

# Kawagoe City Celebrates its 100th Anniversary

Kawagoe City is 30 kilometers away from the center of Tokyo.

It is a very convenient city, but it is also rich in nature.

## The city's changing area

An enlarged Kawagoe Town was created in 1889 with the merger of Kawagoe Town, Matsugo, Terai Village, Tomyoji Village, Kokubo Village, Wakita Village, part of Noda Village, and Kosemba Village. Then, in 1922, Kawagoe Town and Senba Village merged, becoming the prefecture's first city. The city merged with Tanomozawa Village in 1939 and then nine other villages in 1955. The result was the city's current area.

## Surrounded by rivers—Kawagoe's nature

Kawagoe City is a core city in southwestern Saitama Prefecture. It is around 30 kilometers from the center of Tokyo and is next to nine other cities and two towns. The Arakawa River is in the east. The Irumagawa River flows from the west to the north and east. The Shingashigawa River circles the city center. Kawagoe is on relatively flat land.

The south, western, and central parts of the city are on the Musashino Plateau. The old part of town is on the plateau's northeastern tip. From ancient times through the Muromachi

period, the left bank of the Irumagawa River was a center of government in the area. When Kawagoe Castle was built in the Muromachi period, the current city center slowly grew. The areas around the Arakawa River and Irumagawa River were also used for farming since ancient times. The Irumagawa River delta area was used for rice paddy fields. Rice was also grown from the north to the east. In the recent past, new rice fields were made in southwestern Kawagoe, and the Musashino area began being used for farming.

Kawagoe City has 324 parks (as of March 31, 2021), and many plants and animals live in large parks such as Aina Water Park, Kawagoe Aquatic Park, Isanuma Park, and Osezuka Park.

Kawagoe City has no mountains, but lots of rivers, ponds, forests, farm fields, and parks near where people live. Because of this, people living in Kawagoe can experience the four seasons through nature.

## A community created from history and culture

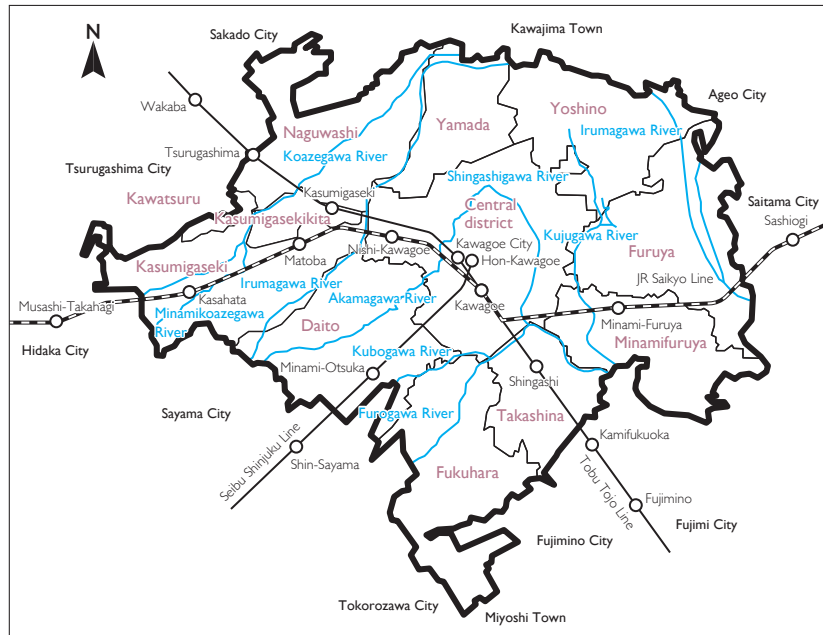
The current Kawagoe City was created when nine villages merged with the old Kawagoe City in 1955.

### [Central district]

This district is the area of the old Kawagoe City in 1939. The northern part grew as a castle town. In modern times, the southern part developed quickly around Kawagoe Station and Hon-Kawagoe Station. The district is still divided into blocks dating back to its castle town period, and there are many shrines, temples, and cultural places.

### [Yoshino district]

Located in the northeastern part of the city, there have been many rice paddies here since ancient times. The area is easy to get to by National Route 16 and Prefectural Route 51.



The Toki-no-kane (Time Bell Tower)

There are many facilities in the district, such as industrial parks, the Saitama Medical Center, and Kawagoe Sports Park. At 24 hectares, Isanuma Pond is one of the largest ponds in the prefecture. The pond has much natural beauty, including lotuses and many cherry trees.



Kakuei Shopping Street (Kasumigaseki)



The Irumagawa River



Isanuma Pond

**[Furuya district]**

The Arakawa River and Irumagawa River meet in this eastern district. There is much rural scenery and a lot of grains are grown here. National Route 16 cuts through the district, leading to the eastern part of the prefecture.

