

Bungotakada became a castle town sometime during the period of recurrent civil war in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The region has over a thousand years of history, but today the town is known for its *Showa no Machi*. The name refers to the latter half of the Showa period, from about the 1950s to the 1980s, which is often regarded as the “good old days.” First created by a collective of seven shops in 2001, the Showa no Machi is made up of forty shops that have been restored to the way they looked and operated in the 1950s and 60s. The collective requires members to display antiques and curios as part of its *itten ippo* (or “one shop, one treasure”) scheme, and the area feels as much like a museum as it does a commercial district. Although 400,000 tourists visit the town each year, most of the traffic is on holidays and weekends, and the town is peacefully quiet during the work week.

In order to maintain the profitability of each shop, the forty-odd members of the collective also abide by their *itten ippin* (“one shop, one product”) rule. This rule requires each shop to have a unique product for sale and forbids other shops from copying that product. Along the avenues, you can find treats from the period including *dagashi* candies and deep-fried croquettes; at the Showa Roman Kura center there is a collection of antique cars, and old bank notes are on display at the historic bank building. A restored antique bus runs through the town on weekends and holidays, and the area regularly hosts local gatherings and events.