

# INTRODUCING KIRYU

## Geography

Kiryu is in the southeastern portion of Gunma Prefecture which is located in the northern part of the Kanto Plain, northwest of Tokyo. Perhaps the most outstanding physical characteristics of Kiryu are its lovely green hills and mountains and the two rivers which flow through the city. As the seasons come and go, Kiryu is constantly changing in color.

The Watarase and Kiryu Rivers flow through the city. The Watarase runs from northwest to southeast, and the Kiryu river runs from northeast to southeast. Eventually, the Kiryu River flows into the Watarase at a point southeast of the city.

Kiryu is nestled among the foothills of the Ashio mountain range located in the central part of Honshu. The city is located not far from the foot of Mt. Akagi, a dormant volcano. The other mountains around Kiryu are not volcanic and are covered with trees. Umeda, the northernmost district of the city, forms a glen between Narukami and Nemoto mountains. The Kiryu River originates high in these mountains and runs through the glen. The Umeda glen forest has been chosen as one of the top 100 forests in Japan. Although there are many cedar trees growing there now, originally it was all deciduous forest. Red pines are also common in the area.

In the springtime, the city is characterized by its lovely cherry trees which bloom in various parks and around schools and public buildings.

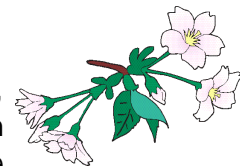
## The Four Seasons

Kiryu has four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.

### Spring



Spring arrives in Kiryu in mid March. Along the streets of the city you can see plum, cherry and dogwood trees blossoming during the spring months of April and May. In particular, many adults enjoy sitting under the cherry trees at night, singing karaoke



and drinking sake.

Columbus Street, named after Kiryu's sister city, is lined with pink and white dogwood trees and red and white azalea bushes. The combination makes a striking picture in Spring.

In addition, tulips and other spring flowers can be seen blooming in the city's parks. Public planters are filled with pansies.

Flowers are not the only sign of spring in Kiryu, however. Another characteristic is the arrival of the season's first strawberries, considered a spring fruit in Japan. Spring is also the time when children begin a new school year and newly graduated young adults begin employment.

## Summer



The summer in Kiryu is divided into two parts. The first part, from early June to mid July is the rainy season. The temperature is cool, but because of the high humidity, it often feels very uncomfortable. People often hang "teru teru bozu" (rain goblins) on their verandahs to drive away the rainy days. This rainy season is critical for the growing of rice in Japan.



Early summer is also the time for the Iris Festival in Azuma Park. Many citizens flock there to see the lovely shades of violet, lavender, and blue which characterize these flowers.

Once the wet, rainy season passes, however, the days grow increasingly hot, with August being the hottest month. In addition, there is high humidity. During this part of the summer, people enjoy eating cool foods like "somen" - cold noodles, watermelon and "kakigori" - shaved ice flavored with fruit syrups. Another favorite pastime for children is lighting firecrackers at night. Many households hang wind chimes on the verandah in order to catch the summer breezes, reminding one to think cool even if you don't feel cool! Of course, another favorite pastime in August is going to the Kiryu Yagibushi Festival.



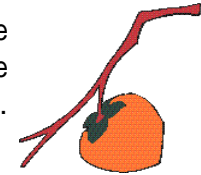
Mosquitoes proliferate during the hot humid summer months and many families burn "katori senko" which drives away the perky insects. "Katori senko," a mosquito repellent incense, is traditionally burned in a pig shaped burner... the smoke curling up out of it like a curly pigtail.



## Autumn



There are many fine days during autumn in Kiryu. The mountains surrounding the city turn golden brown and the days are cool and breezy. In October the fragrant olive trees (official tree of Kiryu City) bloom and the air is filled with their sweet fragrance. This is the season for sports festivals at schools.



Persimmon trees laden with bright orange fruit bear witness to the arrival of fall. Bitter persimmons are threaded together and hung in chains under the eaves of houses. As they dry in the autumn sun, an edible white mold forms on them, transforming them magically into a sweet dried fruit enjoyed as an accompaniment to green tea during the cold winter months.



Fall is also the season for mushrooms, which are very popular in Kiryu and eaten in many different dishes. The Tea Houses at the Hotel Kinoko no Mori are a popular location for autumn parties. Towards the end of Fall Kiryu celebrates the Ebisuko Festival. During the two nights of the festival, the shrine area is a lively place for stalls selling good luck amulets and seasonal delicacies.

## Winter



Winter blows into Kiryu with a fury. The city is well known for its "kara kaze" or strong winter winds which blow off nearby Mt. Akagi and send chills through the bones of the city's heartiest citizens. Despite the cold winds, however, there are usually only one or two light snowfalls per year.



During this cold, dry season, people enjoy sitting at the "kotatsu" (heated table) eating hot soups and stews like "oden" and "kenchin jiru" - a local favorite made with vegetables and flavored with soy sauce or miso. Warm sake is a pleasant rice drink to warm the spirit as well as the body.



Winter sports are popular as well. Kiryu has an ice skating rink and ski resorts abound in Gunma Prefecture. The high point of the winter season is the New Year holiday. Traditionally, families visit shrines and temples and enjoy eating special foods cooked only for the New Year celebration. As winter

draws to a close, Kamo Shrine in Hirosawa hosts a fire throwing festival to ensure good health and prosperity and local citizens enjoy tossing dried soy beans in the house yelling, "In with the good, out with the bad!" to drive out any evil spirits lurking in the house and to pray for good fortune.

## NATURE

Bears, raccoon dogs, foxes, wild boars and serow live in the hills and mountains around Kiryu.

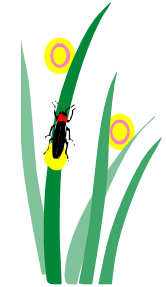
In addition, you can hear Japanese bush warblers singing in the forests around the city in the springtime.

Summer brings the arrival of a whole host of curious insects "kuwagata" (stag beetle) and "kabuto mushi" (goliath beetle) which children enjoy collecting. But most treasured of all are "hotaru" (fireflies). Although they are rare now, they can still be seen near Kuro Creek in the Hishi district of Kiryu. Efforts are being made to protect their habitat to encourage their growth.

While the city flower is the salvia or red sage, Kiryu boasts of a wildflower which is unique to its environs. It is the kakko-so, a rare variety of primula, characterized by its chandelier clusters of pink blossoms. This lovely wildflower can only be seen in the springtime, growing in the deciduous forest on the slopes of Narukami mountain.

The city is surrounded by hiking trails leading through the woods and forests. Climbing Azuma, Narukami and Nemoto mountains are popular activities throughout the year. In addition, on the peak of Hishakuyama is the ruins of Kiryu Castle. A hiking trail up this mountain in Umeda offers one a spectacular view of the city from the peak. Cherry trees have been planted all around the summit of the mountain, making it a popular hiking trail in spring. Chausuyama to the south of the city (Hirosawa) also has a pleasant hiking trail.

