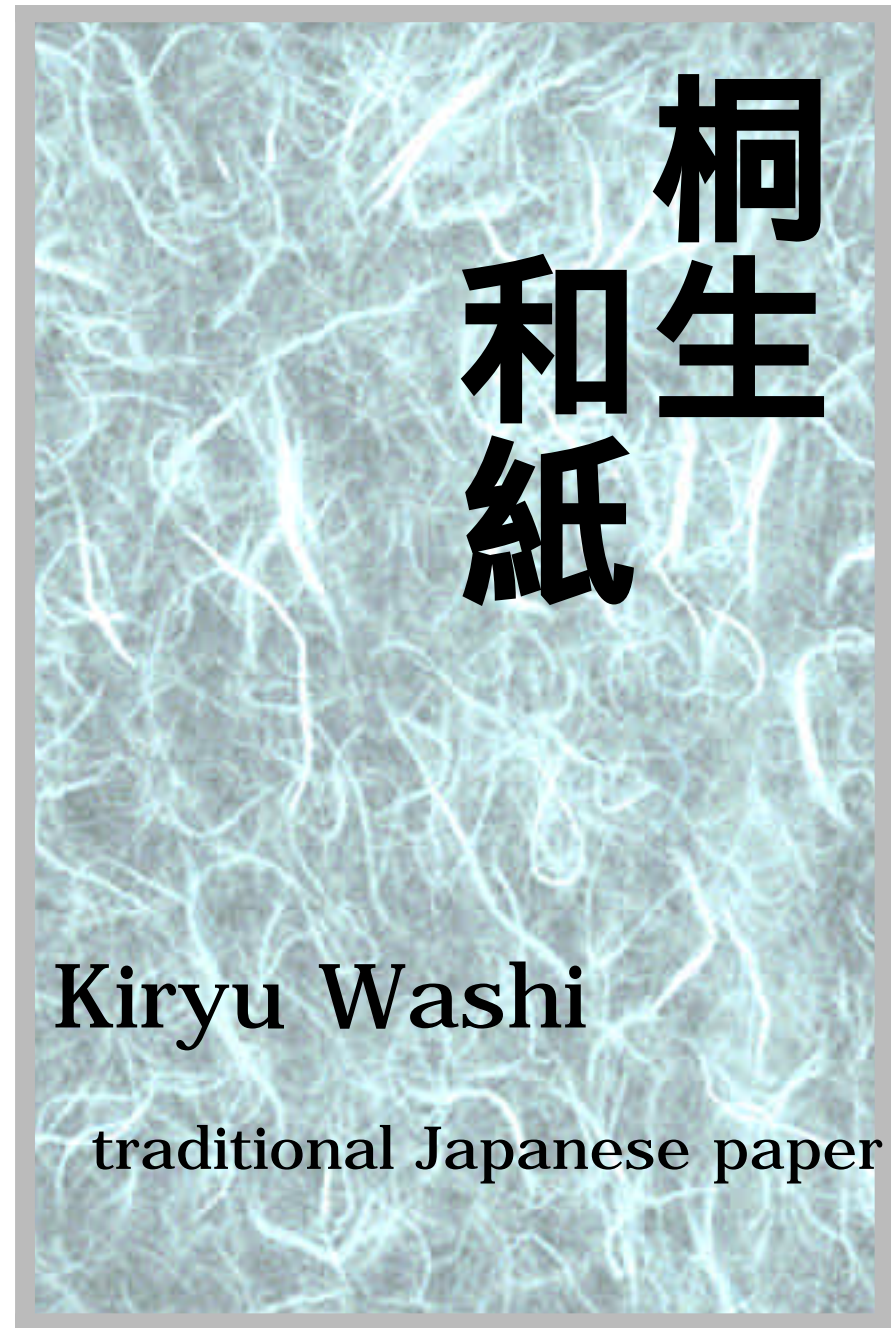
- | | |
|---------------|---|
| May 1, 1878 | Construction begins on the Health Office and Medical School |
| Aug. 30, 1878 | Construction in completed. |
| Septa 4, 1878 | The building is visited by the Emperor. |
| Jan, 1879 | The Health Office is closed. |
| June 1881 | The Gunma Prefectural Medical School is closed. |
| July, 1882 | The building is designated a Prefectural School for Girls. This school closed in 1886. Thereafter, it was designated a normal school with an attached elementary school. Later the building was used as the Gunma Prefectural Products Exhibition Hall. |
| June 5, 1928 | The building is petitioned for by Aioi Village. Permission granted. |
| Feb. 25, 1929 | The building is relocated in Aioi village. |
| Oct. 1, 1954 | Aioi village is incorporated in the city of Kiryu. The building become the Aioi Branch Office of Kiryu City Hall. |
| April 1, 1959 | The building is designated Aioi Kominkan (Community Center). In 1982 the Kominkan and Branch Office move to another building. |
| Feb. 3, 1976 | The building is designated a Cultural Treasure. |
| Jan 1, 1984 | Restoration work begins on half of the building. Work is completed on March 31, 1986. |
| May 1, 1986 | The building is named the "Kiryu Meijikan." |

Long ago, washi was used in many facets of daily life. Nowadays, washi is a more precious commodity, used mostly for artwork and valuable documents. Mr. Hoshino makes various sizes and colors of washi and continually experiments with new forms and uses. The washi itself has a life of its own and will outlive many generations to come.

Kiryu Washi Workshop
Masutaro Hoshino,

Proprietor

7348 Umedacho 5 chome
Kiryu, Gunma 376-0601
0277-32-0201





kozo - the inner bark of which is used to make washi



tororoaio - a unique formative agent ion making washi



preparing the bast fibers



forming sheets of washi

Making Kiryu Washi

At the far north end of Kiryu, where the mountains meet the gently flowing river, the water is ideal for making washi, Japanese handmade paper. I was born and raised in Umeda, and my ancestors, dating back to the Edo Period, made washi right here. Washi for notebooks, shoji doors, paper rope and lining for boxes was produced. Today, I'm the only remaining washi artisan in Gunma Prefecture.

How is washi different from western handmade paper? The latter, like most machine produced paper in use today, is made from pulp, the inner white wood of trees. Washi, however, is made from the inner white bark, using the long bast fibers.

Of the 3 types of trees used for washi, kozo (a variety of mulberry) is the most widely used. Its long fibers provide the desired texture for a strong, durable paper. The addition of an alkaline in the boiling process helps to break the bark down into fibers, and thus allows washi to maintain its unique strength and appearance for more than a thousand years.

Raw Materials Preparation

After one-year-old kozo is harvested, the branches are steamed and the softened bark is removed. The inner, ivory-colored bast is scraped clean of the hard, dark outer bark, forming the base for washi.

The bark is then boiled with sodium carbonate and dissolved into fibers. The fibers are washed in cold water and any remaining particles of exterior bark are removed by hand. The remaining ivory-colored fibers are ready for the last stage of raw material preparation, the beating process, which separates the bast into single fibers. Mixed in water, the fibers are poured into a basin used for making a sheet of paper from the liquid mixture. With the addition of a formative agent - a clear, syrupy mucilage extracted from the root of tororoaio (an annual herb) - the raw material is ready to be shaped into paper.

Transforming the Bark Fibers into Paper

Using a square or rectangular wood frame fitted with a bamboo screen, the liquid fibers are scooped up, sloshed around, splashed off, and scooped up again. The speed and amount of sloshing depend on the type of paper desired - less for a fine, light paper, more for a thicker, more durable paper. This technique of sloshing, "nagashizuki" ("nagasu" = to flow or slosh; "zuki" = to make) differs greatly from the western technique, "tamezuki" ("tameru" = to retain or hold) where pulp is scooped up once and shaken just enough to cover the screen. The screen is then removed from the frame and the sheets are carefully separated as they are laid atop one another on a flat surface. A piece of thread is placed between each sheet to allow separation of the sheets in the drying process.

Drying the Sheets

To remove excess water, the sheets are pressed to about 25% of their thickness. The sheets are then lifted one at a time and laid on a flat surface to dry. What we have now is no longer kozo bark or bast fibers, but paper, pure and true.



A GUIDE TO THE OKAWA MUSEUM OF ART

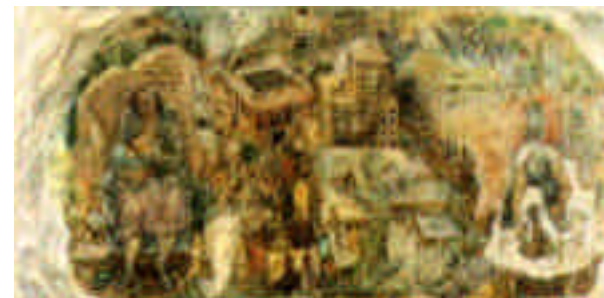
HIDEO NODA AND HIS WORKS

Hideo Noda, a second generation Japanese-American, was born in California in 1908. At the age of three he was taken to Kumamoto, his father's hometown. He returned to the United States after finishing high school and entered the California School of Fine Arts where he became acquainted with Yasuo Kuniyoshi and Toshi Shimizu.

Noda was awarded the Woodstock Art Prize and the Maria Stone Prize. He became the assistant of the well-known artist, Diego Rivera, and joined the Rockefeller Center mural painting project which attracted the attention of the American art world.

Noda returned to Japan in 1934 and exhibited "Way Home" (the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo) and "City" (Okawa Museum of Art), which had a rejuvenating influence on the Japanese art world.

