

The creation of the Tomioka Silk Mill and other silk reeling factories made it possible to efficiently produce high-quality silk all across Japan. Production was hindered only by the number of cocoons that were produced in each area. Cocoons were harvested only once a year, and the yield was still unreliable. Silkworms are particularly vulnerable to disease, and an outbreak could cause a large-scale sericulture farm to suddenly lose all their silkworms. Furthermore, silk quality is strongly affected by the conditions in which the silkworms are raised, which made the industry unstable overall. Two sericulture schools, each of which promoted new techniques for silkworm rearing, helped educate the new generation of silkworm farmers and push silk production to the fore of the Meiji industrial era. The two schools, Takayama-sha and Kyoshin-sha, were founded by brothers who had figured out that the right combination of heat and ventilation could cause silkworms to mature quickly. The schools they started both educated thousands of students and created a huge increase in cocoon production across Japan.