Fishing is popular in both the Watarase and Kiryu Rivers. The "ayu" (sweetfish) fishing season opens in June and the rivers abound with fisherman in wading gear at this time.



## SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITY

Kiryu is a textile center and boasts a 1200 year tradition of textile weaving. Evidence of this long history can be seen throughout the city. Factories with saw-toothed roofs to allow light onto the factory floors and tiny canals can still be seen here and there in the city. The canals drew water from the rivers which then drove water wheels, providing power for weaving looms. In addition, in outlying areas, the canals supplied water for irrigating rice paddies and vegetable fields. Mulberry bushes, whose leaves are used to feed silkworms, can be seen growing in large and small plots in areas near the city limits, evidence also of the thriving silk industry of the past.

Kiryu has become a haven for traditional and modern artisans. Japanese paper making, ceramics, wood crafts and furniture making, along with indigo dyeing and textile/fashion design are all actively engaged in. One can find many art and craft studios around the city. No doubt the romantic atmosphere and quaintness of the many well preserved Taisho/Showa Era buildings lend an artistic touch to the city's lush natural surroundings, attracting artists and craftspersons to the area.

## ENTERTAINMENT AND NIGHT LIFE

As a small town, Kiryu has limited night time entertainment. Young people go to the movies, bowling or eat out. Karaoke singing at karaoke boxes has become a popular pastime for small groups of all ages. Basically, a karaoke box is a private room equipped with audio/video machines for singing. In addition, food and drink can be served to the group which pays an hourly fee for the room. Larger parties, called enkai, usually reserve rooms in traditional Japanese restaurants which are also often equipped with karaoke machines.

Like other cities in Japan, pachinko parlors abound in Kiryu. Pachinko has become almost a national pastime, played by men and women alike. Since Kiryu boasts of three major pachinko machine producers, local pachinko parlors are equipped with state-of-the-art machines, making pachinko a particularly popular local pastime.

In addition, the Kiryu Motorboat Race Course, one of 24 boat racing courses in the country, is open year round with both day and night racing. The course is located on a manmade lake just outside the city limits. The Boat Race Course is publicly operated, with proceeds from betting helping to support public works projects.

Eating in Kiryu can be a fun adventure. Many of the restaurants and eateries have long histories and traditions. Of course, traditional Japanese dishes like tempura, sushi, unagi (grilled eel), soba and udon are readily available. Kiryu is gaining a

reputation as an udon town - Japanese noodle shops abound offering a great variety of cold and hot buckwheat and flour noodles. In addition, Kiryu has become famous for its "sauce katsudon," a savory pork and rice dish which originated here.



There are many interesting foods to sample at "snacks" (drinking establishments) and "izakaya" (taverns). These establishments serve a la carte dishes which are good accompaniment to beer, whiskey, "shochu" (a gin like drink) and sake.

Another tradition is small trucks, converted into kitchens-on-wheels, which roam through the city's neighborhoods at night selling ramen (Chinese style noodles), shumai (steamed dumplings) and roasted sweet potatoes, called "yaki imo." One can hear the shrill steam powered whistle from their trucks as they wander down the streets and alleys, calling out, "Yaki imo, ishi yaki imo!" (Roasted sweet potatoes - stone roasted sweet potatoes!).



Kiryu residents also enjoy the cuisine of countries such as China, France, Italy and Korea, to name a few of the popular styles of cuisine found in foreign

food restaurants around the city.

## FESTIVALS

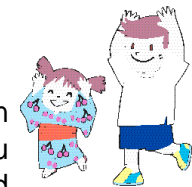
### Kiryu Yagibushi Festival



#### History of Yagibushi Folk music

Yagibushi folk music dates back to ca. 1500, during the Period of Warring States in Japanese history. When Lord Uesugi Kenshin from Etchigo Domain (now the Shinshu region of Honshu) conquered the Kanto area, he attempted to placate the peasants and re-establish peace by promoting the celebration of the Bon Festival or the Feast of Lanterns (July 15 in the lunar calendar). During this festival, peasants enjoyed singing folk music and dancing.

Around the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate (ca. 1800), a woman named "Osayo," who originated from Etchigo Domain, was living in Kizakijuku, a village in the Nitta district of Joshu Domain (now Gunma Prefecture). This woman sang Bon folk ballads based on tales from the Jinpo Kodaiji Temple.



These songs became known as "Kizaki Folk Songs" and were sung at festivals.

Later, during the Meiji Period, Western culture was introduced in Japan. As a result, the lifestyle of the citizenry changed significantly. With the rise of republicanism came new songs celebrating regional pride. In tune with this movement, Joshu's famed bitter winds of Mt. Akagi and the rapids on the Tone River were incorporated in the lively rhythm of the local folk music. Balladeers such as Joshu Yabasho and Noshu Horikome Genta (nee Watanabe Gentaro) would sing out these new lyrics as they drove their horse drawn cart between Kiryu and Ashikaga. These new ballads became known as Yagibushi folk songs.

At the beginning of the Showa Period, the Kiryu Textile Weavers Union President, Hikobe Komao (the 9th Union President) sponsored a Yagibushi contest on the plaza in front of the union headquarters in Eirakucho. He invited textile wholesalers from all over the country to attend the event who declared it a grand success. Since that time, Yagibushi folk music has been used all over the country to promote Kiryu textiles. (Many of the ballads tell of the kimono and obi fabrics woven in Kiryu.)

Perhaps one of the most immediate causes for Yagibushi achieving national renown was its performance at the Osaka Expo in 1970. A team of Yagibushi musicians and dancers traveled to the Expo representing the city of Kiryu. Subsequently, Yagibushi has been performed both on television and overseas on numerous occasions.

Yagibushi is now the focus of Kiryu's annual summer festival and year by year it continues to grow in recognition and popularity.

### History of the Yagibushi Festival

During the Taisho and Showa Eras, Kiryu was a prospering textile city. Many festivals were held celebrating local industry during spring and summer. In 1964, these various festivals (the Commerce and Industry Festival, the Gion Festival, the Tanabata Festival, and the Fireworks Festival, etc.) were combined into one great celebration. At this time, a costume parade was added to the celebration. The combined event became known as the Kiryu Festival. Eventually, yagibushi dancing became the central event and the festival was renamed the Kiryu Yagibushi Festival. It is the biggest event in the summer for Joshu Yagibushi (Joshu is the old name for the Gunma area) and is loved by one and all.

The festival occurs on three successive days early in August. On festival evenings, yagibushi bands perform their lively music in a yagura (elevated stand) around which people dance.

The main streets of Kiryu are closed to traffic during the festival, and people enjoy walking along the streets, admiring the colorful tanabata decorations (decorated bamboo), eating festival treats and playing carnival games. It is also traditional to

wear "yukata" (summer kimonos) and "geta", or wooden sandals. Cotton jackets called "happi" are also popular.

The "tanabata" decorations recall the Tanabata Festival which actually occurs on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. This festival honors the star Vega, the princess of which is traditionally regarded as the Weaving Princess. During this festival, people write wishes on colored paper and tie them to bamboo branches.

