

Town Restoration Like a Phoenix

With the Pride of Nagaoka Residents

The town of Nagaoka was completely burned as a result of the three-month long severe battles. Around 300 people died in the battles and nearly 100 civilian residents were victimized.

Nagaoka Domain was despised as rebels and harsh days would begin. The lord clan Makino escaped discontinuation, the fief of 74,000 koku was reduced to 24,000 koku, and the people suffered starvation and poverty.

Yet, the people of Nagaoka would never lose their honesty and fortitude and gather all of their remaining energy. Around this time, two childhood friends of Tsuginosuke assisted Nagaoka's revival as senior counselors.

One was Mishima Okujiro, who travelled everywhere seeing relief for Nagaoka Domain. In 1870, he decided to abolish the feudal domain system, considering Nagaoka's financial difficulties, and promoted samurai's return to farming and commerce and industrialization in corporation with townspeople.

The other was Kobayashi Torasaburo, who emphasized human resource development. Kome Hyappyo No Koji, or "an account of 100 bales of rice" tells that he sold relief rice sent from Mineyama Domain to build Kokkan Gakkō (Kokkan School).

Thus, Nagaoka achieved steady reconstruction from the ashes, and in 1906, "Nagaoka-shi (Nagaoka City)" was established with Makino



Yamamoto Tatewaki: He was called a child prodigy and at the age of eight, he was adopted by Yamamoto Kanemon, the chief counselor of Nagaoka Domain, who was a relative of Tatewaki's biological parents, Yasuda.



Yamamoto Isoroku: His grandfather, father, and two older brothers joined the Boshin War from his biological family, the Takanos. Isoroku is said to have respected Kawai Tsuginosuke as a forerunner from his home town.

Yamamoto Tatewaki, a brave general who met an untimely demise

A young battalion commander who assisted Tsuginosuke

He contributed to the Nagaoka troops as a battalion commander and was expected to succeed to Tsuginosuke as the Governor-general after his death.

He led 120 clansmen and fought hard to defend Kuragake Pass, a perilous place on the Hachijurigoe path, as the rear guard. He subsequently entered Aizu lagging behind other troops, charged in by following the plan to seize Niidera temple without knowing the retreat of the allies, and was surrounded by enemies while being unable to attack them, believing that they were the allies.

Tatewaki was ordered to surrender, but refuted saying, "how could I turn against the favor given by the 300 years of the Tokugawa shogunate? We are at the battlefield by the order of Nagaoka Domain, which has not ordered us to surrender," which made the enemies flinch.

Tatewaki, who was beheaded at the age 24 after being exposed to cold winds through the night, was named one of the masterminds of the war besides Tsuginosuke, and the Yamamoto clan was once broken off.

In later years, Yamamoto Isoroku restored this distinguished family through the good offices of the first mayor of Nagaoka. Isoroku, too, died tragically during the World War II.

Tadaatsu as the first mayor.

Although the city would later repeat the history of suffering caused by air strikes during the World War II, it would be restored again like a phoenix by the vitality of the Nagaoka people. How does Tsuginosuke feel looking down the current view of the city, which has achieved restoration and development, from the above?