Noda's influence on Matsumoto is also well known. Like Matsumoto, Noda didn't adhere to authority or strive after a false reputation. He was a humanistic painter who turned his eyes to the world of the mind and continued painting the working class, immigrants, circus performers, the unemployed and children from the bottom strata of society. In 1938 he was diagnosed with a brain tumor but continued to paint, holding his eyelids open with adhesive tape. Noda died prematurely at the age of 30.



The Okawa Museum of Art opened in April, 1989 overlooking the city of Kiryu, a textile center. About 1,600 works of art have been collected over a period of 40 years by the museum's founder, Eiji Okawa. The museum, deceptively small on first notice, is built in stages on the hillside and provides its visitors with an amazing number of rooms to peruse its incredibly rich collection.

The core of the collection is Japanese modern paintings, especially the works and materials of Shunsuke Matsumoto (1912-1948) and Hideo Noda (1908-1939). The museum's collection of these two artists is the best in Japan in both quantity and quality.

EXHIBITION ROOMS

In Room #1 one can survey an exhibit of Japanese art in the Western-style painted over the past 100 years. Next, in Room #2, the center of the museum, the works of Matsumoto, Noda and their contemporaries are exhibited, demonstrating various forms of human relationships. The museum takes the perspective that artworks are representative of the artists themselves, and so the works in the museum are collected and arranged thematically, according to their artistic stance.

Room #3 is arranged in the same fashion. There one can examine contemporary Japanese works of art. Room #4 is arranged in like manner, exhibiting the works of foreign artists such as Picasso and Ernst. The Special Exhibition Room on the bottom floor is reserved for temporary exhibitions which are held every two or three months.

The museum urges you to take advantage of the home-like atmosphere to enjoy the masterpieces displayed in the various rooms. When you finally arrive on the bottom floor, the Tea Room is a pleasant place to relax and enjoy a beautiful view of Kiryu.

SHUNSUKE MATSUMOTO AND HIS WORKS

Shunsuke Matsumoto was born in Tokyo in 1912 and spent his boyhood in Morioka, Iwate Prefecture. At the age of 17 he returned to Tokyo where he worked as an oil painter. He died in 1948 at the age of 36. Although during his lifetime Matsumoto was obscure, he gained prominence after his death as a humanistic wartime artist. His beautiful, severe, yet warm paintings will live on through the ages.

Matsumoto lost his hearing soon after entering high school. At that time he began painting with oil colors which his family had given him for consolation. After moving to Tokyo he studied at the Taiheiyo Gakai Institute where he made many good friends... Saburo Aso, Masao Tsuruoka, Tatsuoki Nanbata, A-Mitsu, and others. Matsumoto exhibited his humanistic pictures one after another.

During the war Matsumoto established the Shinjin Gakai group, and continued to paint genuine works of art which reveal both human sorrow and pleasure even during the dark war years.

Although it was assumed that Matsumoto would continue his career after the war, he met an early death in 1948, exhausted from his work during the war.

Matsumoto may be the only artist who could paint Tokyo so beautifully, creating the imagery of a cosmopolitan "hometown."



TENMANGU SHRINE

A Prefectural Cultural Treasure



Tenmangu is a classic example of Early Modern Period (mid 16th to 18th centuries) "gongen" construction designed for the enshrinement of a Shinto deity.

Gables over the Inner Sanctuary and Hall of Offerings are resplendently finished in elaborate detail.

The artwork in the original shrine was created by Ekihiro Kano and when completed appeared as in his graphic design, "The Hall of Offerings and the Oratory of Tenmangu" now exhibited in the Gunma Prefectural Museum.

The architectural plans for the shrine were first drawn up in 1771 and construction began in 1778. Work proceeded through 1792, requiring the removal of enshrined deities until September, 1799 when the structure was completed and rededicated.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF TENMANGU SHRINE

About 1800 years ago, during the reign of Emperor Keiko, Jomo no Kunizukuri dedicated a shrine to Tenpo Nichimeji, a descendent of Toshibe, on Isobe Hill. The establishment here of a shrine in honor of Isobe Myojin is the foundation of the present shrine.

Many centuries after that, from the year 1187, the Kiryu clan dynasty revered this god as their protector. Around the year 1350, the spirit of the god enshrined at Tenmangu Shrine in the Kitano area of Kyoto was apportioned and brought to Kiryu where the shrine was renamed Kiryu Tenmangu.

From that time this god came to be regarded as the tutelary god protecting the 54 villages in the Kiryu area. In 1581, Lord Ieyasu Tokugawa beseeched the gods for victory at Kiryu Tenmangu before going into battle. Thereafter, the shrine was designated a place of worship for successive generations of the Tokugawa clan. From the year 1591, the area came under the rule of Lord Tokugawa and the town was re-established in front of the shrine "torii" (gate) as Kiryu Shinmachi. At this time the area facing south of the torii was divided into districts based upon the Japanese system of "chowari," or town subdivisions, creating Kiryu's current downtown arrangement.

In the year 1600, silk banners woven in Kiryu to be carried into the great battle at Sekigahara were first offered to the gods at Kiryu Tenmangu where a ceremony beseeching the gods for victory was held. This was the decisive battle in which Lord Tokugawa emerged victorious and assumed for himself the shogunate. The soldiers' triumphant return from battle was considered an auspicious omen and the Kiryu silk market was established on the shrine premises. This market became the cornerstone of the flourishing silk trade in Kiryu.





THE GODS ENSHRINED AT TENMANGU

The shrine is dedicated to the worship of Sugawara no Michizane (845 CE - 903 CE) and his ancestor, Tenpo Nichimei. Michizane was born during the Heian Period into the Sugawara clan, whose members from generation to generation had been appointed as scholars to the Imperial Court.

From a very early age, Michizane demonstrated natural abilities as a scholar and when he was only 5 years old, was already composing Japanese poetry called "waka." By the age of 11, Michizane has mastered the skill of composing classical Chinese poetry, those around him were astonished by his intellectual prowess. From early childhood, Michizane had been encouraged to pursue his studies and when he reached 18 years of age, he became a writer. At the age of 33, Michizane was considered one of the foremost writers of his time.

Because of his academic excellence and his honest political views, he won the confidence of Emperor Uda and was promoted to the position of a high ranking government official. At the age of 55 Michizane was appointed Minister of the Right (udaijin). At that time he was the only high ranking official appointed from the ranks of the academics. However, as a result of a plot against him by the powerful Fujiwara clan, he was exiled to Dazaifu (present day Kyushu). Two years later, at the age of 57, Michizane died.

When after his death a number of misfortunes at Court were ascribed to his angry spirit, Michizane was posthumously pardoned and promoted to the highest of court ranks in order to placate his spirit. Shrines dedicated to him were established in Kitano (Kyoto) and Dazaifu. Deified as Tenman Tenjin, Michizane is venerated as the patron saint of scholarship. He is also regarded as an effective protector against evil and disasters.

Finally, since Michizane made the long journey from Kyoto to Dazaifu without encountering difficulties, he has also come to be revered as a protecting god of travel and traffic safety.

UNVEILING THE SHRINE DEITIES

- Extraordinary Shrine Observances -

Ceremonies for unveiling the shrine deities are considered extraordinary observances at the shrine, and according to the historical record, have occurred only 13 times over the past 200 years (between 1762 and 1961, the last occurrence).

Among these observances is a kind of performance-display called "iki-ningyo" or "living figure." Unique to textile towns, a "zasoya" was used to control the movements of interworking looms and other weaving machines. The "zakuri" was a machine used in the preparation of thread prior to weaving. A wooden cogwheel was attached to the machine which when connected to the figures, could control their movements. In early days, this machine was operated with power generated by water wheels constructed in the small canals running throughout the city. Later, the cogwheel was driven by electricity.

As for the actual performances, various associations and districts in the city competed with each other to produce famous kabuki or other traditional dramas. On some occasions, plans for as many as 16 different shows were contrived and executed throughout the city, requiring the composition of a "show guidebook" for visitors. The shows were moved around the city and performances were held over long periods. These events constituted major festivals in honor of the gods and were greeted by bustling throngs of on-lookers, lending an excited atmosphere to the city.

Recently, some of these "living figures," also known as "karakuri ningyo" have been brought out of storage and are now used in performances at the shrine during festivals and on special occasions.

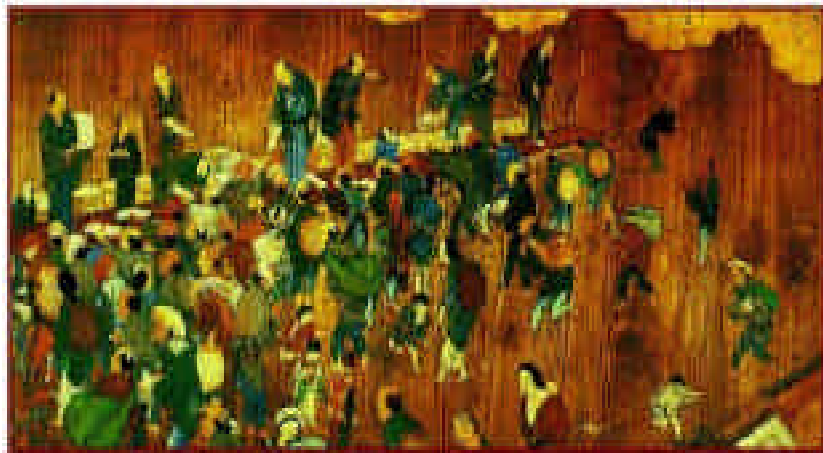
THE SILK MARKET PAINTING

From the early days of the Edo Period (1600-1868), silk trading was conducted on the grounds of Tenmangu Shrine. Products from neighboring locales were gathered and distributed there making the shrine a center for communication as well.