In festivals long past, elaborate dramas were enacted on hastily built stages sometimes employing "karakuri ningyo" or marionettes. These dramas were staged by local textile companies who competed with each other to produce the best play.

Nowadays, dancing has become the focus of the festival and groups vie in a competition for the title of best yagibushi dance team.

### Ebisuko

Ebisuko is a festival of Nishinomiya, a Shinto Shrine. It takes place every year on November 19th and 20th. Nishinomiya Shrine was established in Kiryu in 1901 from Nishinomiya Shrine in Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture. The festival began in Kiryu in that same year.

The shrine is consecrated to the Shinto god, Ebisu, the god of commerce and prosperity. The people of Kiryu, a city where the textile industry has prospered, greatly revere this god.

Nishinomiya Shrine, located near Kita Elementary School, celebrates this lively festival called Ebisuko every year. Near the shrine many stalls are set up selling "otakara" (from the Japanese word for treasure or riches) and "kumade" (from the Japanese word for bear's paw), amulets for good fortune. These amulets are very popular among shop owners and people in commerce and are displayed in the shop or home near the "kamidana," a shelf where Shinto gods are enshrined.

Many people ascend the steps of Nishinomiya Shrine during the festival to make an offering to Ebisu-sama to pray for good fortune in the coming year.

There are also many stalls selling plants and traditional treats characteristic of festivals like "yakimanju" (grilled buns basted with sweetened soy sauce), "okonomiyaki" (vegetable filled pancakes), "yakisoba" (fried noodles and vegetables seasoned with a spicy sauce) and "takoyaki" (octopus filled fried balls, somewhat like doughnut holes, only spicy not sweet).

The lively atmosphere and beautiful autumn leaves of the ginkgo trees surrounding the shrine make Ebisuko a most exciting cultural affair.

## KIRYU HISTORY

The following is a translated and abridged excerpt from the Japanese text, *Furusato Kiryu no Ayumi*, published by the Kiryu City Board of Education (1998). Kiryu boasts a long history extending back to the Jomon Period (prehistory). The segment of history appearing below is from the Edo Period when the town first took on the shape we know today. During this same period, the textile industry began to flourish and thus significantly influenced local traditions and culture.



### The Establishment of Arato Shin Machi

(Arato was the former name for the area now known as Kiryu)

In the year 1590, the Kiryu domain fell under the direct rule of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu. Until that time, the 54 villages in the Kiryu area had been ruled by Lord Yura residing at Hishakuyama Castle in Umeda (Yura had earlier deposed Lord Kiryu). However, after the defeat of Lord Hojo, whom Yura had supported, Yura was removed from Hishakuyama Castle and sent to Hitachi Ushiku, and the Kiryu domain was given to Lord Okubo Nagayasu, a retainer (hatamoto) of the shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Arriving in Kanto, Okubo was appointed a commissioner of the shogun. He became actively involved in the redistribution of domains, a project engineered by Lord Sakakibara Yasumasa, one of the four "Guardian Deities" of the shogunate.

In the year 1603 Ieyasu was given the title "Sei'i Tai Shogun" (Barbarian Subduing Generalissimo) and toured his domain, sending letters to his vassals from his castle residences in Sumpu and Edo, giving them directions on how he wanted his affairs managed. Ieyasu established towns in locales where mountains and flat regions came together, such as Hachioji, Oume, and Kiryu. He actively developed mining in towns such as Iwami, Sawa and Izu. Ieyasu promoted the construction and repair of inns at key stations along the Tokaido and Nakasendo Roads. He built castles in Edo, Sumpu and Nagoya and encouraged the development of technology to promote his waterworks, mining and castle construction projects. These public works became the economic foundation of his administration and it was under his administration that the town of Kiryu as we know it today was first developed.

Lord Okubo controlled his domain from Hachioji in Musashi, making the manor house there his headquarters. He constructed

branch headquarters in other towns and dispatched representatives on his behalf to these locales.

In the year 1590, under orders of Lord Okubo, Ono Sonkichi was sent to the castle town of Kiryu. Lord Ono found the roads there too narrow and difficult to navigate, and so he proposed to construct a new town in Arato Hara, a fan shaped region along the Kiryu River. Once built, the local merchants would be moved to the new zone. Kubo Village was to form the southern boundary and Akagi no Mori (site of the present day Tenmangu Shrine) would form the northern border. In all, Arato Shin Machi (Arato New Town) would encompass some 5 villages lying in a straight line from Akagi no Mori to Kubo Village. At that time, a road already existed in the central part of the fan shaped district, running north south.

This road had been constructed in 1573 by Lord Yura Narishige when he took control of the Kiryu domain. Later, in 1584, his successor, Lord Yura Kunishige, took up residence in Hishakuyama Castle, and, as traffic between Kiryu and Ota increased, the road became steadily more congested. (Ota was the former seat of the Yura Clan.) The road, which was the nearest to the Kubo Village merchants, served for a long time as the main thoroughfare through the area. The road also served as an alternative route to the one which ran along the boundary of Miwa Shrine (now known as Yamate-Dori on the west side of Kiryu).

Goods for daily life, transported between Kiryu and Ota, were chiefly sent by boat through the Nitta Canal, on to the Watarase River, passing through the Kiryu River and the Shimotorobori (a deep moat like ditch constructed in the Middle Ages by Lord Kiryu Kunitsuna).

Lord Ono constructed a manor house ("jinya") to be used by local officials after leveling a hill along the banks of Kubo Village (on the compound of the present day Jakko-In Temple) and used it as his base of operations. Ono widened the main street of Arato Hara. On both sides of the road of the new town he specified the size of lots to be approximately 2 meters wide and about 13 meters deep, thus allowing a maximum number of merchants to have shops fronting directly on the main street. On the west side of the road, Ono constructed another road which served as an access road to the jinya. Along the town perimeter he constructed an embankment to serve as a kind of wall and on the west side of the road he constructed a canal which eventually emptied into the Kiryu River. In the year 1591, the construction of the New Town was completed. Lord Ono had the Kubo Village tutelary deity moved from the Umebara Tenjin Shrine to Akagi no Mori, thus becoming the site of Tenmangu Shrine.

Originally, the town encompassed some 5 villages, however, in 1605, the town was extended to the



south to include over 11 villages, stopping at Shimotorobori, thus forming 3 chome, 4 chome, 5 chome and 6 chome. The canal running along the west side of the road through the town was also extended, emptying into Shimotorobori.

In an effort to populate his new country town, Lord Ono ruled that all families in the surrounding villages having two or more children should send one to reside in the new town and he actively recruited other new residents to the area. To support this policy, the rights of newcomers were to be the same as long-time residents and there were no apparent tendencies toward exclusivity. Social ranking among citizens was fairly weak. The town had a distinctive air of progress and newness.

Kiryu Shin Machi (Kiryu New Town) was most similar to a country market town, despite its original establishment in the Middle Ages as a feudal castle town. In support of this view, one did not find in Kiryu the commercial and industrial factions which normally served the needs of the samurai class living in castle towns.