**[Minamifuruya district]**

In the city's southeast, this district is surrounded by the Arakawa River to the east and the Shingashigawa River to the west. A lot of grains are grown here. There are large malls near Minami-Furuya Station, such as UNICUS Minami-Furuya. There are many homes here as well.

**[Takashina district]**

This district is on a plain on the right bank of the Shingashigawa River on the city's southeastern side. National

Route 254 and the Tobu Tojo Line cross the district. From the Edo period through the Taisho periods, the Shingashigawa River was used to move many goods, and things from this time can still be seen in the area.

**[Fukuhara district]**

This district is located on the city's south side. In the mid-17th century, many new rice paddies were created here. There are still many farms and forests in the area. Kawagoe sweet potatoes are grown here.

**[Daito district]**

Located in the city's southwest side, part of the district is on the Musashino Plateau and part is river delta. National Route 16 leads to Sayama City, and there are many industrial parks and establishments along the road. Minami-Otsuka Station is a major trans-

portation hub in the area.

**[Kasumigaseki district]**

Kasumigaseki Country Club, opened in 1929, was used for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics golf games. This district is located in the western part of the city. The Irumagawa River flows to the



Kawagoe Aquatic Park full of greenery

south. There are many rice paddies along the Koazegawa River in the district's center. There are many homes around Matoba Station and Kasahata Station.

**[Kasumigasekikita district]**

This district is located in the western part of the city. The Irumagawa River flows to the east, and the Koazegawa River to the west. Many homes were built in the area in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Local people shop at the Kakuei Shopping Street. Oisezuka Park and Kasumigaseki Station are also located in the district.

**[Kawatsuru district]**

This district is located on the left bank of the Koazegawa River in between the Kasumigaseki and Naguwashi districts. The area was redeveloped for homes in the late 1970s and early

1980s. Kasahata Park, which has a baseball field, and Koaze Waterfowl Park are located in the district.

**[Naguwashi district]**

There are many farm fields in this district in the northwest of the city. There are sites from the Middle Ages, such as the Kawagoe-yakata Ruins and part of the Kamakura Highway. Tsurugashima Station is a transportation hub. The Waste Treatment and Recycling Center and nearby Naguwashi Park PiKOA are also in the district.

**[Yamada district]**

Located in the north of the city, there is much rural scenery in this district. National Route 254 passes through the district and the land along it is being developed. Saitama Prefectural Route 160 opened in 2019.



The Shingashigawa River



Aina Water Park

Isanuma Pond

This is the second largest pond in the Kanto region after Inbanuma in Chiba Prefecture. The pond is natural and approximately 2,500 meters around. Its water is used for farming. The pond was twice as large in the Edo period. Cherry trees bloom around the pond in spring, and lotuses in early summer. The Adventure Forest is nearby. The pond is used by over 100 species of wild birds, and there are many rare plants, such as *Limosella aquatica*.



Isanuma Pond in 1911

City flower



Japanese rose  
Chosen on October 15, 1982

City tree



Japanese blue oak  
Chosen on October 15, 1982

City bird



Goose  
Chosen on December 1, 1992

# A Story of History: Kawagoe from Ancient Times to the Taisho Period

## Kawagoe in the early Jomon period

Kawagoe is on the northern tip of the Musashino Plateau. In the early Jomon period around 7,000 to 5,500 years ago, ocean covered the land all the way to the Omiya Plateau and Ageo City. In what is now Kawagoe, the area around the Honmaru Goten and Kosemba Shell Mound, and along the Shingashigawa River faced the old Tokyo Bay. Because of this environment, the weather was mild, and there was a lot of nature in the area. The way people lived at this time can be seen from the shells, pottery, stone tools, and ruins of homes in places like the



Ancient canoe  
Kawagoe City Museum collection

What was Kawagoe like in ancient times? Once covered by shallow ocean around 6,000 years ago, the Kawagoe area later became a center of government. Ruled by the Kawagoe clan in the Middle Ages, after Kawagoe Castle was built, it became a busy castle town. In modern times, industry developed. Let's look back at the history of Kawagoe up until it became a city.

Kosemba Shell Mound, Kosemba 4-chome Ruins, and Bent-enminami Ruins. Because the ocean was so close, the people used its resources. In the late Jomon period, the ocean lowered and became further away. Because of this, the use of ocean resources decreased.

## Start of rice farming

The remains of pits from the mid-Yayoi period have been found at the site of Kawagoe Castle. Around 2,100 years ago in the mid-Yayoi period, people came to Kawagoe to farm rice in paddies.

## Hikawa Shrine

In the sixth century during the Kofun period, many burial mounds were made around the Shingashigawa River. Kawagoe's Hikawa Shrine was established in 540 as a branch shrine of Hikawa Shrine in Omiya, Saitama City. The shrine has a stone sword which was used for rituals. Hikawa shrines are connected to Hinokawa River in Izumo, where Susanoo killed the monster Yamata no Orochi. There are many Hikawa shrines in the area because people from Izumo moved here long ago.

