

The Takayama-sha sericulture school in Fujioka operated from 1884 to 1927. The school taught the most up-to-date sericulture methods of its day to people from all over Japan, as well as countries like Korea, China, and Taiwan. Takayama-sha was founded by Takayama Chogoro (1830–1886), a former samurai who turned his ancestral home into a sericulture farm after the start of the Meiji Restoration in 1867. For six years, Chogoro failed to produce a good crop of silkworm cocoons, but he continued to try different methods and eventually found success by combining Tajima Yahei's *seiryō-iku* ventilation technique with a technique from Fukushima called *ondan-iku* in which the air around the silkworms is heated. Although the heat needed to be regulated carefully to prevent disease, it also encouraged the silkworms to grow faster and spin their cocoons after 28 days rather than 50. Chogoro combined the names of these two methods, calling his new approach *seion-iku*, and he shared his knowledge freely with his neighbors. As his reputation grew, silkworm farmers from across Japan began to visit his home to ask for advice. This led Chogoro to turn his sericulture farm into a school. Soon there wasn't enough room at the Takayama-sha for all the students, so a new building and several branch schools were built. Unlike the head school, the branch schools did not charge tuition in order to allow poorer families to attend. Of the thousands of graduates, 3,500 became sericulture teachers themselves, traveling around Japan to teach the *seion-iku* technique at the request of various cities. Takayama-sha has been credited with the rapid expansion of Japan's silk industry by cultivating a broad base of knowledgeable farmers and teachers.