During the middle of the Edo Period, techniques from Kyoto for weaving high quality silk such as saya (gauze twill) and mon'ori (brocade) were introduced in Kiryu. A silk market for distributing these materials was soon established.

The painting of the silk market which can be found in the Oratory of Tenmangu Shrine depicts a market where the goods are being actively bought and sold. It was painted on a large "ema" (a wooden votive painting) in 1894, on the occasion of the Tenmangu Extraordinary Festival Observance (Meiji 27).

This design is truly representative of commerce and industry during Japan's early modern period and details many interesting aspects of distribution economics characteristic of that time.



KASUGA SUBORDINATE SHRINE (A City Cultural Treasure)

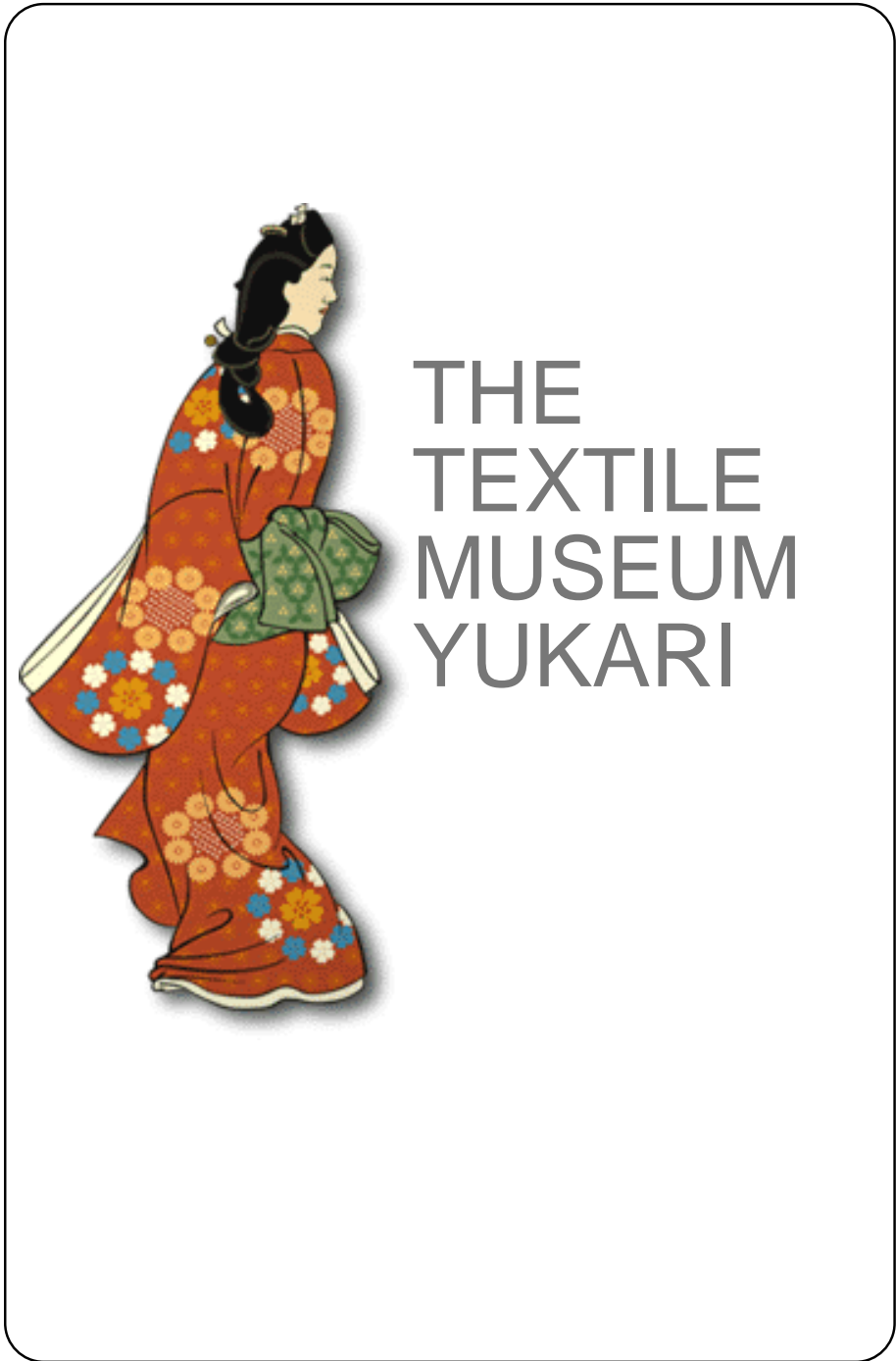
Kasuga Shrine is a subordinate shrine located behind Tenmangu Shrine. Kasuga is a small shrine constructed in the Shinto "nagare" style. While the structure is small, recent research conducted by the government's Department of Building Investigations has confirmed that the shrine was constructed sometime before 1600, probably during or prior to the Momoyama Period. This being the case, the Kasuga Shrine may well be the oldest existing structure in the Kiryu area.

Such examples of building style during the Period of Warring States (1467-1568) / Momoyama Era are extremely rare. For this reason, the uniqueness of the Medieval Kasuga Subordinate Shrine greatly enriches Kiryu's cultural heritage. As a representative of this rich heritage, Kasuga Shrine has been designated a City Cultural Treasure.





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Kiryu, Gunma
0277-45-3111





THE TEXTILE MUSEUM "YUKARI"

The Textile Museum "Yukari" strives to bring the history of weaving in Kiryu closer to everyone by providing weaving looms which can actually be operated by the observer. Viewing the materials exhibited in the cases and operating the machines themselves gives one the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Kiryu's textile history.

The museum's ideal is to preserve, maintain, and display ancient to modern weaving implements; to demonstrate the cultivation of silkworms and the production of silk thread; and, to bring about a more thorough understanding of the process of dyeing.

The museum also operates a school for dyeing and hand weaving. The highly experienced staff teach classes from the introductory level to the more advanced.

The museum shop sells items of clothing, traditional craft items, weaving supplies, as well as other weaving-related souvenirs.

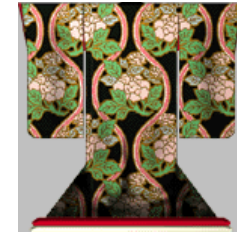
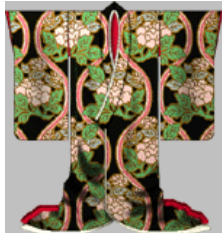


THE TEXTILE MUSEUM YUKARI



"NOKOGIRI" OR SAWTOOTHED ROOF

The roof of a typical weaving factory in Kiryu is saw-toothed in shape. The reason for this is twofold. First, the irregular shape helps to diffuse the loud noise of the weaving machines. Second, windows were placed in the roof facing north. In this way, the factory receives the full benefit of natural sunlight all day long as the sun travels from east to west in the sky.



HISTORY OF WEAVING

The oldest known fabric is from Egypt, dating back to around 5000 BC. Weaving in Kiryu dates back to around the year 1000 AD. In the Shosoin Catalog, there is a record of a contribution of "ashiginu" (a kind of silk) from Kiryu. It is the oldest existing record of Kiryu silk.

NITTAYAMA TSUMUGI ORDERFORM

An early record of an order form, dating back to around 1500 AD for Kiryu silk called "tsumugi" was found at the Hikobe Manor in the Hirosawa District of Kiryu. The order is from a maidservant of the Shogun Yoshiteru Ashikaga.





THE WEIGHTED LOOM

The stone-weighted loom from Greece dates back to around the year 5000 BC. It is believed to be the most primitive weaving loom in the world. Stones are attached to the end of the warp threads as weights to provide tension for weaving. The wool threads are woven by hand between the warp threads. A similar loom has been found among some American Indians.

THE HIZARIBATA LOOM

The "hizaribata" or sitting loom is the oldest style weaving loom found in Japan. In the 3rd century AD, a Chinese technique of weaving was introduced in Japan, which gradually replaced the more primitive "hizaribata" of the Yayoi Period (300 BC).

TYPES OF SILKWORMS



No one knows for certain when silkworms were first used to produce thread. Archeological excavations in China have revealed the use of silkworms more than 5000 years ago. Silkworms commonly used today are cultivated on farms and spin white cocoons. One cocoon can produce as much as 1 m. of thread. About 1000 cocoons are required to weave enough fabric for one article of clothing.

Mountain silkworms, which live in the wild, are pale green in color and in former times their cocoons were used exclusively for producing silk thread. These worms feed on the leaves of a variety of oak tree, whereas cultivated silkworms eat mulberry leaves. This in part accounts for the difference in color of the respective cocoons. After having been bred in captivity for generations, the mountain silkworms developed into the commonly bred, white cocoon silkworms we find today.



HACHO NENSHIKI TOOL

The "Hacho Nenshiki" is used to twist together fine silk fibers pulled from cocoons onto a spindle to increase their strength and produce thread strong enough for weaving. In a native of Kiryu, Kichimon Iwase invented a machine to mass produce silk thread and employed hydraulic power to control this process. As a result, Kiryu was able to produce a large quantity of silk thread and the weaving industry in Kiryu grew and prospered.



THE
KIRYU
TAKAHATA

It takes to warp threads to make material of sufficient width suitable for use for clothing. Fabric of this width is very difficult to weave. The Takahata loom, however, by its special design, employs the tension of elongated warp threads to produce very wide and long fabrics.