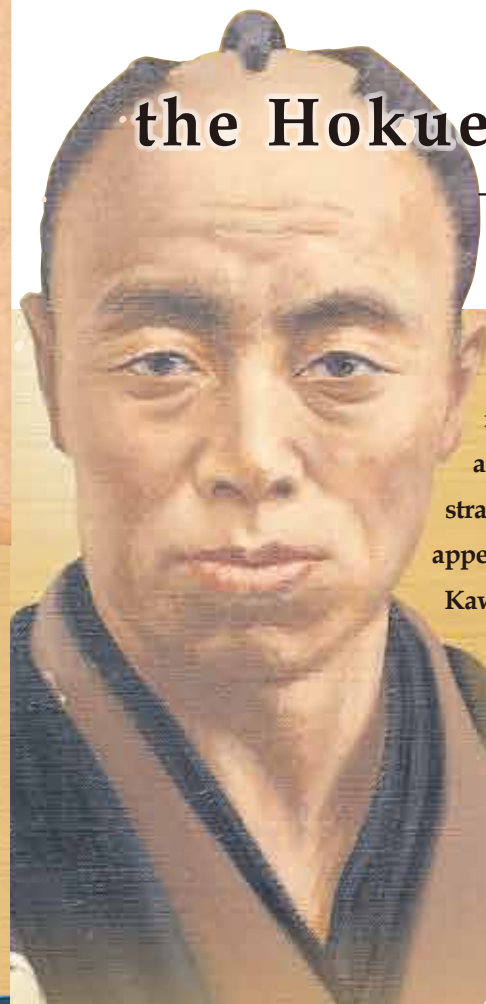


Kome Hyappyo No Gunzo (group of 100 bales of rice [same (Nagaoka City)]

Soryu-kutsu in Nagaoka

(Cave of the Blue Dragon)

Kawai Tsuginosuke, the whizz-kid of Echigo, and the Hokuetsu Boshin War



Echigo at the end of the Edo period, When influential Han, or feudal domains, such as Satsuma and Choshu were in a battle of wits with shrewd strategies, a great revolutionary of the time gallantly appeared in Nagaoka Domain with only 74,000 koku.

Kawai Tsuginosuke, a man who aspired to rise to the central government from Echigo-Nagaoka, a domain with heavy winter snows. Tsuginosuke, who aimed to achieve armed neutrality of the domain on a grand scale, challenged head to head the overwhelming military power of Satsuma and Choshu.

A Road to Domain (Han) Reform: Studying in Various Provinces

A Boy Standing Out with His Brilliance

On January 1, 1827, Tsuginosuke was born the first son of Kawai Daiuemon Akinori, a middle-class clansman of Nagaoka Domain.

He was a stubborn child and never gave in to unfair threats of older people, and his mother, Sada, secretly thought he was hopeful.

Meanwhile, his father was concerned about Tsuginosuke's future as a clansman and nearly forcibly made him take lessons to lean literary and military arts.

Tsuginosuke, however, would not listen to his instructors, insisting that the only important thing in horsemanship was to let the horse run and the only important thing in gunnery was to make the bullet hit the target.

At yet, he began to study seriously when he learned of Yangmingism, or the doctrines of Wang Yang-ming, that taught that knowledge and action should be consistent.

To Edo and to the Western Japan

When he was 24, he married a sister of a Nagaoka clansman, Nagino Kahee, named Suga, who was seven years junior to him. When he was 26, however, he left for Edo alone for his compelling love of learning. He visited Sakuma Shozan and others who were renowned scholars of Western sciences and gunnery.

Just then, Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the

United States arrived in Japan, and Tsuginosuke, who sensed that the situation was tense, suggested to the then lord of Nagaoka Domain, Makino Tadamasu, a senior councilor of the shogunate, the necessity of reforming the Han-based political system. This was accepted and Tsuginosuke was appointed to his first official position as a conference advisor; however, he was persecuted by his superior and soon resigned from the position.

In 1857, he succeeded his father to become the head of the family and was appointed to Tozama ("outside") Daimyo examiner in his domain. Around this time, his passion for learning began controlling him again.

In 1858, Tsuginosuke once again went over the mountains in a snowstorm. He did not just stop at Edo this time, but he traveled further to the west. He headed for Yamada Hokoku, a scholar of the Wang Yang-ming school living in Bitchu-Matsuyama Han (current Takahashi, Okayama Prefecture). He kowtowed to the reformist who had saved his domain from financial crisis and studied as his disciple for six months.

Reforms in Anticipation for Japan as a Modern State

In 1861, Tsuginosuke returned home when he was 35, stored up his energy for a while, and

civil wars. It has deeply rooted in Nagaoka through the 250 years of the clan's governance, which continues have an impact today.

