

## **City of Toyota**

The city of Toyota is approximately an hour by train east of Nagoya, the capital of Aichi Prefecture, located in the center of Japan's main island of Honshu. With a population of over 420,000 and at 918 square kilometers in size, Toyota is part of the Chukyo region, one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world.

The city is best known as the headquarters of the Japanese multinational corporation Toyota, but the history of what is now the city of Toyota dates back long before the invention of the automobile. In the Kamakura period (1185–1333), fortifications were constructed around modern-day Toyota, which was originally part of Koromo domain. Koromo Castle, also known as Shichishu Castle, was built in 1785 on the hill now occupied by the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art.

The village of Matsudaira, the ancestral home of the Matsudaira samurai family, has been part of Toyota since 1970. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), who was born Matsudaira Takechiyo, founded the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled Japan from 1603 to 1867. Many historical sites are associated with the Matsudaira family, such as Kogetsuin Temple, the Matsudaira Castle Site, and the Matsudaira Toshogu Shrine, which is located on the site of a former Matsudaira residence and is dedicated to Ieyasu and the family's founder, Matsudaira Chikauji (d. 1394).

Until the end of the 1950s, Toyota was called Koromo. In the early twentieth century, Koromo and the surrounding area were known for their abundant forests and silk production, but by the 1930s, with the onset of the Great Depression, worldwide demand for silk fell into decline. In an effort to revive industry in Koromo, the mayor Nakamura Juichi (1892–1956) lobbied Toyoda Kiichiro (1894–1952) to locate Toyota Motor Corporation's first manufacturing plant in the town. Toyoda eventually built a large-scale facility, company housing, and a school for the children of employees. The Koromo factory, now known as the Toyota Honsha plant, opened in 1938, making the town a center for Japan's then rapidly growing automotive industry.

In 1959, after a public campaign to change the city's name to highlight its commitment to modern industry and to recognize the contribution of its largest employer, Koromo officially became Toyota. As Japan's automobile industry achieved worldwide success in the latter half of the twentieth century, the city boomed. Today, Toyota has six

manufacturing plants in its namesake city, as well as its headquarters and company museums.

The economic boom brought cultural benefits. Toyota today has several major attractions and landmarks designed by prominent architects. The Toyota Municipal Museum of Art, built in 1995, was designed by Taniguchi Yoshio (b. 1937); Kurokawa Kisho (1934–2007), the architect behind Tokyo's Nakagin Capsule Tower, designed the Toyota Ohashi Bridge (opened in 1999) and Toyota Stadium (opened in 2001). The 45,000-seat stadium is the home field of both the Nagoya Grampus soccer team and the Toyota Verblitz rugby union team. The stadium hosted matches during the 2019 Rugby World Cup.

In 1989, the city held its first Toyota Oiden Matsuri. The citywide festival features dancing in the streets and culminates in the largest fireworks display in the region. Despite its industrial history, approximately 70 percent of the municipality is forested. There are several popular hiking trails around the city, including scenic excursions on Mt. Sanage and in the Otaki Valley.