

The Development of Takayama-sha

In 1873, the silk production company that would become Takayama-sha Sericulture School was founded under the name Takayama Group, in the small village of Takayama.

The founders of Takayama-sha understood it was not enough to simply lecture on the biological theory of raising silkworms. Academic study was given equal emphasis with practical training. Takayama Chōgorō (1830–1886) began teaching at his home as early as 1884, and by 1901 there were so many students at Takayama-sha that the members of the company opened a new school, the Takayama-sha Private Sericulture Industrial School in Fujioka. Dying in 1886, Chōgorō himself did not live to see his dream of spreading his method of sericulture throughout Japan realized.

Machida Kikujirō (1850–1917) was the school's first headmaster. Tuition cost 6.5 yen per month—equivalent to roughly 35,000 yen today—and included room and board. The regular sericulture course covered academics, sericulture theory, and practical skills through experience, but there was also a second program focused solely on practical skills for those who could not afford tuition fees. Combining theory and practice as well as continued development, the school drew students from all across the growing Japanese Empire, including both Taiwan and Korea, and even from China. The school closed its doors in 1927, ending half a century of pioneering sericulture education.