Around Kiryu began to export "habutai" (a fine light silk) to the United States. This fabric was woven on the Takahata, especially for export.

THE JACQUARD WEAVING LOOM



In a Frenchman, Joseph Marie Jacquard, invented a machine for weaving figured textiles (e.g. brocade, etc.). Once the design of a fabric has been created, holes are punched in specially linked cards representing the pattern. The holes in the cards control which needles can pass through on any one revolution to lift the appropriate warp threads as the variously colored wool threads are interwoven. The loom operator, sitting in front, observes the pattern in a mirror as she/he works the loom.

THE FLYING SHUTTLE

In an Englishman, John Kay, invented the "flying shuttle." When the operator pulls a rope, the shuttle carrying the wool thread flies between the warp threads. This invention made it possible to produce large quantities of fabric in a short time. The flying shuttle is still commonly in use today.



AIZOME OR INDIGO DYEING

Aizome or indigo dyeing has been in use in Japan for centuries. This dark blue-colored dye comes from the indigo plant. The plant is harvested and its leaves and stems are allowed to ferment. The dye is stored in large vats in the ground, but since it tends to weaken overtime, it must be periodically replaced with new dye.

After the item to be dyed has been dipped in the dye, exposure to air gradually brings out the vivid blue coloring. The dye itself has a strong smell and is said to be a good insect repellent.

Aizome articles are popular craft items in Japan. Such products as "noren" (Japanese style curtains), aprons, and other articles of clothing are commonly produced.

Aizome dyed fabrics are usually made of cotton. Tie-dyeing techniques are often used to produce interesting, beautiful patterns on the cloth.



Textile Museum of Yukari
4-2-24 Higashi
Kiryu, Gunma
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YURINKAN



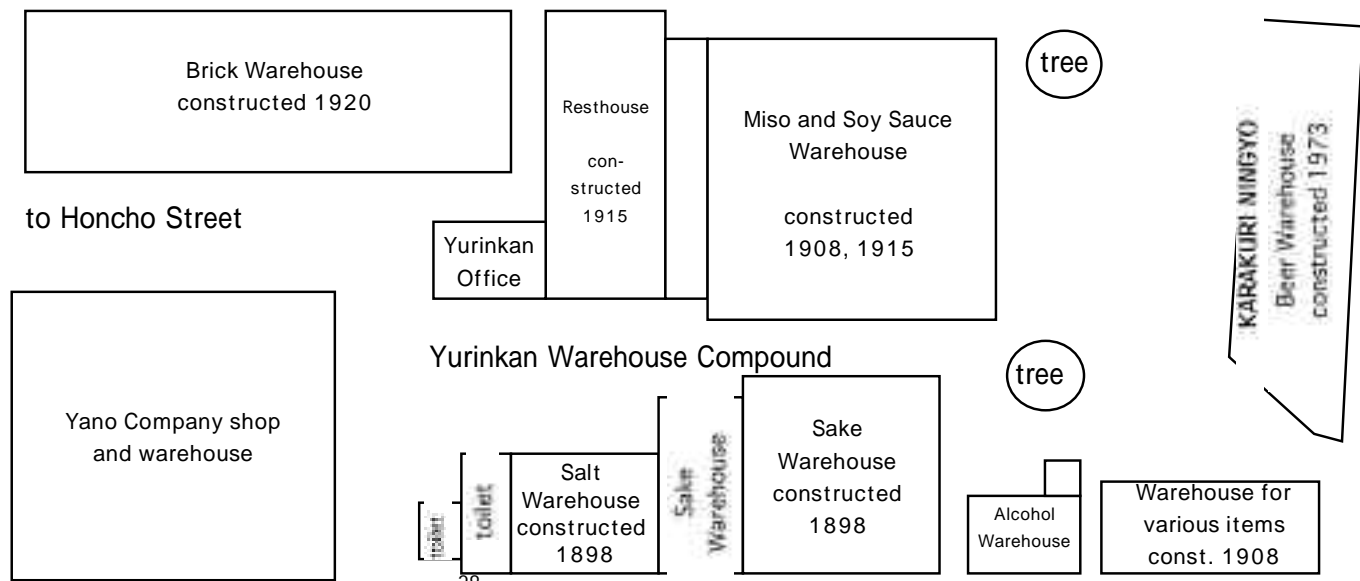
You will always have friends.” (The kanji characters for “yu” and “rin” are a reference to having friends.) From the time the company was established as a soy sauce and sake business, this saying has been the company motto.

The earthen and brick warehouses on the compound were constructed during the Meiji and Taisho Eras to store sake, miso, soy sauce, etc. The buildings are reminiscent of the days of Kiryu Shinmachi and among the various brick structures to be found in Kiryu, they are the largest and most representative of the early Modern Era.

In February, 1990, the Yurinkan Management Association was formed in order to preserve the charm of the closely constructed warehouses while at the same time make fitting use of them. In addition, the group is working to make the compound a highlight of

The Yurinkan (Yano Warehouses) date back to 1717 when Yano Hisaemon came to Kiryu from Omi and established a business here. His son, continuing the tradition, opened a store at the present location in 1749 and the business has been operating from this site ever since as an important part of the Kiryu business community.

The name, “Yurin” comes from the Analects of Confucius, chapter 4, verse 25: “If you are virtuous, you will not be lonely.



the Kiryu Shinmachi Period by promoting local Kiryu cultural heritage.

The Yurinkan Management Association has assumed the responsibility for managing the buildings, excluding the currently operated Yano Store and warehouse. The Yano Corporation has since donated the buildings (excluding the shop and its warehouse) to the city of Kiryu. On October 14, 1992, the Yurinkan Warehouse Compound was declared a City Important Cultural Asset.

Beginning in 1993 and over a four year period, the National Land Agency began restoration of the buildings as part of its "Local Color Formation Program." The purpose of the restoration was to make the buildings suitable for various cultural uses. The Yurinkan was then reopened for use in April, 1999 as one of the city's new cultural highlights.



KARAKURI NINGYO (MECHANICAL DOLLS) EXHIBITION

Mechanical doll performances date back to the early part of the Edo Era, in the year 1662, when shows were held by Takeda Izumo (d 1747). Takeda Izumo is a well-known mechanical doll master and associate of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), a renowned Bunraku and

Kabuki master and one of the outstanding authors of the brilliant late 17th century period.

Karakuri ningyo (mechanical dolls) are truly representative of Edo Era technology and the dramas enacted by these dolls were extremely popular among the common folk of the Edo and Meiji Eras.

According to Tenmangu Shrine archival records, the first known mechanical doll performance at the shrine took place in 1894 on the occasion of the Unveiling of the Deities Celebration. The performance was by a later Takeda, who was a mechanical doll craftsman from Edo's Okuyama District of Asakusa and a descendant of Izumo. In Tokyo of the Meiji Era, the old ambiance of Edo was rapidly disappearing, however, one of the last traditional mechanical doll performances was given in Kiryu. As of 1961, records indicate that six special performances had been held at Tenmangu Shrine.

Karakuri ningyo are an extremely valuable part of Japanese performing arts and a cultural heritage. The dolls are truly representative of the technical and artistic skills of days gone by.



Karakuri Ningyo Performances in Kiryu

At present Kiryu is the only city in the whole country which has revived this great tradition, making mechanical doll performances a valuable contribution to cultural preservation. During the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, wealthy textile manufacturers commissioned the creation of various mechanical dolls and the stages needed for their performances which were part of the lively entertainment provided during festivals and shrine events.

Karakuri Dolls were some of the most sophisticated technological inventions of the Edo Period. Not only did the hands, feet and heads of the dolls move, but elaborate gears and pulleys were engineered to actually guide the dolls on and off the stages as a tale was told in the background.

Different textile companies competed with each other for elaborate performances and gorgeous displays. This was during the heyday of silk production in Kiryu. This tradition was carried on without interruption in Kiryu until 1961, which sadly was the last performance. Thereafter, these mechanical dolls were stored away with their stages and equipment to become a part of the forgotten past in Kiryu.

In the spring of the year 2000, however, the Kiryu Karakuri Ningyo Preservation Society took up the challenge, and, after a 41-year hiatus, gave a Karakuri Doll Performance at the "Art Hall Hoko-Za" on Honcho Street in Kiryu.

The Kiryu Karakuri Ningyo Preservation Society is now working hard to have these remarkable dolls recorded by the National Culture Agency as important cultural assets.

Karakuri dolls can now be seen again during the Kiryu Yagibushi Festival in August and during other city events and on display in their permanent home on the compound of the Yurinkan.

For information, contact the Yurinkan Office at 0277-46-4144.



