

The Kaga Domain and Nanto

For most of the Edo period (1603–1868), the Kaga domain, also known as the Kanazawa domain, covered roughly what is now the east and west of Toyama Prefecture, as well as most of what is now Ishikawa Prefecture. During that time, land value was determined by a system known as *kokudaka*, expressed in *roku* or bushels of rice (each 150g). The Kaga domain ruled by the Maeda clan was the largest domain within the Tokugawa shogunate in terms of annual rice yield and had an assessed *kokudaka* of over one million *roku*.

The area known as Nanto today includes the towns and villages of Gokayama, Johana, Inami, Iguchi, Fukumitsu, Fukuno, and Toga, all of which were ruled by the Kaga domain. Some of these areas had strong industrial and artisanal connections to the Kaga. Johana's high-quality silk fabrics made from raw silk produced in Gokayama and Fukumitsu were a specialty of the Kaga domain and were in high demand in areas such as Kansai (where Kyoto is located) and present-day Tokyo. The Gokayama region contributed to the Kaga domain with its high-quality washi paper as well as saltpeter, an essential component in gunpowder, which strengthened the Kaga domain's defenses. The Gokayama region was also a foremost site where the Kaga domain banished exiles. Gokayama's challenging terrain made the area an ideal place for exiling criminals, as it was very difficult to enter or leave, especially during the winter when the area was completely isolated.