## Musashi Province in the Nara period and ancient Korea

In the early eighth century, the government office of Musashi Province (now Saitama Prefecture) was established at

Okunitama Shrine in what is now Fuchu City, Tokyo. What is now Kawagoe was in Musashi Province's Iruma District. The government office for Iruma District was at the Kasumigasaki Ruins in Uwadoshinmachi, Kawagoe City. The kingdom of Goguryeo in Korea was destroyed due to invasion in 668. People from Goguryeo moved to the Irumagawa River and Shingashigawa River areas, and in 716, the new Koma District, written with the characters used to write "Goguryeo," was established.

## Kawagoe in the Nara and Heian periods and Miyoshino Village

In 743, Emperor Shomu created a new law which encouraged rich families, shrines, and temples to create and own rice fields. Many powerful families in Musashi Province and their children also created and owned rice fields. In addition, many shrines and temples were built in the Heian period. One reason is because many powerful families were moving into rural areas and wanted shrines and temples like in the capital. In 830, Muryojuji Temple (now the Kitain and Nakain Temples) was built by the priest Ennin.



The Tales of Ise were based on the life of Ariwara no Narihira  
The Thirty-six Immortal Poets (Ariwara no Narihira), Nikko Toshogu collection

A place in Kawagoe appears in *The Tales of Ise*, a Heian period poem collection. "They lived in Miyoshino Village in Iruma District." "Like the geese in the fields of Miyoshino Village who fly at the sound of the clapper, so my daughter flies to you." "Miyoshino Village in Iruma District" is believed to have been on the Irumagawa River in Kawagoe City.

## The Kawagoe clan and the Kamakura period: "Kawagoe" as a place name

From the end of the Heian period through the Kamakura period, many manors were established across Japan, and local samurai became powerful. When the Fujiwara clan took control of Japan, members of the imperial family and other nobles moved to the countryside and became rural samurai. In Musashi Province, there was a group of samurai called the Musashi-shichito. From the late Heian period to the Muro-machi period, the Musashi-shichito became more powerful. Part of this group, the Kawagoe clan, built a home in Uwado and made it their base. Kawagoe Shigeyori served the Shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo and was very important to him. Shigeyori's wife was Yoritomo's son's nursemaid, and his daughter married Yoritomo's younger brother Yoshitsune. However, when Yoritomo and Yoshitsune fought, Shigeyori was killed. The Kawagoe family line ended with Shigeyori's third son, Shigekazu. "Kawagoe" was used as the name for the area for the first time in the inscription on the Yojuin Temple's bronze bell made in 1260. The location written on the bell was the "Kawagoe-no-sho," the name of the Kawagoe clan's home.

## The Uesugi clan becomes powerful and Ota Dokan builds Kawagoe Castle

In 1331, Emperor Go-Daigo started the Genko War in Kyoto to defeat the Kamakura shogunate government. Kawagoe Sadashige served the shogunate and helped the government in the war. However, when the Rokuhara Tandai, an important part of the government, was defeated, Sadashige killed himself. When Sadashige's son, Takashige learned of this, he joined with Emperor Go-Daigo instead. The Kamakura shogunate government then lost in 1333. Emperor Go-Daigo ruled Japan for three years but was then defeated and the Ashikaga shogunate government was established. In 1368, Kawagoe Tadashige and other samurai rebelled against the Ashikaga shogunate. However, they were defeated by Uesugi Noriaki. After this, many members of the Kawagoe clan ran away to Ise. Miyoshino Shrine still has a

beautiful folding fan which a member of the rebellion donated to pray for victory. After the rebellion, the Kawagoe clan lost power. The Uesugi clan, who defeated the rebellion, began to rule the area.

The Uesugi clan was tied to the Ashikaga clan through marriage. Eventually, the Uesugi clan was put in charge of the Kanto region, and ruled the provinces of Kozuke, Echigo, Musashi, and Sagami. The Uesugi clan had four branches, and the Yamanouchi and Ogigayatsu branches became especially powerful.

In 1457, Ogigayatsu Uesugi Mochitomo, of the Ogigayatsu branch, ordered Ota Doshin and his son Dokan to build Edo Castle in Toshima District and Kawagoe Castle in Iruma District in Musashi Province. The Onin War in 1467 made it difficult for nobles to live in the capital. Many moved to the countryside, bringing the culture of the capital to rural areas. Ota Doshin loved culture, and he held a poetry party at Kawagoe Castle in 1470. The result was the *Kawagoe senku* poetry collection. Ota Dokan was good at military strategy and supported the Ogigayatsu Uesugi clan. However, because of trouble with other followers of the clan, in 1486, he

was killed by his lord, Ogigayatsu Uesugi Sadamasa.

