

## Brick Chimney

Efforts to repair this rare brick chimney became an inspiration to the local community in the aftermath of the 2004 Great Chuetsu Earthquake. The community was recovering from widespread damage, and here it sought to restore one of the last remaining regional examples of a chimney from the Meiji era (1868–1912).

Koshi no Murasaki, a soy sauce producer founded in 1831, built the chimney. The exact date of its construction is unknown. However, it predates the rest of the current structure, which was completed in 1933. During the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, it was common for soy sauce makers to use such large-scale chimneys in conjunction with coal-fired furnaces as part of their production process. At the height of its use, this chimney would billow black smoke throughout the day, making it a familiar local landmark.

Advancements in both the soy sauce production process and technology in general have rendered the use of coal unnecessary, so the chimney and its furnace are no longer in use. Today, it stands at approximately two-thirds its former height.