アートホール鉾座：祇園屋台

明治2年(1869年)に完成したものである。鉾と同じく、本町四丁目で買継商を営んでいた磯部庄七(いそべ しょうち) (1824~1896)がスポンサーとなり、自らの趣向と設計によって制作された。襖絵12枚を組み、両袖を広げると7.5m、高さ7m、奥行6.5mは、まさに巨大屋台とも言え、鳥が羽根を広げたように美しい。(同規模の屋台が、本町各町に6台現存する。) 舞台中央に 回り舞台を有し、下座は2階建てとし、囃子座(はやしざ)となっている。歌舞音曲の 舞台として、大変珍しい構造であり、花道も付く。床下の車輪近くには20cm角のカシ材の心棒があり、かつて屋台を曳き廻した際、180度回転させる為、一本で全重量を支えた。唐破風(からはふう)様式で四方全面に素木(白木)の装飾彫刻を据えている。藪塚の名工岸亦八(きしまたはち) (1791~1877)の手によるもので、龍、獅子、犬、牡丹、飛龍など大小60の彫刻で組み上げられた芸術品といえる。大工は町内お抱え大工の鈴木嘉七である。襖絵は、二種類所蔵している。画家は清水東谷(しみずとうこく) (1841~1907)である。江戸に生まれ13才で狩野派に入門し玉龍と号した。一組の絵は「鶴と秋草の図」で狩野派らしく華やかで繊細である。もう一組の「芭蕉之図」は当時としては大変珍しい南方のパナナをモチーフにしている。2度目の来日を果たしたシーボルトに雇われ、植物の写生に従事した。長崎で油絵と写真を学び、その影響もあって洋画風の大膽な構図となったものである。のちに横浜で写真館を開き、東京に上京する。大変貴重な美術品である。扁額は表裏 二種類所蔵している。正面破風下の「楽郷華観(らっきょうかかん)」は江戸にいた館林藩の書家田口江郎の筆によるものである。先代屋台の嘉永7年のもので、桐生の図案家石田九野(いしだきゅうや)と親交があり、依頼されたものである。寄進者は四丁目の金子吉右衛門である。裏の扁額の「四街目」は屋台完成を記念して磯部庄七が寄進した。なお、一部の彫刻と構造物が嘉永7年(1854年)製のものを再利用している。桐生の屋台では、一部とは云え最古のものである。

鉾

明治8年(1875年)に完成したもので、屋台と同じく磯部庄七が51才の時スポンサーとなり、趣向を凝らした豪華な鉾となった。関東地方での多くは山車(だし)と呼ばれているが、京文化の影響が強い桐生らしく鉾と明記されている。江戸の天下 祭りでは二社の 山車群が江戸城に入ることが許されたことから、二層式で高さ7.5m位までであった。関東に残る山車は、江戸から流出したり、モデルとした為、大方この規模なのである。桐生の鉾に三丁目の「翁鉾」(おきなほこ)もある。これは江戸型山車の原型で最もシンプルなもの、しかも三味線胴の彫物は桐生に珍しく金塗りである。「四丁目鉾」は関東地方では無類の大きささとオリジナル性に富んだ重層式桐生型と云える鉾である。四方幕(水引き)を整え、三味線胴と人形が迫り上がると全高9.2mまでになる。四方全面の素木の装飾彫刻は岸亦八79才の時の作品で、正面2本の龍柱は昇龍と 降龍を立てている。龍の他、下座には獅子、牡丹、りすとブドウ、鶴など繊細な彫刻は大小100の部材で組み上げられている。床下には10cm角のカシ材の心棒が下り、この一本で全重量を支え180度回転させ、曳き廻す手法である。近年では、人力のみでこの様な作業をする鉾や屋台が少なくなったが、むしろ美しい姿なのである。最上部の人形、素戔嗚命

(すさのおのみこと)は浅草の生人形師松本喜三郎(まつもとときさぶろう) (1825~1891)の作品で50才の時のものである。熊本で生まれ、大阪から江戸に出て新門辰五郎のもとで評判をとった。東校(今の東大医学部)の依頼で人体模型を制作するほどで、解剖学的正確さとリアルで人間味を加味させ、命を与えた人形師だったといえる。眼光鋭く、歌舞伎の大見栄の様にも見える。人形、彫刻、構造が見事にバランスをとり、素木(白木)の美しさと豪華さが、これほど調和のとれた動く建築芸術は珍しい。

祇園祭

まつりは人々を熱狂させ、興奮の渦に巻き込む不思議な魅力がある。人が集まり街や村が形成される過程では必要不可欠な要素なのである。祇園祭は元来、祇園会とか天王祭礼と云い、牛頭天王を祀った。貞観18年(876)に京都を起源とした神仏習合の信仰であった。祇園精舎の守護神で、疫除として祇園社に祀ったことから、全国津々浦々に広まったのである。

桐生の場合、天正19年(1591)から街並みを整い始めたが、明暦2年(1656)の祭礼記録が最も古く、これを桐生祇園の起源とする。当初は子供の手踊りが中心で、素朴なものであった。

現在の本町三丁目市営アパートの地に衆生院という寺があった。この地に牛頭天王社を祀ったのである。

商業都市として活気を持ち、市がたち市神を建てた。この市神と天王社と一緒に祭りをするようになってから一層華やかになり、賑わうようになった。江戸末期には、屋台の曳き違いなどが行われ、四、五台出ることも珍しくなかった。江戸芝居など各町が競い、見物人も夜通し徹夜で楽しんだという。関東の三大夜祭りと言われた所以である。

華美な祭りは時には禁止されもしたが、安政の頃より総六町の屋台が本格的に建造され始めたのである。

明治維新が実現し、神仏分離の布告が出されると、牛頭天王の神号は廃止され、祭神は素戔嗚命とした。

京都の感神院祇園社が八坂神社と改めたのを機に全国へ広がり、桐生でも明治3年に衆生院が廃寺となり、八坂神社と改名し今日に至っている。明治41年末社と共に美和神社へ合祀され、神輿蔵を建造したのである。

織物業を中心として栄えた自由都市桐生は、京文化と江戸文化を貧欲に採り入れ、独特の町人文化を形成した。

経済力と文化的資質が、多くの文人達を呼び寄せ、そして輩出してきた。そのような土壌や気風が、祇園祭の鉾や屋台、祇園囃子や神輿、大幟にみられるように彫刻、絵画、書など、素晴らしい祭礼芸術を創造することになった。先人達の残したこれらの文化遺産は、町衆の心意気と街への愛着が生み出したものであり、決して忘れてはならないものなのである。

(解説：奈良 彰一)
(鉾座資料より抜粋)

彦部家の歴史

彦部家は、家蔵の由緒書や系図によると、7世紀後半天武天皇の皇子高市親王を祖とする旧家で、桐生へ定住してから十六代を数えます。

鎌倉時代には、陸奥国菊田郡彦部郷（現岩手県紫波町）の領主を勤め、その土地の名である「彦部姓」を名乗るようになりました。室町時代には足利將軍の直参として仕え、京都で活躍しています。その後、関東の動静を幕府へ注進するため広沢郷へ留まり永禄四年（1561）に太田金山城主由良成繁から千匹の地を賜り、現在地に屋敷を構えた者です。

江戸時代になると帰農しますが、古くから染織を営んでいました。特に文化・文政期（19世紀後半）には黒染技法を習得して黒縹子を織りだすようになり、桐生でも有数の織物の経営者になりました。

明治時代後半からは本格的に織物業を営み、桐生織物同業組合の組合長になった彦部駒雄を輩出するなど、桐生織物の発展に寄与しています。

保存修理工事

彦部家住宅は主屋のほか冬住み、長屋門、文庫倉、穀倉が重要文化財に指定されています。これらの建物はすべて江戸時代に建築されたものです。

主屋は、平成7年10月から全面的な解体による保存修理工事が行われ、平成10年6月に竣工しました。生活様式の変化に応じて、さまざまに改造されていましたが、復元工事に先立つ綿密な調査や、さらに民家では珍しい発掘調査によって、創建当初に近い形に復元することができました。

修理後もここに住みながら保存してゆくために、土間から見えない二室は修理前と同じ状態に整備してあります。

北面の突出した部分は、明治時代に建てられたもので、主屋とは建築年代が異なりますが、地下から彦部家が江戸時代から染織を行っていたあかしが発見されたために、保存することにしました。

主屋に引き続いて、他の建物についても修理が行われ、平成12年12月完成しました。

主屋の特徴

解体調査によって、柱や梁などの材料の使い方や技法・工法などに、近世初期の古民家に見られる要素がすべて含まれていることが分かり、建築年代は17世紀前期と推定され、すでに380年以上もの歴史があることが明らかとなりました。

その時代性を示す主な特徴は次のとおりです。

座敷の柱が一間毎に建ち、柱間が二間半の二つ割で、内法が低い。
柱材はケヤキ、クリ、クルミなどの雑木を使用し、柱の径が不揃いである。
床の間は框を高くして、蹴込板とする奥行き浅い押板形式となっている。

小屋組の梁は細く、うりむき幅も狭いこと。などをあげることができます。居室部は土間に接して二室、奥に三室の五間取りで、広間がタケスノコ床となっていることもこの近辺では数少ない特徴となっています。

長屋門

中央に、間口1間半の扉口に潜門を備えた門構えをもち、両脇を大壁造りの物置としています。寄棟造りの茅葺き屋根で、昭和50年の群馬県指定史跡として保存修理が行われています。今回も再度、半解体修理が行われました。

冬住み

二間取りの隠居室で、東側の下屋に土間と台所が設けられています。この建物に良く似た「延年堂主人冬住之図」という古文書の断片が残されています。今回、半解体修理が行われました。

文庫倉・穀倉

文庫倉は平入二階建てで、中央が仕切られ二室となっています。中世から近世にかけての古文書が多数保存されています。
穀倉は妻入平屋建てとなっています。
いずれも構造がしっかりしているので、部分修理が行われました。

（彦部屋敷発行パンフレットより抜粋）

桐生市市民文化会館

桐生市市民文化会館は、車550台の駐車スペースを持つ28,000㎡の敷地に、地上4階(高さ30.62m)、地下1階からなる建物が18,000㎡のエリアに建てられています。地下部分は強化コンクリート、その他の部分をスチールフレームを用いています。屋根の部分は桐生の長年にわたる絹織物産業を想起させる繭をイメージしています。