#### The Nighttime Attack on Kawagoe and Hojo clan rulership

After the death of Dokan, the Ogigayatsu Uesugi clan became weaker and weaker. Hojo Ujitsuna of Odawara saw a chance to take control of Musashi Province. In 1524, he captured Edo Castle. The next year, he took Iwatsuki Castle. Finally, in 1537, he captured Kawagoe Castle. Later, Ogigayatsu Uesugi Tomosada wanted to take back Kawagoe Castle. He worked with the Yamanouchi Uesugi clan, Ashikaga Haruji, and Imagawa Yoshimoto. In 1545, when Hojo Ujijyasu was away, they surrounded Kawagoe Castle with a large army. Ujijyasu worked hard to fix the situation, making peace with Imagawa Yoshimoto and beginning negotiations. After the Ota clan, a very important clan to the Uesugi clan, switched sides to the Hojo clan, Ujijyasu decided to attack. Ujijyasu's army was small, but they made a surprise attack on May 19, 1546. The attack worked well, and Uesugi Tomosada was killed. This caused the end of the Ogigayatsu Uesugi clan. When Yamanouchi Uesugi Norimasa ran away to Hirai Castle in Kozuke, the Hojo clan fully ruled Musashi Province.

Thereafter, Kawagoe Castle was used as a support castle by the Hojo clan. The Daidoji clan, an important follower clan of the Hojo clan, was put in charge of Kawagoe Castle. In 1589, the powerful samurai Toyotomi Hideyoshi began trying to take control of Odawara. Daidoji Masashige was in charge of Kawagoe Castle and Matsuida Castle. When Hideyoshi's large army attacked Matsuida Castle, Masashige surrendered. Later, when Hideyoshi won, he ordered Masashige to kill himself on the sixth day of the seventh month of 1590.

#### Ieyasu moves to Edo and Kawagoe Domain is established

Toyotomi Hideyoshi ordered many lords to move to new places. In the eighth month of 1590, Tokugawa Ieyasu was ordered to move to Edo (now Tokyo). Ieyasu thought that Kawagoe was an important place. He put Sakai Shigetada, an important follower, in charge of the area and established Kawagoe Domain. After the Tokugawa shogunate was established, the domain was ruled by 21 lords from eight clans, including Shigetada. All of them were from clans which strongly supported the Tokugawa clan, and many held important government positions.

The Toki-no-kane (Time Bell Tower) was originally built on the grounds of the Jorenji Temple in Tagamachi (now

Saiwaicho) by Sakai Tadakatsu, the lord of Kawagoe, between 1627 and 1634. Tadakatsu was famous for always being on time and being strict. In 1733, a fire watchtower was added to the Time Bell Tower. The current Toki-no-kane (Time Bell Tower) was built the year after the Great Fire of Kawagoe of 1893.

#### The Kawagoe Highway

To support the Tokugawa shogunate government's control of the Kanto region, Kawagoe Domain was used to control the north Musashi area. Kawagoe Domain was very closely connected to Edo. This can be seen in the fact that all of the lords of Kawagoe were from clans which strongly supported the Tokugawa clan. In 1601, Tokugawa Ieyasu built up the highway system. He built post stations, expanded road widths, and added distance markers. His son, Hidetada, created the Five Highways of the Tokai, Nikko, Oshu, Nakasendo, and Koshu.

The Kawagoe Highway connected Edo and Kawagoe. There were five post stations on the route: Oi-juku (now Oi, Fujimi-

no City), Owada-juku (Owada, Niiza City), Hizaori-juku (Hizaoricho, Asaka City), Shirako-juku (Shirako, Wako City), and Itabashi-juku (Itabashi City, Tokyo). Cities developed around each of the post stations on the highway.

#### Kitain Temple and Senba Toshogu Shrine

The priest Ennin established Muryojuji Temple (now the Kitain, Nakain and Minamiin Temples) in 830. In 1599, Tenkai became the head priest of Muryojuji Temple. Tokugawa Ieyasu liked Tenkai very much. In 1612, the temple's name was changed to "Kitain" and the next year, in 1613, it was made the head temple of Tendai Buddhism in the Kanto region.

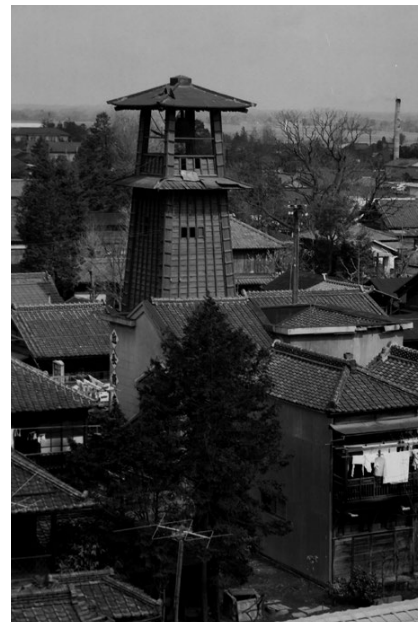
The year after Ieyasu died, in 1617, his body was brought from Kunoza to Nikko. Along the way, it was brought to Kitain Temple, and Tenkai held a memorial service. After this, Tenkai had Senba Toshogu Shrine built on the temple's grounds. However, the shrine was destroyed in the Great Fire of Kawagoe of 1638. Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third Tokugawa shogun, later ordered Hotta Masamori to rebuild the shrine (the shrine's stone torii gate was a gift from Masamori). The stone lanterns around the shrine were gifts from different lords of Kawagoe Domain. In the front shrine, there remains the *Thirty-six Immortals of Poetry* painted by Iwasa Matabei. The shrine also has 12 pictures of hawks painted by Kano Tan'yu which were a gift of Abe Shigetetsugu, lord of Iwatsuki Domain.