In particular, the teaching to be constantly alert for danger as if being in a battlefield was the most important principle of the clansmen. Tsuginosuke also respected this principle.

"Chiritsubo" (Nagaoka City Central Library (Nagaoka city)) A travel journal written by Tsuginosuke about the people's lives, nature, politics, etc. at the places he visited for studies.



created storms.

As the movement to restore the emperor to power intensified, he was appointed to Kyoto police deputy and then to a senior councilor of the shogunate by the then lord of Nagaoka Domain, Makino Tadayuki; however, he requested resignation, fearing that he might be fallen along with the fall of the feudal system. Tadayuki was displeased, and Tsuginosuke resigned from his position.

In 1865, however, he assumed the position of Tozama Daimyo examiner after being appointed again by Tadayuki, and he immediately solved a conflict between the village headman and residents of Yamanaka Village (former town of

Takayanagi in Kariwa and the current city of Kashiwazaki). From then on, he began to make exceptional achievements.

He not only reorganized the Nagaoka Domain government and implemented financial reforms, but prohibited bribery and gambling that had become commonplace and abolished the red-light district. He also began punishing samurai for any unfair collection of taxes and protected farmers and abolished river tax and stock privilege for commercial development. Correction of the amounts of clansmen's fiefs and abolition of lineage privileges were also epoch-making at the time, and he fully exploited his unmeasurable talents.

Hokuetsu Boshin War: Part 1

Beginning of the Hokuetsu Boshin War

Aiming for Armed Neutrality of Nagaoka Domain

Tsuginosuke worked to abolish the outdated order of feudal society and reform people's minds. He had the vision of a new and powerful state, an armed, neutral state that would not reply on others and not be affected by others, but survive on its own.

He also focused significantly on armaments to achieve this goal. He carefully selected weapons and purchased Minié rifles that proved effective in the Crimean War from Schnell, a Prussian arms dealer.

He also established a military academy in Nakajima and promoted the French-style military system. As a result, Nagaoka Domain achieved the modern armament of itself that made even powerful domains surprised.

In 1867, the political power was returned to the Emperor by the Tokugawa shogunate in October, and in December, the Imperial Court issued the

order to restore the imperial rule. Tsuginosuke was in charge of gold mint of the Tokugawa shogunate at the time, and visited Kyoto in support of Nagaoka lord, Tadakuni, to fulfil his role as a hereditary daimyo. He severely criticized the plot of some Western domains and submitted a proposal to restore the power of the Tokugawa shogunate.

The court nobles, however, did not accept his appeal and the fatal year, 1868, arrived. On January 3, the Boshin War started with the Battle of Toba-Fushimi.

Approach of the New Government Army to Echigo

The so-called New Government Army that won the battle in Kyoto and forced Tokugawa to surrender Edo Castle without fighting sent troops to various regions to control resistance forces.

On March 15, the Hokuriku Pacification Governor-general, Takakura Nagasachi, and

Nagaoka Domain where Tsuginosuke Grew Up

Echigo-Nagaoka Domain, a domain with 74,000 koku. The lord of Nagaoka Domain was the Makino clan that had been a powerful local clan in Ushikubo, Mikawa, which was assigned to rule Nagaoka in 1618 as a hereditary daimyo.

The Ushikubo Wall Writing that has been handed down in the domain is the compilation of the 18 rules of samurai that the Makino clan had developed in the period of

Deputy Governor-general, Shijo Takatoshi arrived in Takada (current Joetsu city) and requested 11 domains of Echigo Province to supply war funds and soldiers.

Meanwhile, Tsuginosuke had been travelling to Osaka, Edo, and other places after his visit to Kyoto, entered the Port of Niigata on Schnell's warship through the Tsugaru Strait, and finally arrived in Nagaoka on March 28.

While most of the neighboring domains had surrendered to the New Government Army by this time, Tsuginosuke, who had become the chief counselor, rejected the opinion to support submission. To the outside, however, he maintained neutrality and remained silent.