建設に当たり、公演芸術鑑賞のための最高の施設、人々の創造性を広げる中心的施設、生涯学習の場、様々な人々の交流の場という目的を掲げ、こうした目的を全てかなえてくれる施設となっています。ぜひたくさんの皆さまにご覧いただき、存分に活用していただければと存じます。

シルクホール

シルクホールの最大の特徴は通常のステージ下に格納された音響シェルターステージです。一般的な多目的ホールの場合はクラシック音楽用のステージとなっていますが、このシルクホールの場合は、通常のステージの下に格納された音楽コンサート用ステージが上昇し、通常ステージは天井裏に格納されるというもので、世界でも大変珍しいホールとなっています。このシステムにより、クラシック音楽専用ステージに変えることができ、普段は通常ステージの下にあることから損傷などを避けることもできるのです。

また、残響を調整するため、客席後部天井に多角柱状の柱が設けられています。残響を必要とするクラシックコンサートの際には、可変装置によって調整することができます。

更に、このホールは多彩なステージ様式に対応することができます。ステージの一部を客席に突き出す形の「スラストステージ」はファッションショーなどで使用され、オペラやバレエなどの公演でのオーケストラピットを設けることのできる「フロントステージ」、そして多岐の用途に使用できる「プロセニアムステージ」です。ステージ間口は14m～18m、高さ8m～10.5mの間で可変することが可能です。

音響では、ディレッドスピーカーシステムを採用し、前後のスピーカのタイミングを調整することで、全ての観客の耳に同時に音が伝わるようにしていることから、どこに座っても綺麗な音を聞くことができます。

コンピューター制御の照明は約1000シーンを記憶しておくことができるなど、シルクホールには最先端技術が用いられています。世界中の芸術家がこの施設を使って素晴らしい公演をしていただくことを願っています。

小ホール

繭を連想させる小ホールは、427㎡の広さを持ち、276席の通常ステージ、220席のスラストステージ、310席のセンターステージなど全4種類の配置が可能です。

す。

床材にはかつてこの地に建っていた産業文化会館の舞台に使用されていた松材を再利用しています。

周りを取り巻く壁も木材を用いて3D構造とし、緑に囲まれた桐生を連想することができます。また内部壁面を折状にすることで、理想的な音響を確保しています。多様なステージ形式に対応でき、1,000シーンを記憶できる照明設備や32チャンネルの音響システムなど、先進設備を採用しています。

座席数最大約300席そしてその斬新なデザインは、様々な演出や新たな発表スタイルへの挑戦が可能です。

緞帳

シルクホールの緞帳は、桐生市が培ってきた伝統と技を結集して、このまちで作ろうという発想のもと、世界的に活躍している芸術家シーラ・ヒックスさんがデザインし、桐生織物協同組合が制作を請け負い、織物関連業者をはじめとする多くの市民の創意・工夫により完成しました。

世界に2つとないこの緞帳は、歴史ある桐生の街のたたすまいと美しい自然とを帯状の布を連ねることによって表現し、その上に「ちょうちょ」のように舞い飛ぶ装飾を散りばめて、未来へ飛躍する市民の姿をイメージしています。

タイトル 「FLOWERING FUTURE(花咲く未来)」

大きさ 235.75㎡(間口20.5m、高さ11.5m)

重量 約850kg

スカイホール

スカイホールは、研修会や講演会、パーティー、結婚披露宴などに使用される市内最大規模のレセプションホールです。最大460人を収容でき、規模に応じて2つに仕切ることができます。

またパーティー等で使用できる配膳室や多彩な照明設備、ビデオプロジェクター等最新設備を備えています。

地上24.5mのスカイホールは、赤城山や桐生の山並みを展望することができます。

展示室

絵画・書道・写真・工芸なぞ、市民の幅広い自主活動の展示発表の場です。可動展示壁によって多様なレイアウトが可能であり、十分な照明と専用の主催者控え室、倉庫、搬入口を持ち、展示ケースや展示テーブルなどの備品も備えています。

1階のカーテンウォールから自然光が吹き抜け部分に柔らかく注ぎ、市民が気軽に立ち寄れる、シンプルで開放感のある展示空間を演出しています。

面積：500m²
最大展示壁長：150m

アートワーク

北 裕行 = 「風をつむぐ」
会館の正面玄関前。桐生の織物産業の特徴である糸車や機をイメージした作品。北風にのり巨大繭玉から紡ぎ出される生糸を繰る糸車のようでもある。

氏家慶二 = 「風景の眼」
旧ユーゴスラビア産シベックという白大理石を使用。

16名の女性たち = 「未来からの要請」
テキスタイル界における世界的プランナー、新井淳一氏監修によるステンレススティールファイバータペストリー。高橋英子氏以下16名の新井淳一門下ファイバアーティストの共同作業で織り上げた、文字通り世界で初めての全金属繊維タペストリー。

新井淳一 = 「ミネラル」
小ホール入口ドアガラス中に挟み込んだ全く新しいインテリアアート。ポリエステル繊維にアルミニウムの真空蒸着と転写捺染を施した作品。

ピーター・コリンウッド = 「STEELWEAVE 1」
W7.5m × H5m × D0.6m
イギリスを代表するテキスタイルアートの世界的巨匠の作品。独創的な技法マクロゴウゼと新井淳一氏のステンレス繊維が合体融合されている。

木戸 修 = 「繭のらせん」
W1.2m × H2.15m × d0.9m
メビウスの輪と繭の絹糸をモチーフとし、複雑な三次局面を持つモニュメンタルなステンレス彫刻。アトリウム出入口正面。

ヤマザキミノリ = 「Aplysia-HIKOBOSHI」
W2.4m × H2.4m × D0.4m
日本におけるライトアート作家の代表の一人。宇宙と生命存在の神秘や関係性を「ミクロ・マクロループの不思議」という切り口でとらえている。

森村 均 = 「Drawing in the Air I & II」
(I) W1.5m × H1.5m × D0.5m
(II) W2.4m × H3.0m × D0.5m
2つともステンレスオブジェ。コイル状に曲げられたステンレスロッドが不思議な質量感を醸し出している。

鴻池朋子 = 「WINDY & "NAZO-NAZO"」
WINDY(左) W3.0m × H2.7m × D1.0m
NAZO-NAZO(右) W1.9m × H2.1m × D0.1m

大隅秀雄 = 「NEIRO Type D, Type S」
Type D(左) W2.7m × H5.5m × D2.0m
Type S(右) W2.2m × H2.0m × D2.0m

(市民文化会館資料より抜粋)

桐生明治館

「白い洋館」の桐生明治館は、明治11年に建てられた擬洋風の建物です。百十数年経った今もなお、異国情緒を伝える重要文化財としてご覧いただいています。館内では、今日に至るまでの明治館のあゆみをはじめ、初期洋風建築に見られる様々な特徴を知ること、古き貴台の面影と共に新鮮な感動に巡り会うことができます。

みどころ（建物の特徴）

関東では数少ない初期洋風建築で、小屋組が和風、外観の装飾が洋風の典型的な「擬洋風」の建物です。西洋建築のモチーフと日本の伝統技法・造形とをみごとに融合させているのが特徴です。

一階/展示室

衛生所兼医学校として（前橋市）創建以来、時代を超えて様々な機関への転用された歴史があります。棟札や壁紙（断片）移築・保存修理に関する資料や文書類を展示しています。

談話室

ピアノ・オルガン・人力車・自転車などアンティークな品々の他明治時代に宮内庁や宮家で使用されたものと同じスタイルの家具（黒漆塗）が置いてあります。

喫茶室

昔懐かしい蓄音機やオルゴールのノスタルジックな音色を聞きながら、おいしいコーヒーやケーキを味わってください。

二階中央/貴賓室

黒漆塗に金時絵の豪華な家具があります。

二階/会議室・展示室

大小の会議室があります。

展示室は、当館の企画展に使われる他、市民の皆さんの作品展等に無料でご利用いただいています。

時代性を物語る特徴

部屋割りはほぼ左右対称

内壁と天井は紙張り（半紙台で白に灰色の雲母引き）、創建当初すでに洋紙の使用が見られる。（一部、藍染めの桐生和紙使用）

柱頭の飾りが不規則

片開きの4尺扉（120cm）内開き、玄関・貴賓室は両開戸、窓は全館上下開

□

各部屋が独立。部屋へはポーチベランダから出入り（管理上、仮説の扉を設ける）。急勾配の階段はベランダに直接通じている。

屋根は目地漆喰塗、突針付鬼瓦

正門・門柱・門扉・ベランダのブロンズ格子は創建当時の写真をもとに復元している

創建時の家具・調度品は不明 - 現在は時代性を考慮したもの（シャンデリア、貴賓室・談話室の家具類）

外壁はペンキ塗、幅木は弁柄塗（色調は、残存する塗装から復元）

明治館の歴史

明治11年5月1日 「衛生所兼医学校」新築工事着工

8月30日 「＃」竣工

9月4日 明治天皇御巡幸に際し天覧

12年1月 「衛生所」廃止

14年6月 「群馬県医学校」廃校

15年7月 「県立女学校」開校（同19年廃校）以後「師範学校附属小学校」「群馬県物産陳列館」「群馬県農会」に転用

昭和3年6月5日 相生村が本館払い下げを申請 - 許可 - 移築工事着工

4年2月25日 移築工事完成

29年10月1日 相生村が桐生市へ合併（桐生市役所相生出張所となる）

34年4月1日 市立相生公民館を併設（57年出張所・公民館が転出）

51年2月3日 重要文化財に指定

59年1月1日 半解体による保存修理工事開始（61年3月31日完了）

61年5月1日 桐生明治館となる

（桐生明治館パンフレットより抜粋）

桐生和紙

昔和紙は日常生活の様々な場面で使われていましたが、現在では和紙は貴重なものとなっていて、主に工芸作品など特別な目的のために使われています。星野さんは色々なサイズ、色の和紙を作り、新しい種類や目的のための和紙作りの試みを続けています。和紙は生きており、また何世代にもわたって生き続けてゆくことでしょう。