The name "Arato Shin Machi" first appears in 1668 in the Kozuke Kuni Gocho (The Rural Annals of Kozuke Domain). However, Arato Village had not yet been reapportioned. Reapportionment occurred in 1673 with the formation of Kiryu Shin Machi as a result of the land survey conducted by the Tatebayashi Fiefdom. After that, the administration of Kiryu fell into different hands, at times under the direct control of the shogun, at other times under the control of various retainers to the shogun.

By 1824 the population of Kiryu Shin Machi had reached 850 households, totaling 3,640 persons of which 1,862 were male and 1,778 were female.

### The Development of the Silk Industry

Arato Shin Machi market, located where the Kanto plain meets the mountains, served as a locale for the exchange (barter at first) of goods produced in the mountains and products from the plains. The "Tori no Machi," a market which took place near the Tenjin Shrine (later called the "Tori no Ichi" or Tori Market) originally was a market for the exchange of household goods, vegetables, fish, clothing and other various items. From the middle of the Modern period, however, silk cocoons, thread and silk material became the focus of the market.

In the year 1600, the citizens of the 54 villages in the Kiryu domain were ordered to produce silk banners for the soldiers of Tokugawa Ieyasu to carry into the Battle of Sekigahara. Lord Tokugawa commanded one of his vassals, Lord Hiraiwa of Umabayashi Castle (present day Maebashi, the prefectural capital of Gunma Prefecture) to order the production of silk to be used as banners for soldiers in battle. Each weaving loom in Kiryu was ordered to weave approximately 24 yards of silk. At

that time, there were some 2,410 hand looms in Kiryu, thus 2,410 bolts of silk were brought to Tenjin Shrine where a prayer for victory in battle was offered. The silk was carried off to Lord Tokugawa who subsequently emerged as the victor of the great Battle of Sekigahara. Defeating his enemies, Ieyasu united the whole country and established his shogunate at Edo.

The banners became a symbol of good luck to Ieyasu and so each year Kiryu was requisitioned to produce the same amount to be presented to the shogunate. This annual contribution of silk was no doubt a great burden for the citizens of Kiryu, however, the reputation of Kiryu silk grew far and wide as a result.

In 1646 the practice of paying duty to the shogunate in kind was replaced by paying in currency. As a result, Kiryu area weavers began marketing their silk in earnest. The intermittent Tori no Machi was replaced by the Roku Sai Ichi. The compound of Tenjin Shrine was designated as the marketplace and the market was held on regular shrine festival days, namely days falling on the 5th or 9th (5th, 9th, 15th, 19th, 25th, 29th).

The Roku Sai Market was a lively gathering of local silk producers and retailers. Eventually it came to be known as "Sayaichi" or Silk Market. The market was expanded in 1686 to include a site on the shrine compound at Honcho 3 chome, making two markets in town (the uptown market and the downtown market). The silk industry prospered and flourished in Kiryu. After the opening of Japan in the late Edo Period, local merchants became interested in exporting their products overseas. During the Meiji Period, many local silk producers traveled abroad, bringing back to Kiryu new weaving looms and new techniques for dyeing from the United States and Europe. Water wheel driven looms were introduced from the United States. The number of persons who could operate Jacquard looms, invented in France, also increased. The Jacquard loom was important because Kiryu had established a reputation for beautiful brocades, which are woven on Jacquard looms. The majority of Kiryu's looms at this time were made of wood.

### Contemporary Kiryu

Kiryu continues to be an important textile center in Japan. Since the Meiji Era, Kiryu's textiles have been exported all over the world. Since World War II, the number of factories producing silk has declined, however, synthetic and other kinds of materials are being produced in place of silk. Lace production along with embroidery are also important aspects of the textile industry in the city. Kiryu takes pride in its world famous textile and fashion designers and is the focus of an annual

International Fashion Design Competition. Currently, through various forms of community development programs, Kiryu is striving to make its mark on Japan and the world as a Fashion Town. Kiryu's sister cities, Columbus, Ga., USA and Biella, Italy, are also important textile centers.

#### Other Industries

Some of Kiryu's citizens work in factories, many of which produce automobile parts. Textile companies, however, outnumber machine/metalworking by 3 to 1. The average number of employees in textile companies is 10, whereas the average number of employees in machine/metal works factories is 30.

In addition to the textile industry, Kiryu is well known as a center for the production of pachinko machines. Sixty percent of the nation's pachinko machines are made in the city. Finally, a large mushroom research center is also located in the city.

#### CULTURE AND SPORTS

Kiryu City has recently completed the construction of a Performing Arts Center. This structure includes not only a large performance hall and recital hall, but also an exhibition room, art studios, music rehearsal studios and conference / convention center. There are two restaurants located within the building as well. It is hoped that this new performing arts center will become a locus of cultural activity for the city's citizens and promote a sense of appreciation for both Eastern and Western performing and fine arts. Kiryu has its own amateur Symphony Orchestra and there are many amateur bands and choral groups as well.

A large sports complex is located on the southwest side of the city where citizens can enjoy tennis, baseball, swimming, basketball, volleyball, etc. There are also special facilities for sumo and Japanese archery.

Recently, the Kiryu area towns and villages have cooperated in building an indoor heated pool/recreation facility called the "Caribbean Beach." This facility offers not only an Olympic size heated swimming pool, but also a "big wave" ocean play area, sliding boards, and jacuzzis. The entire facility is heated by the combustion of waste at the newly constructed waste processing center.

Every year in February Kiryu sponsors a half marathon through the city streets. More than 5,000 persons participate in this event. Each year, the number of participants is growing, making it a major winter event in the city.



In 1999 the Kiryu Dai'ichi High School Baseball Team won the National High School Baseball Championship. This is a great source of pride for the local citizens who have traditionally been avid baseball fans. In years past, Kiryu teams have gone to the National Championship Tournament held at Koshien Stadium in Kobe, however, this was the first time a Kiryu team ever won.

## A KIRYU CHRONOLOGY

### PREHISTORY

(before ca 300 CE)

20,000 BCE

Paleolithic Culture

Sumiyoshi Prehistoric Site

Iwajuku Prehistoric Site

8000 BCE

Jomon Culture

Oka Koen Prehistoric Site; Tokodai Prehistoric Site; Kinryudai Prehistoric Site; Mishimadai Prehistoric Site; Fumonji (temple); Chiamigaito Prehistoric Site; Tanitsu Prehistoric Site

300 BCE - 300 CE

Yayoi Culture

Hirai Prehistoric Site; Shinmeiyama Prehistoric Site

### KOFUN PERIOD

(ca 300 - 710 CE)

The Kofun Period was characterized by the construction of large tomb mounds ("Kofun"), indicating the stratification of the agricultural society inherited from the Yayoi Period. Many of these tombs were decorated with the hollow clay sculptures known as "haniwa". The Kofun Period witnessed the introduction of Buddhism and the Chinese writing system from the Asian continent and the rise of the Yamato Court, a powerful dynasty which established Japan's earliest unified state. The last century of the Kofun Period is called the Asuka Period, which is generally considered Japan's first historical age. During this period, a series of institutional innovations, most notable the Taika Reform, created a centralized bureaucratic state based on the Chinese model.