On April 19, Hokuetsu staff officers, Yamagata Kyosuke (Aritomo) and Kuroda Ryosuke (Kiyotaka), entered Takada. Mountain path troops of 1,500 soldiers and sea route troops of 2,500 soldiers began marching into Nagaoka, which was known for Tsuginosuke.

troops defeated the Aizu troops and the infantry corps of the former shogunate in the Imosaka and Yukitoge area and, on the following day, 27th, Matsudai and Matsumoto domain troops occupied Ojiya as the vanguard. The Aizu troops were defeated in the battle of Koidejima.

On this day when loud blasts were heard even in Nagaoka, Tsuginosuke was appointed to the Governor-general. On the same day, he had 23 platoons organized and stationed in various regions, placed the headquarters in Kofuku-ji temple in Settaya, and prepared for defense.

On May 2, Tsuginosuke attended the Ojiya meeting, holding on to his last hope. The meeting was held not at the domain headquarters, but at Jigen-ji, an old temple of Shingon Buddhism.

The counterpart was neither Yamagata nor Kuroda that he had expected, but 24-year old Iwamura Seiichiro. He was accompanied by Fuchibe Naouemon from Satsuma Domain and Sugiyama Soichiro and Shirai Kosuke from Choshu Domain.

Tsuginosuke insisted on renunciation of war and requested some time to convince the shogunate army for reconciliation. When he asked the

Back Stage of Breakdown at the Ojiya Meeting

Distrust of Tsuginosuke

Tsuginosuke was in formal attire and accompanied by Futami Torasaburo, a military superintendent, and Matsuzo, servant, and had hopes and confidence when he attended the meeting. The neutrality that he had built, however, backfired on him.

Tsuginosuke ordered his troops to retreat from the domain border where they had been deployed. Aizu Domain, which had asked Nagaoka for an alliance, speculated that the meeting was for Nagaoka's submission to the government. Even some of Nagaoka residents had doubts about Tsuginosuke.

Meanwhile, Iwamura Seiichiro received a spy report suspecting the armament of Nagaoka Domain and saw Tsuginosuke as an adversary. People only learned in later years that the meeting had been the place of negotiations with an important person that could change the course of history.

Yamagata Aritomo, who was unable to meet Tsuginosuke, regretted the result in his memoir, "Koshi No Yamakaze," stating that he was secretly sorry about the inadequacy of Shirai, etc.



During the Ojiya Meeting [Jigen-ji (Ojiya City)] / The room of the temple used as a camp of Satsuma Domain



Iwamura Seiichiro from Tosa Domain who confronted Tsuginosuke when he was a hot-blooded 24-year old.

reasons for overthrowing the shogunate using his usual sharp tongue, however, the conversation turned into a heated argument and angry Iwamura shake off Tsuginosuke's hand and left the place.

The dream of neutrality was shattered. On the following day, Tsuginosuke summoned troop

commanders at the headquarters, explained the inevitable war, and declared all-out resistance.

Nagaoka, then, led the van of the Ouetsu Reppan Domei (alliance of the domains of Mutsu, Dewa, and Echigo), consisting of 25 domains of Ou and six domains of Echigo, to the site of the hardest-fought battle of the Hokuetsu Boshin War.

The Dream of Neutrality Shattered: Ojiya Meeting

On 26th, the left column of the mountain path

Raising Funds for Gatling Guns

Tsuginosuke's economic sense comparable to traders

While people have the impression that Tsuginosuke was a big spender for his famously frequent visits to the red-light district, he was actually very strict on how he spent money. His belief was to take what he should and pay when he should, and he did not waste the slightest bit of money.

He may have used such a sense when he sold variables in auctions to clean up his Edo Domain house. On his way back to Nagaoka, he sold rice that he had bought in Edo in Hakodate and redeemed copper coins in Niigata where the exchange rate was high.