桐生和紙工房

星野増太郎

〒376-0601群馬県桐生市梅田町5丁目7348

電話0277-32-0201

桐生和紙作り

清流を生む山々に囲まれた桐生市北部の水は和紙作りに適しています。私は梅田に生まれ育ち、江戸時代にまでさかのぼる私の祖先がここで和紙作りを始めました。大福帳や障子紙、紙紐などに使われてました。今では群馬県に残るただ一人の和紙職人となりました。

和紙と洋紙との違いはなんでしょう？現在機械で生産されている紙は茎の髄質であるパルプを使用していますが、和紙は内部の樹皮を使います

和紙作りに使われる3種類の木のうち、最も広く使われているのが楮（クワ科の一種）です。その長い繊維が強く丈夫な紙を作るのに適した材料となります。また蒸す過程でアルカリを加えることで、皮を剥ぎやすくでき、千年以上も保存できる強い紙を作ることが出来ます。

準備

1年を経過した楮を刈り取り、釜に入れて蒸かし、楮の皮をむきます。さらに黒い表皮を白くなるまで取り除き、白くなった楮を流れに浸し、その後灰汁で煮て柔らかくします。煮た皮は水にさらしてあくをぬき、小さなごみを取り除きます。そしてやわらかく、きれいになった皮をどろどろになるまでたたきます。次にトコロアオイの根からしぼったものを糊として一緒に水槽に入れます。これで準備が完了です。

紙漉

木枠に竹箆をセットし、前後左右にゆすりながら漉き上げる。作る和紙の種類によってゆする早さや漉き上げる材料の量を調整します。この方法を「流し

漉き」と言い、洋紙を作る際に使う方法でパルプを一度だけすくって作るのを「溜漉き」と言います。次に竹箆を木枠から取り外し、漉き上げた紙を重ねていきます。重ね上げた紙との間に糸を挟んでおき、乾燥過程に移る際にはがしやすくしておきます。

紙干し

重ね上げた紙を上から絞り、25%程の厚さになるまで脱水します。脱水が終わったら一枚ずつ乾燥機に貼り付けて乾かします。

（桐生和紙工房資料から抜粋）

大川美術館

野田英夫の人と作品

野田英夫は1908年（明治41）日系2世としてカリフォルニアに生まれ、3歳で両親から離れ、父の故郷熊本に戻る。中学卒業後帰米、カリフォルニア美術専門学校に入学、国吉康雄、清水登之を織る。24歳でウッドストック賞、マリア・ストーン賞を受賞。世界的画家リベラの助手となり、ロックフェラーセンターの壁画制作に参加、アメリカ美術界で注目された。1934年帰国、「帰路」（東京国立近代美術館蔵）「都会」（当美術館蔵）を発表し、日本美術界に新風を送り込んだ。特に松本竣介への影響はよく知られる。野田は竣介と同じく権威や虚名にこだわらず、心の世界に眼を向けた人間画家で、働く貧しい人たち、移民の群れ、労働者、サーカスの人々、失業者、子供等、大都会の底辺に生きる人たちの生活を描き続けた。1938年（昭和13）脳腫瘍となり、開かぬまぶたをバンソウ膏で押さえカンヴァスに向かったが、翌年1月に30歳で夭折した。

大川美術館は、桐生市出身の大川栄二が約40年にわたって収集した日本・海外の作家のコレクションを中心に、平成元年4月に市内を一望できる水道山の中腹に開館いたしました。

丘陵斜面に建っていることから一見すると小さい美術館に見えてしましますが、一歩中に入ると数多くの展示室とそのコレクションに驚かされます。

中心となるコレクションは日本の近代画家松本竣介（1912-1948）と野田英夫（1908-1939）の作品です。この両者の作品を集めた美術館としては、その量及び質の面において日本で一番です。

展示室

展示室 1

過去100年の日本近代洋画家の作品

展示室 2

松本竣介及び野田英夫と周辺の画家達の作品。彼らの芸術スタンスにより、テーマ毎に展示されている

展示室 3

同様の構成。同時代の日本人作品。

展示室 4

ピカソ、アーンストといった海外の画家の作品。

特別展示室

一番下のこの部屋には、2～3ヶ月毎に開催される特別企画展として使われる。

大川美術館は数々の部屋に展示された名作を楽しめるあたたかも自宅にいるような雰囲気的美術館です。一番下の階にあるティールームはくつろぎの、そして桐生の美しい景観が楽しめるスペースです。

松本竣介の人と作品

松本竣介は1912年（明治45）東京で生まれ、少年時代を盛岡で過ごし、17歳で上京、洋画家として活躍し、1948年（昭23）36歳で世を去る。生前は一般には無名だったが、死後「暗い戦争を人間的に生き続けた画家」として脚光を浴び、その美しく厳しい、それでいて暖かい画趣は無限の光彩を放ち、時代を超え永遠に生き続けることだろう。

竣介は中学入学後に聴覚を失ったが、家族が慰みに与えた油絵具から絵の道に入った。上京後、太平洋画会研究所に学んだが、よき画友に恵まれ、麻生三郎、鶴岡政男、難波田龍起、霽光等と交遊し、次々と人間味あふれる作品を発表した。特に戦時中、同志と新人画会を結成、あの暗い戦時下でも「生きている画家」として、あくまで人間の哀歓を塗り込めた本物の絵画を描き続けた。

戦後はその限りなき飛躍を期待されたが、戦時中の無理がたたわり、1948年に夭折した。

戦時下の東京を故郷の山河の如く美しい絵にした唯一の画家である。

（大川美術館パンフレットより抜粋）

天満宮（群馬県指定重要文化財）

天満宮の社殿は、近世の神社建築の典型とされる権現造の形式で、切妻流破風の本殿及び幣殿には精巧で華麗な彫刻が施され、当初は画工の狩野益弘が描いた「天満宮本社幣殿拝殿妻之図」のように極彩色に彩られていました。

社殿造営は明和7年（1771）に企図され、安永7年（1778）に起工、寛政4年（1792）に遷宮をなし寛政11年（1799）9月に落成したものです。

由緒

今からおよそ1800年前の景行天皇の時代に上毛野国造が土師部の遠祖である天穂日命を磯部の岡に奉斎した磯部明神が当宮の起源です。

その後幾多の星霜を経て、文治3年（1187）から当地を支配した桐生家が代々の守護神として崇敬し、観応年間（1350年頃）には京都北野天満宮の御分霊を合祀して「桐生

天満具宮」と改称し、桐生領54ヶ村の総鎮守と定められました。天正9年（1581）に徳川家康公が東征の祈りには徳川家累代祈願所として朱印領を賜りました。天正19年（1591）より徳川家の支配下となり、当宮の鳥居前には新たに「桐生新町」が形成され、鳥居から南へ向かって日本で最初の丁割りに基づく桐生の街並みが整えられました。

慶長5年（1600）の関ヶ原合戦の折には軍旗に用いる絹織物を社殿に献上して戦勝祈願を行い、その勝利凱旋を吉例として境内に織物市が開設され、後の桐生織物繁栄の礎となりました。

御祭神

天満宮は菅原道真公をはじめ、公の御祖先である天穂日命を奉斎しております。菅原公は承和12年（845）代々学者として朝廷にお仕えした菅原家に生まれまし

た。幼少より学才に秀で、御年わずか5歳にして和歌を詠まれ、12歳にして漢詩を作られ、その才能は人々を驚かせました。さらに幼少より学問に励まれ、18歳で文章生となり、はやくも33歳で学者として最高の文章博士となり、優れた学識と誠直な政見によって、時の宇多天皇の御信任篤く次第に高位高官に昇り、55歳にして右大臣兼右近衛大将に任ぜられ、当代随一の学徳をもって政務を担当されましたが、藤原氏の讒言により太宰権師に左遷され、延喜3年（903）57歳で至誠を貫いた生涯を閉じました。

後生の人々はその御徳を敬慕して「管公」と称え、古くから学問の神として敬仰されました。

また、北野天満宮が道真公の御霊による祟りをお鎮めするために創祀されたことから、厄除け・災難よけの神として、さらに、道真公京都から太宰府までの長い道程を無事に旅されたことから交通安全・旅行安全の神としても広く崇敬されております。

御開帳

天満宮の御開帳（臨時大祭）は、記録によると宝暦12年（1762）より昭和36年（1961）までの200年間に13回斉行されましたが、なかでも御開帳の呼び物は「生き人形」の飾り物で、これは織物の街に特有の「座繰屋」が機械組みをするものでした。座繰とは織物準備機の一つで、木製の歯車を組み合わせた機械を応用して人形に動作をつけるもので、その原動力として、当時の掘を流れる水を用いた水車が使われ、後にはこれが電気仕掛けにかわりました。

出し物には、歌舞伎や伝記物語の名場面が多く各町会とも競って趣向を凝らし、全町会では16場面もあったことから「飾物案内図」が出回り飾物小屋をはじめ稚児行列・芸妓行列やサーカス・大道芸など様々な催しが長期に渡って繰り広げられ、桐生の街をあげての一大祭典として賑わいました。