- 552 Buddhism is introduced to Japan when Buddhist images and sutras are sent from Korea by King Song of Paekche.
- 600 Mitsuzuka Burial Mound; Inarizuka Burial Mound; Kamo Jinja (Shrine) Burial Mound; Kamihitozuka Burial Mound; Tsukakoshi Burial Mound
- 645 Taika Reform

NARA PERIOD (Ancient Japan)  
(710 - 794)

The establishment of the capital city, Heijokyo (Nara) marked the beginning of the Nara Period, which was characterized by the maturation of the Chinese inspired Ritsuryo System of government and the active adaptation of other aspects of Chinese culture and technology. Buddhism gained official recognition as the state religion, and temples were constructed throughout Japan in an effort to buttress the authority of the central state. This period also saw the flowering of the arts known as Tempyo Culture, the compilation of Japan's first historical chronicles, the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, and the first of the great anthologies of Japanese poetry, the Man'yoshu.

- 710 Capital established at Heijokyo (Nara).

HEIAN PERIOD  
(794 - 1185)

The Heian Period, which began with the establishment of the imperial capital of Heiankyo (Kyoto), saw the full assimilation of Chinese influences and the flowering of an indigenous aristocratic culture. The development of the Japanese "kana" syllabary gave birth to a truly native literary tradition, including some of the finest works of Japanese poetry and prose, such as Murasaki Shikibu's masterpiece, the Tale of Genji. Politically, the Heian Period was characterized by the domination of the Imperial Court by regents of the Fujiwara family. This age also witnessed the growing power of provincial warrior bands and the proliferation of private estates (Shoen), which together brought about the disintegration of the Ritsu-ryo System of centralized government.



- 794 Capital moved to Heiankyo (Kyoto). It remained the capital until 1868.
- 796 In August, Kamo Shrine and Miwa Shrine in Yamada-Gun were designated official shrines.
- 835 A tract of vacant land in Yamada-Gun was bestowed upon Imperial Prince Michiyasu of the Fujiwara Clan.
- 1058 In March, Minamoto no Yoshi'e worships at Kamo Shrine.
- 1113 It is said that Princess Shirataki introduced the techniques of weaving in this year.
- 1117 In February it is said that the Nittayamahata Shrine was established.



- 1156            The Sonoda Mikuriya was established.
- 1180            In May, Lord Kiryu Rokuro allies with Ashikaga Toshitsuna and engages in battle against the forces of Minamoto no Yorimasa at Ujigawa.
- 1181            Kiryu Rokuro kills Lord Ashikaga Toshitsuna in September. Delivering the head of Toshitsuna to Minamoto no Yoritomo in Kamakura, Rokuro is himself beheaded for his heinous deed.

KAMAKURA PERIOD (Medieval Japan)  
(1185 - 1333)

Minamoto no Yoritomo's victory in the Taira - Minamoto War heralded the beginning of the Kamakura Period and the rise to political power of the provincial warrior class. His appointment of provincial governors (Shugo) and estate stewards (Jito) established the foundations of the Kamakura Shogunate, the first in a series of military governments that would rule Japan until the mid-19th century. Other developments of this period included the eventual political ascendancy of the Hojo Family, the Mongol invasions of Japan, the introduction of Zen Buddhism, and the emergence of new popular sects that spread the Buddhist religion among the common people.

- 1192            Around this time the Sunaga Mikuriya is established.
- 1200            In October Sonoda Nari'ie visits the Imperial Court. He renounces his worldly life in pursuit of Buddhist ideals and studies under the monk, Honen Shonin, founder of the Jodo Sect of Buddhism. Sonoda was given the religious name, Chimyo Shonin.
- 1205            In this year Sonoda Nari'ie establishes a Buddhist monastery in Ogura Village and builds Sozenji Temple. Over 20 are ordained monks.
- 1227            In this year the Saihoji Temple monastery is established in Hisakata Village.



MUROMACHI PERIOD  
(1333 - 1568)

The destruction of the Kamakura Shogunate by the forces of Ashikaga Takauji signified the beginning of the Muromachi Period, an era of great cultural achievement and persistent social instability. The first decades of the Muromachi Shogunate were disrupted by conflict between two rival imperial lines (Northern and Southern Courts). The Shogunate was unable to restrain the ambitions of powerful provincial governors (Shugo Daimyo) and collapsed entirely after the Onin War, which ushered in a century of civil strife known as the Sengoku Period (1467 - 1568). At the same time, the Muromachi Period saw the impressive development of new artistic forms such as No and Kyogen, as well as Zen inspired arts such as the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and ink painting.

- 1333            Kamakura Shogunate collapses; power is restored to Emperor Go-Daigo.

- 1338 Ashikaga Takauji becomes shogun.
- 1350 In this year Kiryu Kunitsuna constructs Hishakuyama Castle and takes up residence there. In this year Kunitsuna digs Shimotoro Hori and conquers Takatsudo Castle (Omama).
- 1412 In this year Ashikaga Ujimitsu bestows Shimo Hishi Village on Hosokawa Tango.
- 1543 In April Kiryu Suketsuna has the statue of Buddha at Saihoji restored.
- 1547 Firearms are introduced in Japan.
- 1554 Around this time Gyokunen constructs Jounji Temple monastery in Hirosawa Village.
- 1561 In February Hikobe Nobukatsu receives an allotment of land in Hirosawa from Lord Yura Narishige and constructs Hikobe Manor.
- 1564 Lord Kiryu Suketsuna allies with the forces of Lord Uesugi Kenshin.
- 1565 In May Hikobe Harunao and Hikobe Terunobu (father and son) commit ritual suicide.



AZUCHI - MOMOYAMA PERIOD (Early Modern Japan)  
(1568 - 1600)

The Azuchi Momoyama Period was defined by the rise of three successive hegemony, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who brought about the political unification of Japan following a century of civil war. Warrior patronage supported the construction of castles throughout the country and a spectacular flourishing of the decorative arts, epitomized by the opulent style of artists such as Kano Eitoku. During this brief period, Japan was also exposed to Western (Namban) culture through contact with European traders and missionaries.

- 1570 In May Lord Kiryu Suketsuna dies.
- 1573 In March the Lord of Kanayama Castle, Yura Narishige conquers Hishakuyama Castle.
- 1574 In May Yura Narishige takes up residence in Hishakuyama Castle and constructs Hosenji Temple.
- 1575 In this year Lord Yura Narishige moves Shorenji Temple from Iwamatsu to Kiryu.
- 1578 In June Lord Yura Narishige falls ill and dies. His burial site is established at Hosenji.