Tsuginosuke used such techniques like a trader to make

huge profits, which were important war funds of Nagaoka Domain. When Nagaoka Castle fell, the war funds carried out allegedly exceeded 110,000 ryo, and Nagaoka's financial power made people of other domains envious.



Reproduction of Gatling Guns

[Kawai Tsuginosuke Museum (Nagaoka City)] In February 1868, Kawai Tsuginosuke purchased two Gatling guns for 3,000 ryo each from Favre-Brandt in Yokohama. When Nagaoka Castle fell on May 19, he shot one of them himself in front of the main gate. This was the first use of a Gatling gun in Japan.

Hokuetsu Boshin War: Part

Clever Tactics that Troubled the New Government Army

The Allied Forces Record a Total Victory

The New Government Army kept increasing the number of soldiers, which allegedly had reached approximately 20,000 by this time. The allied forces, in contrast, had only 5,000 soldiers, which was an absolute difference.

Tsuginosuke, therefore, developed an elaborate plan to seize Enoki Toge, a strategic mountain pass at the south of Nagaoka, and waited for the water of the Shinano River to increase, which would prevent the entry of the enemy's additional troops.

On May 10, the Nagaoka troops led by commanders, Hagiwara Kanendo and Kawashima Okujiro, joined by the Aizu troops led by Sagawa

Kanbei and Raijin troops and Shoho troops of Kuwana Domain led by Tatsumi Kanzaburo, began moving. While struggling to attack from highlands and the opposite side of the river, their attacks from three different directions forced Owari and Ueda soldiers deployed there to retreat. The allied forces that had won their first battle secured a strong fortress in Mt. Asahi located southeast of Enoki Toge. Early morning of the 13th, Choshu and Satsuma soldiers made a surprise attack on the fortress; however, they retreated due to a lack of reinforcements and loss of Tokiyama Naohachi, an acting chief of staff of the Tosando force.

Protecting the Castle and Doing Everything Possible

Yamagata, the chief of staff of the Hokuriku troops had to change his strategy against Nagaoka after being severely defeated at the Enoki Toge and Mt. Asahi.

As a result, the Hokuriku troops passed across the rapid, muddy streams of the Shinano River early morning of the 19th and landed on Terajima and Nakajima village. They showered the castle with bullets while the defense was short.

Tsuginosuke hurriedly returned from the headquarters and operated a Gatling gun himself to give the opponent a series of shots, it was already too late and the castle fell on this day. The lord of Nagaoka Domain escaped to Mottate Pass and headed for Aizu through the Hachijurigoe path. The clansmen came from various areas to gather at Yukuizan, pledged to rise again, and retreated to Tochio.

Boys aged 15 to 18 from the military academy in Nakajima were dressed only in training wear when they fought the battles. On the bank in Jooka, 62-year old Ito Douemon delivered



Drawing of Nagaoka Castle Offense and Defense [Nagaoka City Central Library (Nagaoka city)] It depicts the three-month long fierce battles that started at Enoki Toge.

messages in a resonant voice while swinging a spear and demonstrated his bravery until he was brought down by bullets.

Nagaoka clansmen purportedly kept fighting until their last breath, refusing to give up even after seeking the castle on fire.

Successful Recapture of Nagaoka Castle

Tsuginosuke retreated to Tochio first, but set up headquarters in Kamo on the 21st and summoned generals of the allied forces on the 23rd to explain the plan to recapture Nagaoka Castle.

They first targeted Imamachi where the opponents were gathering. On June 2, check troops (“decoy” troops) led by Yamamoto Tatewaki launched fierce attacks with four guns, and while the opponents were responding to them, the main force led by Tsuginosuke charged in and occupied Imamachi through the skillful feint operation.

Their advance took a new turn in the late afternoon of July 24th. It was Tsuginosuke’s secret plan, surprise tactics at Hacchooki (current northeastern area of Nagaoka), which was a large swamp in which a demon was believed to live.

690 Nagaoka soldiers led by Kito Kumajiro landed on Tomijima before daybreak on the 25th after fighting their extremely tough way through muddy water, charged into Nagaoka Castle all at once, and managed to recapture the castle as they had longed for.

