

Welcome to the Historical Museum of Iron

This museum introduces the history and development of ironmaking in the region. Traditional iron smelting is done with a furnace called a *tatara*. A *tatara* can be defined as a clay furnace that burns charcoal to smelt iron sand into steel. Displays in the museum's three exhibit halls show the development of ironmaking using examples of raw materials, tools, models, and the finished items made from *tatara*-smelted iron and steel.

A visit to the museum begins in the theater on the far side of Exhibit Hall 1 (across from the entrance) with a 30-minute documentary on the history of *tatara* smelting. The documentary is available in Japanese or English, with subtitles in Korean or Simplified Chinese.

Exhibit Hall 1: Smelting

Display cases on the first floor contain items made with the last batch of steel produced at Sugaya Ironworks Village, as well as items used in the wholesale of metal ingots. The staircase nearby leads to displays on the second floor that introduce the tools and culture of ironmaking. One display has samples of iron slag (waste material) excavated from 45 sites in one district of Unnan, illustrating the prevalence of iron smelting in this region.

Exhibit Halls 2 & 3: Smithing and Shipping

The museum's other two exhibit halls are located across the back garden, on the other side of a small bridge. These exhibits and dioramas show how low-grade iron was refined and shaped for shipment throughout Japan. The high-quality iron sand found in this region made it a vital production center for both iron and steel as early as the mid-fourteenth century.