- 1579 In May Yura Kunishige allies with Lord Hojo Ujimasa.
- 1586 In this year Lord Yura Kunishige is dispatched to Hishakuyama Castle.
- 1589 In November, Yura Kunishige, by command of Lord Hojo Ujimasa, dispatches 360 soldiers and fights under the leadership of Lord Maeda Toshiie at the battle of Odawara Castle. (Here Hojo is defeated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi who awards the 8 Kanto provinces to Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu as a reward for his support. Kunishige is defeated with Hojo.)
- 1590 In April, Yura Myoin-ni (Buddhist nun and mother of Kunishige) joins with her two grandsons and 300 soldiers to fight under the control of Lord Maeda Toshiie who then conquers Matsuida Castle. In August, Lord Yura Kunishige is sent to Hitachi no Kuni Ushiku and the Kiryu District falls under the control of Tokugawa Ieyasu.
- 1591 In April Ono Sonkichi transfers the god enshrined at Shimo Hisakata Village to Mihara and establishes Kiryu Shin Machi. In November, a seasonal market is opened on the Tenmangu Shrine compound. (Market town is established.)

EDO PERIOD  
(1600 - 1868)

Victory in the Battle of Sekigahara established Tokugawa Ieyasu's hegemony over Japan, commencing the Edo Period. Over two centuries of peace followed under the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate, which instituted a political structure known as the Bakufu System and isolated Japan from politically foreign influences through its policy of national seclusion. The vibrant bourgeois spirit of the period's thriving merchant class (Chonin) found expression in dramatic forms such as Kabuki and Bunraku, in the popular literature known as Gesaku, and in artistic genres such as Ukiyo-e. In the turbulent period following Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in 1853, the shogunate lost its ability to assert national authority, and the Tokugawa regime collapsed.

- 1600 In July, on the order of Lord Tokugawa Ieyasu, 2,410 silk banners are purchased from Kiryu. (These banners were carried into the Battle of Sekigahara by Tokugawa's victorious forces.)
- 1624 Around this time, cargo was carried to Edo by way of the river bank (Watarase River) at Kitasaruda Village (part of the present day Ashikaga).
- 1646 In this year sale of silk by bartering was replaced with the use of currency. Around this period, the silk market was flourishing in Kiryu.
- 1656 In June the Tenno Festival begins.
- 1658 In this year Omama Village opens its Silk Market.

- 1661 In August Kiryu Shin Machi becomes part of the Tatebayashi domain in the control of the Shogun, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi.
- 1672 In this year construction of the Okanobori irrigation canal is completed.
- 1682 In August Kiryu Shin Machi falls under the control of Kamio Motokiyo, a samurai retainer of the Tokugawa Shogunate.
- 1684 Around this time silk trade with Edo begins.
- 1689 In this year because of the success & growing number of people involved in the silk market trade, a shrine is established at Shincho 3 chome.
- 1692 Around this time the silk trade with Kyoto begins.
- 1718 Around this time the "Jushichiya" from Edo establishes a branch office in Kiryu.
- 1722 In this year Edo's Echigoya Dry Goods Store (present day Mitsukoshi) opens a branch store in Kiryu and begins to market Kiryu silk.
- 1723 In this year a textile artisan named Kyubei from Kyoto instructed Kiryu weavers in the art of "Harimono" and "Shirohariho" techniques for weaving silk for aristocrats.
- 1731 In February the silk market days were changed from the 5th and 9th days of the month to the 3rd and 7th. (market days ran on a 10 day cycle: 3rd, 7th, 13th, 17th, 23rd, 27th, etc.)
- 1738 In this year a Kyoto artisan introduces the technique of weaving on a "takahata" loom to Kiryu weavers. (The Takahata loom is a Japanese hand loom).
- 1742 In August women from Kawamata, Oura-Gun are employed as weavers. In this year, Kiryu comes under the direct administrative control of the Tokugawa Shogunate.
- 1744 Around this time "sayaori" or patterned silk, grows in popularity.
- 1751 Around this time the Akaiwa Ferry Boat begins service across the Watarase River.
- 1754 In this year Omama Village begins a new silk market on the 2nd and 6th days (10 day rotation). However, strong opposition from Kiryu forces its closure.
- 1762 In this year Kiryu Shin Machi is reassigned to the district of the samurai retainer, Kamio Motoju.



1764 Around this time "terakoya" or private elementary schools are instituted.

1778 In July Takayama Hikokuro visits Kiryu.

1779 In December Kiryu is reassigned to the Dewa no Kuni Matsuyamahan Sakai Tada-kyu District.

1783 In July Mt. Asama erupts and ash falls heavily on Kiryu. In this year, Iwase Kichibei begins to employ water wheels for power and invents a thread plying machine.

1786 In this year, the Kyoto Artisan, Kosaka Hanbei, comes to Kiryu to give instruction in advanced weaving techniques.

1787 Around this time "Kiryugami" or Kiryu paper begins being produced in Umeda.

1813 Around this time Sawa Tanzai institutes "Suihei Ginsha" (a poetry group) and this form of poetry grows in popularity.

1817 Around this time Yoshida Genbei goes to the Ou Ezo area (Tohoku) to sell textiles.

1829 Around this time the study of Japanese classical literature promoted by Tachibana Moribe gains popularity among the commercial class.

1831 In October Watanabe Kazan of the Southern School of Chinese Art visits Kiryu Shin Machi & stays at the home of Iwamoto Mohei.

1832 In this year the Ashikaga Nittamachi Silk Market is instituted.

1840 In November Kiryu tradesmen are barred from the Ashikaga Market.

1841 In July cotton tradesmen from Kiryu are permitted at the Ashikaga market. In this year, Kiryu silk trade reaches 700,000 ryo (standard gold coin of the Tokugawa Shogunate).

1842 In this year a law is decreed prohibiting peasants and tradesmen from wearing silk; the textile industry is severely hurt by this policy.

1858 In this year a cholera epidemic breaks out.

1859 In November Furuki Shirobei and Tsukui Giuemon are ordered to stop exporting silk thread. In this year, textile production comes to a halt and civil unrest results from the hardships suffered by the citizens.



- 1861 In March the recurring problem of market participation is resolved and the Ashikaga Silk Market becomes independent.
- 1864 In this year Onozato Kisaemon begins to export silk handkerchiefs.
- 1865 In this year western dyes are first employed in textile production.

MEIJI PERIOD (Modern Japan)

(1868 1912)

The Meiji Restoration of direct imperial rule commenced the Meiji Period and began Japan's transformation into a modern industrial society. Restoration leaders welded former feudal domains into a modern nation-state, established a centralized bureaucracy, enacted a new land tax system, and created a modern conscript army. Abolition of feudal classes and the establishment of universal education helped create a unified national polity. The 1889 Constitution of the Empire of Japan established the first parliamentary government in Asia. During the latter part of the period, Japan emerged as a major imperialist power through victories in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 - 1895 and the Russo - Japanese War and the annexation of Korea in 1910.