A memorial to Kawagoe Shigeyori at the Yojuin Temple



Kawagoe-yakata Ruins Historical Park



Toki-no-kane (Time Bell Tower) (March 1960)



Folding screen with images of the Edo area (Kawagoe Castle pictured)

National Museum of Japanese History collection

Tokugawa Iemitsu first visited Kawagoe in 1618 and visited often thereafter. He liked to go hunting in the area.

#### Renkeiji Temple becomes a center for Buddhist learning

The Tokugawa clan strongly supported Pure Land Buddhism. After the start of the Tokugawa shogunate government, the clan established 18 temples to serve as centers of Buddhist learning. These temples were like universities for priests. At that time, there were nine temples in Musashi Province, and one of them, Renkeiji Temple, was made one of the 18 centers for Buddhist learning. The temple is dedicated to Lord Donryu, who helped the poor.

#### The Great Fire of Kawagoe, the reorganization of the town, and the development of industry and trade

The town around Kawagoe Castle was destroyed in the Great Fire of Kawagoe of 1638. The next year, Matsudaira Nobutsuna, the lord of Kawagoe Domain, reorganized the town to help it recover.

He established five neighborhoods for merchants, five for craftsmen, a neighborhood for temples, and combined the surrounding villages into a single town. One unique feature of the new castle town was that there were many T-junctions but very few four-way crossroads.

This organization system was the foundation for central Kawagoe today. The merchants and craftsmen of Kawagoe created ten trade guilds. At first, most of the work done by the merchants and craftsmen was also directly for Kawagoe Domain. Eventually, more work began being done for the surrounding farming villages, and fabrics and rice became major industries in Kawagoe.

After Akimoto Takatomo brought silk production to Kawagoe Domain from Yamura Domain, Kawagoe Domain began making “Kawagoe Hira” silk. Silk was very expensive then. Kawagoe’s merchants sold silk in Edo and farming villages throughout the countryside, and many kimono fabric shops were established.

In the merchant neighborhoods, markets were held on dates with two, six, or nine in them. Later, markets were also held on dates with four in them, and markets were held in many locations. As the merchant neighborhoods developed, the market stalls eventually became permanent shops.

#### Major improvements to Kawagoe Castle

When Ota Doshin and his son Dokan built Kawagoe Castle, they made the Honmaru, Ninomaru, Sannomaru, and moat.

In 1639, Matsudaira Nobutsuna made major improvements to the castle and made it bigger. He added extra defenses as well as three turrets, including the Fujimi Yagura. The Fujimi Yagura was 15 meters tall. The tallest structure in the castle, it was used instead of a main castle tower.

The current Honmaru Goten is much newer. It was built in



Senba Toshogu Shrine



Renkeiji Temple

1848 by Matsudaira Naritsune, the 18th lord of Kawagoe Domain.

#### Matsudaira Nobutsune and Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu make new rice fields

In the Edo period, rice was the center of the Japanese economy. Good farming was very important.

Fifty years into the Edo period, the population of Edo (Tokyo) had grown very large and there was not enough water for everyone. To fix this problem, Matsudaira Nobutsuna, who was also a member of the shogun’s council, started building the Tamagawa Aqueduct in 1653 to bring water from the Tamagawa River. The work was difficult, but the aqueduct was finished in 1654. As a reward for his hard work, Nobutsuna was allowed to use some of the water from the aqueduct at Nobidome (now Niiza City) in Kawagoe Domain. Nobutsuna made new rice fields at Nobidome and moved 55 farming families to the area. The Nobidome Canal was finished in 1655, and many new rice fields were made. The farmers were very happy, and, based on Nobutsuna’s official title, called the canal “Lord Izu’s Moat.”

The Nobidome Canal was 24 kilometers long, going from the Tamagawa Aqueduct through the Nobidome Plateau to the Shingashigawa River area. Seventy percent of the water from the Tamagawa River was used for the Tamagawa Aqueduct and thirty percent for the Nobidome Canal. The water from the Nobidome Canal was used for farming, drinking water, and other daily needs.

Nobutsuna also made new rice fields in nine other villages in the area of what is now Kawagoe City to Sayama City. Nobutsuna’s goal was to help small farmers become independent. This would increase tax collection and make Kawagoe Domain richer.