The castle and town erupted with joy for this achievement. The people of the town opened sake casks to celebrate and clapped their hands to welcome back the clansmen. Even Tsuginosuke purportedly had tears of joy.

Meanwhile, the Nagaoka troops kept fighting against remnant soldiers without a break. The battle of Aramachi-guchi was particularly fierce, and Tsuginosuke summoned troops and rushed to the place. On his way there, however, a bullet pierced through his left leg. The condition was serious, and he was taken to Shofukuji temple that had a military hospital.

The Nagaoka troops were severely shocked by the injury of their reliable commander in chief, and with fatigue and confusion, they continued to struggle.

Around this time, the New Government Army finally landed at the Port of Niigata, persuaded Shibata Domain to change sides to use the residents as guides, and freely mobilized massive troops. With this backing, 28 platoons that had prepared themselves for attacks in Myoken village launched an aggressive charge, and the forces on the other side of the river began crossing the Shinano River and attacking one after another.

Despite the desperate offense and defense, Nagaoka Castle fell again only after four days from the recapture.

Towards the Hachijurigoe Path

The now overwhelming force of the opponents began to cover the Echigo Plain, and Nagaoka clansmen headed for Aizu through Hachijurigoe path.

Tsuginosuke, who was suffering a high fever, also followed this path in a street palanquin swinging hard because of the bad road. He wrote a self-mocking poem, “Hachijurigoe, a pass crossed by a coward samurai.”

His condition suddenly deteriorated after crossing the pass and entered Aizu territory. An army surgeon, Matsumoto Ryojun, treated Tsuginosuke, but there was already nothing to be done.

On August 12, he departed for Aizu again, but his time would come to an end at the house of Yazawa Soeki, a physician at the village of Shiozawa. Tsuginosuke purportedly had his coffin and urn box made and had fire to cremate his body lit.

Around eight o’clock in the evening of August 16, 1868, Kawai Tsuginosuke, who had kept running



Shuen No Ma (room of the end) [Kawai Tsuginosuke Kinenkan (memorial museum) (Tadami Town)]

through the winds and clouds of the twilight years of the Tokugawa shogunate, ascended to heaven in crimson flames. He was 42 years old.

The End of the Samurai Era

The hopes for the continuation of the feudal domains were passed on to Nagaoka clansmen who bid farewell to Tsuginosuke.

People who travelled from Nagaoka to Aizu at the time totaled about 1,500, including the family members of the clansmen. Crossing the Hachijurigoe path was, however, extremely difficult, and many of them fell on the road due to hunger and fatigue. Some allegedly left behind sick persons or infants.

Clansmen who crossed the border warmly welcomed by the people of Tadami, a village (now a town) in Aizu territory. On the 18th, about 600 Nagaoka troops gathered at Jorin-ji temple in Aizubange, formed new six platoons, and moved to Aizu to fight battles.

On the 25th, they joined the battle at Nanokamachi-guchi (Namidabashi) and 15 lost their lives. The Yamamoto Tatewaki troops that joined the battles later were met with the most tragic end at Nidera temple. They mistook enemies for allies in a heavy fog, and nine were killed and 33 were beheaded after being captured. The Nagaoka troops fought very hard while making great sacrifices even at places away from their home. The allied domains had already begun surrendering one after another, however, and the defeat was inevitable.

On the 25th, Nagaoka Domain that had become a wandering group, surrendered with deep mortification in Yonezawa.

Hokuetsu Boshin War: Part 3

Final Days of Nagaoka’s Soryukutsu

The second fall of Nagaoka Castle after losing the supreme leader

In response to the hard-fought battles in Hokurikudo, the Kyoto headquarters of the New

Government Army organized Aizu Subjugation Echigo-guchi troops and dispatched a large number of soldiers. They were, however, met with surprise attacks from Hacchooki and became panicked and chaotic again.