- 1868 Meiji Restoration  
In April Kiryu comes under the administrative control of Matusryo-ken.
- 1869 In February Kiryu Shin Machi is transferred to Iwahana-ken.
- 1870 In July the Watarase River floods and a river branch is formed from Akaiwa to Kiryu Shin Machi 6 chome.
- 1871 In November Kiryu falls under the administrative control of Gunma-ken for the first time.
- 1872 In January Kiryu is transferred to Tochigi-ken. In July, the first post office is opened.
- 1873 In this year the first public elementary school opens.
- 1874 In January the silk market days are changed from the 3rd and 7th days to the 3rd and 8th days. In March, the Kiryu Police Department is opened.
- 1876 In August Kiryu is transferred to Gunma-ken.
- 1877 In August Moriyama Yoshihei and Associates introduce the first Kyoto-made Jacquard device. In October, Christianity is introduced in Kiryu.
- 1878 In July the Kiryu Textile Guild is formed.



- 1879 In December the Daishiju Bank (Dai-Ichi Kangyo Bank) branch office is opened in Kiryu.
- 1882 In July a cholera epidemic occurs. In October, the Cocoon, Yarn & Textile League of Gunma and 6 Prefectures conducts a textile promotion show at Kiryu Shin Machi 1 chome.
- 1883 In January the uptown market is opened.
- 1884 In July the town administrative office is established.
- 1886 In May Seiaisha begins to employ steam power to operate textile machinery.
- 1888 In November Ryomo Railways begins daily service between Oyama and Kiryu.
- 1889 In April Kiryu Shin Machi, Arato Village, Shimo Hisakata Village, Shinshuku Village, and Kami Hisakata Village are incorporated to form Kiryu Town. In July, the first electric power plant producing electricity for the Nihon Orimono Corp. (Japan Textile Co., Inc.) is completed along the banks of the Watarase River.
- 1890 In August the Watarase River floods resulting in copper poisoning from the runoff from the mines in Ashio.
- 1892 In February the local industries downtown market is instituted. Around this time electric lighting comes into use in town.
- 1894 In May Kiryu Town erects its first electric light utility poles.
- 1896 In April the Textile School is opened.
- 1898 In October the Dai Shiju Bank headquartered in Tatebayashi transfers its main office to Kiryu.
- 1901 In November the Town Hall is completed.
- 1902 In this year the Akaiwa Bridge is opened. Around this period, moving pictures are replaced by movies and the bicycle becomes a popular means of transportation.
- 1904 In May the Kiryu Nenshi Limited Partnership (Nippon Silk Throwing Company Limited) begins production.
- 1907 In this year telephone service is introduced.

- 1908 In May Kiryu Girls High School opens.
- 1910 Kiryu ga Oka Park is constructed. Japan annexes Korea.
- 1911 In April the Ashio Railways begins operation. Noma Seiji, a Kiryu native, forms Kodansha Ltd., a major publishing house.

TAISHO PERIOD  
(1912 - 1926)

The Taisho Period was marked by the advent of true party government, increased popular involvement in politics, the growth of organized labor and left-wing movements, and a domestic economic boom fueled by World War I. The democratic tendencies of the period, often referred to as "Taisho Democracy", were supported by the emergence of an educated urban middle class and the rise of new forms of mass media such as radio, large circulation newspapers, magazines, and paperback books. Eventually, however, an economic downturn and authoritarian measures such as the enactment of the Peace Preservation Law of 1925 and the expansion of the Special Higher Police began to erode the gains made by Japan's first experiment with democracy.

- 1913 In March the Kiryu Line of Tobu Railways begins operation. The Textile School is closed.
- 1914 In this year the town crematorium is opened in Shinshuku. Japan enters World War I.
- 1916 In April the Kiryu School of Dyeing and Weaving (currently Gunma University, Faculty of Engineering) is opened.
- 1917 In April Kiryu Middle School (currently Kiryu High School) is opened.
- 1919 In December the Kiryu Club is established . In this year textile production exceeds 46,850,000 yen.
- 1920 The first Japanese May Day demonstration is held. In October the periodic market system is discontinued; trading is conducted on a daily basis.
- 1921 Kiryu City is incorporated in March. In this year synthetic silk thread is used to produce women's kimono sashes (obi). Public bus service begins.
- 1923 The Great Kanto Earthquake occurs.
- 1925 In February the Credit Union is established. (Currently the Kiryu Shinyo Ginko). In April the steel truss "Kiombashi" bridge is opened. The first Japanese radio broadcast takes place.

## PRE-WAR SHOWA PERIOD

(1926 - 1945)

The Showa Period was one of the most turbulent in Japanese history. In its first decades an ultranationalist coalition of right-wing politicians and army officers seized control of the country, engaging in domestic political repression and setting Japan on a course of militarist expansionism in continental Asia that culminated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 - 1945 and entry into World War II. Japan's defeat ushered in a period of occupation by Allied military forces and sweeping democratic reforms that included a new constitution of Japan. The postwar decades saw recovery from the war, reentry into the international community, and phenomenal economic growth that transformed Japan into the world's second largest economy by the end of the period.

- 1927            In September city gas service begins.
- 1928            In October the city seal is approved. In November the Shinkawa Athletic Field is completed. Jomo Electric Railways begins service.
- 1929            In August the Oaza Village section designation system for addresses is discontinued. Chome names are adopted.
- 1932            In April the Waterworks Bureau begins operation.
- 1933            In April Sakaino Village is incorporated in the city of Kiryu. Around this time textile orders for Kiryu silk exceed those of Nishijin (Kyoto).
- 1934            In February the medical association begins practice (currently, Kiryu General Hospital). In May the Kiryu Technical School (Presently Kiryu Technical High School) opens in November. The Infantry conducts training exercises in Kiryu and the Emperor pays a visit to the city.
- 1935            The Public Library opens in November.
- 1936            In March the Nutrition Coop is established. In April the Kiryu High School Baseball Team is runner-up in the national competition.
- 1937            In April Hirosawa Village is incorporated in the city of Kiryu.
- 1939            In March the Yamada-Gun Gazette is published.
- 1940            In March the Kiryu Public Girls Training Institute is opened (presently, Kiryu Commercial High School). In July rice rationing is instituted.
- 1941            In April the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, Kiryu Branch is formed. In December Showa Bridge is opened.

1943 In February temple bells, iron lamp posts, copper statues are collected to be melted down for armaments. In November many textile companies are taken over for the war effort and looms are confiscated for scrap iron.

1944 A Veterans Memorial is erected on Raiden Mountain. At this time there is a severe shortage of food supplies.

POST-WAR SHOWA (Contemporary Japan)  
(1945-1989)

1945 In June the Suehirocho area undergoes forced evacuation. In July American planes shell the Kiryu Station area. In October Allied Occupation Forces take up residence in Inaricho on the premises of the former Nippon Silk Throwing Co., Ltd. Around this time Honcho and Suehiro Streets are lined with stalls. There is a thriving black market.

1946 In January a textile companies' fair to encourage the rebirth of textile manufacturing is held. In August the all-Kiryu baseball team places second in the national city baseball championship. In this year membership in labor unions increases dramatically.

1947 In September Typhoon Catherine strikes causing great flooding and damage. Compulsory education in the form of 6 year elementary school, 3 year junior high school is established.

1949 In September Typhoon Kitty strikes resulting in considerable flooding. Aizawa Tadahiro discovers Jomon period artifacts in Iwajuku.