Later, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu became the lord of Kawagoe Domain. In 1694, he ordered Sone Gondayu to turn the Jizo Forest south of Kawagoe Castle into farms. This area was then called the Santome area. (Santome Village started being created in 1696, and harvests were ordered starting in 1700.)

#### Kawagoe Domain at the end of the Edo period: The defense of Odaiba and the end of Kawagoe Domain

In 1853, United States Navy ships, led by Matthew C. Perry, came to Uruga. They wanted Japan to open up to international trade.

After Perry left, the Japanese government built defenses off the coast of Shinagawa to protect Edo Bay from foreign ships. Kawagoe Domain, Aizu Domain, and Oshi Domain

were ordered to take charge of these forts.

In 1866, Matsudaira Yasuhide became the lord of Tanagura Domain. In the tenth month of 1867, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the 15th Tokugawa shogun, returned power to the emperor. The next year, in the first month of 1868, the old Edo government army lost to the new Meiji government’s army in the Battle of Toba-Fushimi. Matsudaira Yasuhide decided to join with the new Meiji government. Yasuhide quit his position under Tokugawa Yoshinobu and went to Kyoto. In Kyoto, Yasuhide was made to stay in his house for a time, but his choice saved Kawagoe Domain from war with the new Meiji government. In the fifth month of that same year, Kawagoe Domain was attacked by forces who supported the old government. The forces supporting the old government lost in the Hanno War.

In 1869, Yasuhide retired and made his son-in-law Yasutoshi the leader of the Matsudaira clan. Shortly after, Yasutoshi returned control of Kawagoe Domain to the emperor and was made the governor of Kawagoe Domain. In 1871, the



A map of Kawagoe in 1694  
Kawagoe City Central Library collection

Meiji government ended the domain system and established the prefecture system. Kawagoe Domain became Kawagoe Prefecture. The history of Kawagoe Domain started when Sakai Shigetada was made lord of the new domain in 1590 and lasted 281 years. Now, Kawagoe Domain was no more. Kawagoe Prefecture was ended just four months later and the area was reorganized several times, becoming Iruma Prefecture in 1871, Kumagaya Prefecture in 1873, and then Saitama Prefecture in 1876.

### The great Meiji fires and Kawagoe

Today, Kawagoe is famous for its Kurazukuri townscape of traditional old storehouses. In fact, most of the Kurazukuri storehouses are not from the Edo period. (The oldest, the Osawa House, was built in 1792.) Three huge fires occurred in Kawagoe during the Meiji period. The one that broke out on March 17, 1893, destroyed more than one fourth of central Kawagoe. The merchants of Kawagoe saw that storehouses survived the fire. They decided to build new storehouse-style homes that fires wouldn't destroy. Several years later, Kawagoe's Kurazukuri townscape had been created.

Today, the Kurazukuri storehouse homes that were in Edo (Tokyo) are gone, but they still exist in Kawagoe. Through them, we can see what life was like in the past.

### Industry and trade become modern: The 85th National Bank and the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce

In the Edo period, Kawagoe's castle town was the economic center of the nearby area. When Kawagoe Domain was ended in 1871, it was difficult for Kawagoe's merchants and they had to change. Even in the Meiji period, fabrics and grains from local farms were still the center of Kawagoe's industry.



Kajimachi Street in the late 1870s/early 1880s

From the Edo to the Meiji periods, Kawagoe developed because of fabric exports. This was a good match for the new Meiji government, which wanted to make Japan stronger.



The Kawagoe Castle Honmaru Goten chief retainer's office



A map showing the destruction in Kawagoe caused by the Great Fire of Kawagoe of 1893  
Kawagoe City Museum collection

### Protecting history and culture also helps a city to grow

Shino Ayako became a historical novel writer because she studied and was interested in classical literature in university. Her 2005 book *Yoshitsune to Satohime* was about the tragic life of Shigeyori Kawagoe's daughter Satohime. Shino



At the Kawagoe Castle Honmaru Goten

says it eventually led to her writing *Seizan ni ari* as well. "I visited Kawagoe to research about Satohime, and I found a book about Ogawara Samiya, Kawagoe Domain's chief retainer. He lived during the end of the Edo period. His life and death were very interesting, and I thought he could be the main character of a novel. In the end, I made the main character the son of Samiya, who didn't actually exist in real life. Before this, I always wrote about the Heian and Kamakura periods, but Kawagoe Domain was so interesting, it made me want to write about the end of the Edo period."

*Seizan ni ari* won an award from the Japan Historical Writers' Association. After writing *Yoshitsune to Satohime*, Shino was invited to hold lectures, and she became even more connected to Kawagoe. Kawagoe's Kurazukuri townscape and the site of Kawagoe Castle show the history of the area. Shino says she feels the weight of history in Kawagoe's castle town scenery.

"Kawagoe's castle town scenery is beautiful, and now it is becoming famous as a tourism destination. I believe that Kawagoe will continue to grow and be the center of Saitama Prefecture. I hope Kawagoe will continue to protect its amazing history and culture to share with future generations and people from the area and beyond."