紗綾市之図

江戸時代初期になると、天満宮境内では織物市が盛んに開かれ、近郷近在から集散する商品や人の交流の中心地として賑わいました。その後江戸時代中期には京都から高度な織物技術が導入され、紗綾・紋織などの高級織物が作られ、それらを取り扱う紗綾市（さやいち）が開かれました。

天満宮の拝殿にある「紗綾市之図」は、競り衆によって絹織物がさばかれる様子を描いた大絵馬で、明治27年の天満宮臨時大祭（御開帳）の折りに奉納されたもので、近世の商工業・流通経済を知る上で大変貴重な史料として、数多くの文献・教材等に取り上げられています。

末社春日社（桐生市指定重要文化財）

天満宮本殿の裏側に鎮座する末社の春日神社社殿は、一間社流造の建築様式で、規模は小さいものですが、先日の文化庁建造物課調査官による詳しい調査でも、慶長（1600年）以前の桃山時代頃の建立であると判明しました。このことは、現存する桐生の建造物の中では最古のものであるということです。

桃山時代は戦国乱世の頃で、その時代の建造物の遺存例はきわめて少なく、この「末社春日社」は、中世からの伝統を引き継ぐ地域色の豊かな独自の建造物であり、桐生を代表する大切な文化遺産として、桐生市指定の重要文化財となっております。

（桐生天満宮パンフレットから抜粋）

織物参考館ゆかり

織物参考館ゆかりは、実際に展示物に触れ、動かして見ることで桐生の織物の歴史を知ることが出来る施設です。昔から現代までの織物機械の保存・管理・展示、養蚕や絹糸の生産の紹介、そして染織過程に至るまでを理解してもらうことを目的としています。また、藍染めや手織り教室を開催し、熟練スタッフが初心者から慣れた人まで指導してくれます。お土産売り場には、生地、伝統のクラフト製品、織物製品などを購入することができます。

のこぎり屋根

のこぎり型をしている屋根は、織物工場独特のもので、音が乱反射することで音をやわらげ、北窓は採光を一定に保つ効果がそれぞれあります。

織物の歴史

最古の織物はBC4400年のエジプトまで遡ります。桐生の最古の織物は753年頃で、「あしぎぬ」と呼ばれる織物を献上した記録があります。

仁田山紬注文書

1550年頃の「紬」の注文書が桐生の広沢地域にある彦部屋敷で発見されました。足利將軍義輝の侍女小侍従から彦部家にあてられた注文書です。

おもり機

BC560年頃のギリシャのもので、世界最古の織機と言われています。ぴんと張った状態を保つように縦糸の先に重しとして石が括り付けてあり、手で横糸を通して行きます。似た織機をアメリカインディアンも使っていたと言われています。

居座機

居座機は日本で発見された元も古い織機で、5世紀頃中国から伝わり、弥生時代(BC300)の原始機がこの機に転換しました。

蚕の種類

最初蚕から糸を作る方法を誰も知りませんでした。中国の考古発掘において、4000年以上も前に蚕が使われていたことが分かっています。蚕は普通養蚕農家で育てられ、白い糸を吐きます。一つの蚕で1200mもの糸を作ることができ、一つの洋服の生地を作るのに3000個の蚕を必要とします。山間部に住む自然の蚕は青白い色をしていて、以前は絹糸を作るには適していませんでした。飼育される蚕はクワの木の葉を食べるのに対し、この蚕はオークの木の葉を食べます。このことだけでも蚕の種類による違いがあるのがわかります。その後、年代を重ね飼育されることで、山間部の蚕が現在私たちが一般的に見る白い蚕に変わってきました。

八丁撚糸機

八丁撚糸機は、織る作業に耐えられるような強さを加えるため繭からの絹糸を撚る機械です。1783年に桐生の岩瀬吉兵衛という人がこの機械を水車動力を用いて動かすように改良しました。その結果大量の絹糸を桐生で生産できるようになり、桐

生の織物産業の繁栄のきっかけとなりました。

桐生高機

4000から5000本の糸を用い生地を作ることができます。幅が広いので織るのがとても大変ですが、この特徴的なデザインから、とても幅の広い、長い生地を作ることができます。1882年頃桐生は羽二重をアメリカに輸出し始めましたが、その時の生地はこの高機で輸出用として作られたものです。

ジャカード織機

1804年、フランスのジョセフ・マリー・ジャカールが紋織りの機械を開発しました。織物のデザインが決まると紋紙というパンチカードに穴を開け、それを繋げてデザインを表現します。このカードの穴を利用して縦糸を上げ下げすることで様々な色の糸を編み合わせるような複雑な文様を織ることができます。操作する人は前に置かれた鏡を通して織られた文様を確認することができます。

飛び杼装置

1733年、イギリスのジョン・ケイによって発明された装置で、紐を下に引くことで横糸をセットしたシャトルが縦糸の間をぬって左右に移動させ織ることが出来ます。短時間で大量の織物を作ることが出来るようになり、今でも使われている技術です。

藍染め

藍染めは日本では何世紀もの間使われてきている手法です。この紺青色の染料はインディゴという植物から出来ていて、その葉っぱと幹を発酵させ、地面にセットした大きな桶に貯蔵しておきます。あまり長く保たないので、定期的に新しいものと入れ替えをします。藍で染めたものは空気に触れると鮮やかな青色に変化してきます。藍自体の臭いはとてもきつく、虫除けとに適していると言われています。日本では藍染め製品の人気は高く、のれんやエプロンなどの製品が作られています。通常藍染めには綿を使用します。変わったデザインに仕上げるために絞り染めという方法もよく使われます。

【織物参考館ゆかり 群馬県桐生市東4-2-24 0277-45-3111】
(織物参考館ゆかり資料から抜粋)

有鄰館

有鄰館（矢野蔵群）は、享保2年（1717）現在の株式会社矢野本店の創業者である近江の商人、初代矢野久佐衛門が近江から来往し、二代目久左衛門が寛延2年（1749）現在地に店舗を構えて以来、桐生の商業に大きく寄与してきたその土蔵等の建物群の名称です。また「有鄰」とは、孔子の「徳孤ならず必ず鄰あり」という故事から引用した言葉で、かつて矢野商店が製造していた醤油と酒の商品名でもあり今もこの言葉は社訓となっています。

現存する土蔵や煉瓦蔵は酒類・味噌・醤油などの醸造を行っていたところで、明治・大正期の建物群です。それらは桐生新町の往時の姿を今日に伝えており、なかでも煉瓦蔵は桐生市内の煉瓦建物としては最も規模が大きく、近代化遺産のひとつとして注目されています。

林立する蔵の風情を保存しながらそれを活用するため、また景観を活かし、桐生新町の町並み保存の拠点として桐生の文化振興に一役担うため、平成4年2月に有鄰館運営委員会を発足させ、同敷地と建物（店舗・店蔵部分を除く）を借り受け管理運営を行っていました。その後、矢野商店から店舗店蔵部分を除く建物が桐生市に寄付されたことから、平成6年10月14日に市指定重要文化財となりました。

この歴史的建造物は、平成5年度から4か年事業で国土庁の「地域個性形成事業」により活用に向け改修整備が行われ、平成9年4月から文化発信の拠点として再スタートをきりました。

からくり人形芝居館

からくり見せ物は、江戸初期、寛文2年（1662）にはじまった竹田出雲のからくり芝居に系譜をひくものです。竹田出雲は近松門左衛門らと、現在の文楽や歌舞伎の儀作や舞台演出などにも功績を残したことで知られるからくり師です。からくり見せ物は抑圧された江戸の科学、技術の発露として、また庶民の好奇の対象として明治まで大いに流行した。

桐生天満宮の記録によれば、桐生のからくり見せ物は明治27年（1894）に見世物興行のメッカであった江戸浅草奥山の竹田縫之助の活き人形からくり芝居が、天満宮で興行されたのが初めようです。縫之助は出雲の末裔であるが、江戸の風情は明治の東京では既に終演を迎えていました。

その名残を受け入れたのが、桐生でした。昭和36年までに6回の興行があったと記録にある。再発見された「からくり人形」は日本の芸能の貴重な遺産であり、そこにはかつての日本の風情と、さらに技と美までが封じ込まれています。

桐生のからくり人形芝居

芝居からくり人形を貴重な文化遺産として復活させようとしている街は全国でも桐生だけです。18世紀、19世紀そして20世紀初頭には、祭や神社行事の際の見世物の一つとして数多くのからくり人形やその舞台の制作を依頼された富裕な織物工場主等がそれらを提供していました。

からくり人形は、江戸時代の最も精巧な発明技術の一つでもありました。手、足、頭の部分が可動するだけでなく、舞台裏で読まれる物語に合わせて舞台上で人形を忠実に動かすことができました。

様々な織物業者がその技術の精巧さや華麗さを競い合っていて、この時期は桐生の織物産業の全盛期でありました。こうした伝統行事は1961年まで絶え間なく続いておりました。その後、からくり人形と舞台はどこかに保管され、桐生では忘れ去られた過去となっていました。

2000年の春、桐生からくり人形保存会のチャレンジが始まり、41年ぶりに復活、桐生市の本町通りにある「あーとほーる銚座」でからくり人形芝居を披露しました。

現在からくり人形保存会は、このからくり人形を貴重な文化資産として文化庁に文化財として指定してもらえよう努力しています。

からくり人形は8月の桐生八木節まつりや他のイベントでも披露され、通常は有鄰館敷地内のからくり人形芝居館に展示されています。

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（有鄰館、からくり人形館資料より抜粋）