1950 In January the city anthem is chosen. (The Korean War begins.)

1951 In May the Orihime War Memorial Statue is dedicated in Kiryuga Oka Park.

1952 In this year proceeds from the sale of textiles exceeds 7,200,000,000 yen.

1953 In May the Shinkawa Amusement Park, constructed over the Shinkawa conduit, is opened.

1954 In October Umeda, Aioi and Kawauchi Villages are incorporated in the city.

1955 A portion of Morita Village Yoshisawa is incorporated in the city in June.

1956 In November the Kiryu Motorboat Racecourse is opened.

1958 In October the National Health Insurance program is instituted. In November the Kiryu Sangyo Bunka Kaikan is opened.

- 1959 In January Hishi Village is incorporated in the city.
- 1963 In April the Kiryu Minami High School is opened. In October Kiryu forms a sister city relationship with Biella, Italy.
- 1964 In August various city festivals are combined and celebrated as the "Kiryu Festival."
- 1965 In May the new Kiryu City Hall is opened. In June Kiryu forms a friendship city relationship with Hitachi in Ibaraki Prefecture. In November, the city crest is chosen.
- 1966 In April the use of house numbers for addresses is adopted. The city waste disposal center is completed.
- 1967 In August the south entrance of Kiryu Station is completed.
- 1968 A portion of Tanuma Town Hikoma is incorporated in Kiryu.
- 1969 In July Kiryu Stadium is completed.
- 1971 In March the 3 volume "History of Kiryu" is published. In April Kiryu ga Oka Amusement Park is opened.
- 1972 In July Kiryu Girls High School moves to its new location in Umeda.
- 1973 In June the Public Swimming Pool is opened.
- 1974 In July the city market is opened.
- 1975 Kiryu Ohashi is opened in January.
- 1976 Kusaki Dam on the Watarase River is completed.
- 1977 "Kiryu Ori" is designated a national industrial art in October.
- 1978 Kiryu forms a sister city relationship with Columbus, Georgia, USA. In July Japan normalizes relations with China.
- 1979 In October the Bunka Center is opened.
- 1980 In April Kiryu Nishi High School is opened. Kiryu and Naruto become friendship cities.



- 1981 In April Miyama-En is opened. In May the Minami Sports Complex is opened.
- 1982 In March the Sakaino Water Treatment Plant is opened. In August the Kiryu City Hall Annex is completed. In October the new City Crematorium is opened.
- 1983 In March the Kiryu River Dam is completed. In October the Akagi National Sports Competition opens.
- 1984 In November the first Kiryu Walk Rally is held.
- 1985 In March the Hirosawa Water Treatment plant is opened. In October the Ryomo Line to Kiryu Station becomes an elevated track.
- 1987 In March Matsubara Bridge is opened. In April the Kiryu Local Industries Promotion Center is opened.

HEISEI PERIOD (1989 --)

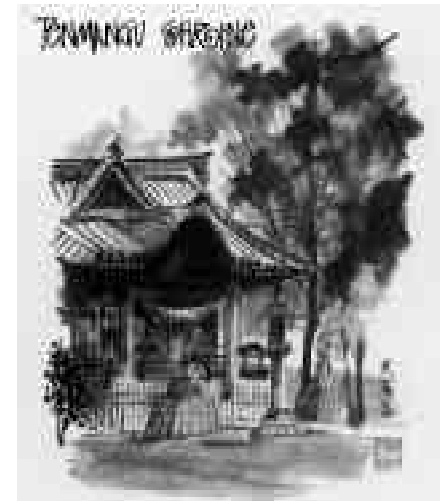
- 1989 In March the Watarase Ravine Railway begins operation. In April the Kiryu Nature Sanctuary is opened.
- 1990 In December the 4 lane Kiryu By-pass is opened to traffic.
- 1991 In May the new Fire Department Building is completed in Motojuku. In October the Public Lifelong Learning Seminar begins.
- 1993 In May the prefectural Kiryu Youth Outdoor Activities Center opens in Umeda.
- 1994 In this year the city designated cultural treasure, Yano Warehouses, are named "Yurinkan" to be used as a cultural events center.
- 1995 In October the National Government Office Building and the Kiryu City Health & Welfare Center open near Kiryu Station.
- 1997 In May the Kiryu City Performing Arts Center opens.

(Explanations of the Japanese historical periods excerpted from the chronology in Japan, An Illustrated Encyclopedia published by Kodansha, Inc., 1993.)

# FOUR SEASONS OF KIRYU

## LOCAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- January 7            Sozenji Temple: Seven Herb Gruel Gathering  
(Kawauchi 2 chome)
- January 10          Fumonji Temple: Daruma Fair  
(Hishimachi 4 chome)  
Daiyuin Temple: Kounsai (Daruma Fair)  
(Hirosawacho 3 chome)
- February            Early February: - Hori Marathon in downtown Kiryu streets  
Kamo Shrine: Mikargari Shinji (City Designated Cultural Treasure)  
(Hirosawa 6 chome)
- Late February: Plum Blossom Viewing at Minami Park  
(Hirosawa 5 chome)
- 1st Sunday in April   Season Opening of Umeda Lake  
(Umedacho 5 chome)
- Early April          Kiryugaoka Koen Cherry Blossom Viewing  
(Kiryugaoka Amusement Park Area)
- April 14-to 15      Kamo Shrine Daidai Miyahira Festival (Intangible Cultural Treasure)  
(Hirosawacho 6 chome)



- Mid April Azuma Park Tulip Festival  
(Miyamotocho 3 chome)
- Late May Kiryu Azalea Festival  
(Shinkawa Park)
- Mid June Azuma Park Iris Festival  
(Miyamotocho 3 chome)
- Late June Watarase River Ayu Fishing Season Opens  
(Watarase River)
- 1st Friday, Saturday and Sunday of August  
Kiryu Yagibushi Festival  
(Downtown Kiryu streets)
- August 6th to 7th Shirataki Jinja Daidai Kagura (City designated Intangible Cultural Treasure)  
(Kawauchicho 5 chome)
- August 17 Kaizawa Hyakumanben Nenbutsu Ceremony  
(City Designated Intangible Cultural Treasure)  
(Hachimangu Shrine, Umedacho 4 chome)
- Late August Fireworks Display at Kiryu Motorboat Racecourse  
(Azuma Pond, Kasakake Town)





We hope you have enjoyed  
reading about Kiryu...  
better yet -  
come and see us here!



This pamphlet has been prepared by:

The Kiryu International Exchange Asso.  
Kiryu City Hall  
1-1 Orihimecho, Kiryu City  
Gunma Prefecture 376-8501 Japan  
Phone: 0277-46-1111 ext. 537  
Fax: 0277-43-1001  
Email: [office@kiea.jp](mailto:office@kiea.jp)  
URL: <http://www.kiea.jp>



Kiryu's Kakko-so (Primula kisoana miquel)

BUTSANBAIKAZIO  
KIRIU  
GUNMAKEN

生桐

物賣所  
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