## Shino Ayako

### Novelist

Shino Ayako writes historical novels.

Her 2018 novel *Seizan ni ari* takes place in Kawagoe. Shino chose Kawagoe because she was very interested in the history of Kawagoe Domain at the end of the Edo period.



*Seizan ni ari* is a novel about a short but beautiful friendship.

## Interview

### profile

Born in Kasukabe City, Saitama Prefecture in 1971, she graduated from Tokyo Gakugei University. She is a historical novel writer. Her first book, *Haru no yo no yume no gotoku: Shin Heike kindachi zoshi* won the Kenyukan Literary Prize. She has published many other works. *Seizan ni ari* won an award from the Japan Historical Writers' Association in 2019.



The government gave bonds to former samurai, but this didn't work well. Japan needed money to flow, and banks to do this. Thanks to the work of the rich merchant Ayabe Riemon, the 85th National Bank, the first national bank in the prefecture, was opened in Kawagoe in 1878. Also, in 1896, the bank's management opened the Kawagoe Savings Bank. The original bank building was destroyed in the Great Fire of Kawagoe of 1893. The current building was built in 1918. In 1880, seven Kawagoe merchants started the Kawagoe Bank and, in 1913, the Kawagoe Watanabe Bank was established.

In April 1889, Japan established the municipal system. Around this time, trade and industry in Kawagoe was doing well, and Kawagoe Town was strongly connected to the farm villages in the area. Farming families and former samurai in the area began making fabrics, and Kawagoe Town started to become a center of trade and industry.

The need for materials because of the First Sino-Japanese War, which started in 1894, also helped trade and industry in Kawagoe to grow. In 1900, Saitama's first chamber of commerce was established in Kawagoe. The Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce greatly helped the growth of industry and trade in Kawagoe. Some of the things the chamber helped with include the building of an electric railway between Kawagoe and Omiya in 1906, the opening of the Kawagoe Dyeing and Weaving School (later Kawagoe Technical High School) in 1908, the establishment of an emergency telephone, and the establishment of the Kawagoe Textile Market Corporation in 1910. Kawagoe's trade and industry became weak in the Taisho period. It became stronger with the need for materials in World War I (1914–1918), then became weak again. In 1928, the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce changed its name to the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The chamber had to close during World War II, but was re-established after and still exists today.

#### Kawagoe's railway history

Kawagoe's merchants originally used the Shingashigawa River to move their goods. Because of this, they were not interested in a railway. However, in 1895, merchants from Tokorozawa and Koma District opened the Kawagoe Railway (now the Seibu Railway) between Tokyo and Kawagoe. They also opened Kawagoe Station (now Hon-Kawagoe Station). This was the start of the history of railways in Kawagoe. In 1906, electricity became available in Kawagoe Town. Then, the Kawagoe Electric Railway was opened between Kawagoe's Kubomachi and Omiya. The Tojo Railway (now the Tobu Tojo Line) opened between Tanomozawa and Ike-

bukuro in 1914.

Goods were moved by train, but they also continued to be moved by boat on the Shingashigawa River. However, the Tojo Railway grew, and then Saitama Prefecture ordered boats to stop being used in 1931. After this, only trains were used.

In 1940, the Japan National Railways Kawagoe Line (now the JR Kawagoe Line) opened. With this, Kawagoe's railway network was completed. It is still used today.

#### Nakajima Kyuhei and Kawagoe Tozan

Starting in the Edo period, Kawagoe was famous for fabrics. Fabrics such as Kawagoe Hira and Kawagoe Nanako were made by women and children in the homes of Kawagoe and the nearby farm villages. In the Meiji period, fabrics were also important to Kawagoe as an export industry. In Japan, "Tozan" cotton fabric was once imported in small amounts from other countries. It was much more expensive than silk. In the Meiji period, it became possible to buy very nice but cheap cotton thread from Western countries. This made it possible to make Tozan in Japan.

Nakajima Kyuhei was a businessman from Kawagoe. He saw the danger of cheap cotton fabric from Western countries. He bought cheap imported cotton thread in Yokohama and brought it to a fabric maker in Kawagoe to try to make Tozan. They were able to make Tozan that was as good as imported fabric, and it was cheaper. Kyuhei began having many fabric makers in Kawagoe make lots of Tozan. This

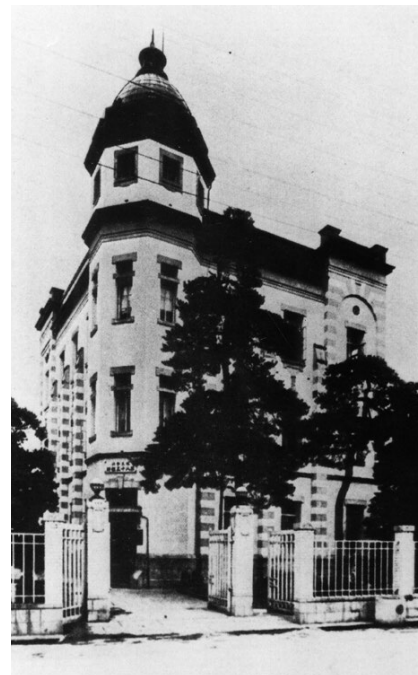


Townscape on the south side of Shigimachi Street. From right to left: A fertilizer shop, a medicine shop, a large fabric shop, and a Western goods shop (1911)

was the start of Kawagoe Tozan. Kawagoe Tozan was a hit. People called it "Kawato." It was sold all over Japan, and Kawagoe became famous for making high quality Tozan. Kawagoe's beautiful Tozan was popular up until the late 1890s to the early 1900s.

#### The Kawagoe Textile Market

The Kawagoe Textile Market was opened in 1910. The Kawagoe Textile Market Association and Kawagoe Textile Market Corporation were also established. Three weeks after the Kawagoe Textile Market's ridgepole-raising ceremony, a market opening ceremony was held. The fabric market was held six times a month. Fabric makers expected the market to be a hit. However, they made their fabrics by hand, and people began wanting machine-made fabrics. After World War I, there was also very little thread to make fabric. Because of this, the market closed in 1919.



The 85th National Bank



Minamimachi Street in 1912

#### Special large-scale army maneuvers at Kawagoe Junior High School

Emperor Meiji died on July 30, 1912. At the order of the new Emperor Taisho, "special large-scale army maneuvers" were



The Kawagoe Electric Railway opened in 1906



The Kawagoe Watanabe Bank (1913)



Kawagoe Tozan fabric



The Kawagoe Textile Market (1910)



Battle training (1912)

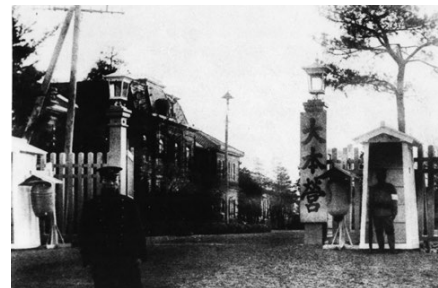
held in Kawagoe and other places in November 1912. Imperial General Headquarters and quarters were set up at Kawagoe Junior High School (now Prefectural Kawagoe High School). The new emperor came to Kawagoe to watch the maneuvers. A new Town Hall building was built just before the visit as well.

**Kawagoe becomes Saitama's first city**

In 1918, Kawagoe Town set up a special committee to make Kawagoe a city. Because Kawagoe's population was not large enough to be a city under the law, the decision was made to merge with the nearby Senba Village. Kawagoe Town was a center of trade and industry, especially grains. Kawagoe's population was also growing because of its railway network. Local people were very excited about the merger and becoming a city.

Senba Village agreed to the merger in April 1922. Finally, on December 1, 1922, Kawagoe Town became Kawagoe City, Saitama's first city. After the merger with Senba Village, its population was over 30,000 people. An election for city council was held in February the next year, and three political groups were established: the Doshikai, the Tesshinkai, and the Koyukai. The members of the Doshikai were merchants and other people who had traditionally held political power in Kawagoe. The Tesshinkai's members were pro-government or neutral, and many came from Senba Village. The Koyukai's members were graduates of Kawagoe Junior High School or businessmen.

A festival was held for three days starting on December 17 to celebrate the new city. Kawagoe Town Hall became Kawagoe City Hall, and the building was lit up at night. Red and white curtains, city flags, and lanterns were hung around the city. Festival floats were also pulled around the city. It was a big party.



The Imperial General Headquarters at Kawagoe Junior High School (1912)



The former Kawagoe City Hall



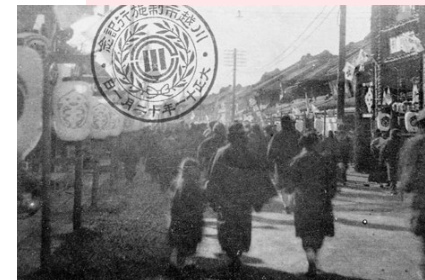
The Takazawamachi festival float



The Edomachi festival float



The Shigimachi festival float



Minamimachi Street



Shigimachi Street



The Kamimatsuecho festival float



Near Renkeiji Temple



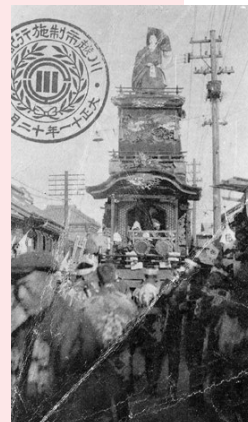
Honcho Street



The former Kawagoe City Hall lit up at night



The Kitamachi festival float



The Minamimachi festival float

1922  
Kawagoe Celebrates  
Becoming a City