

Politician Scientist The Passion of Egawa Tannan

Egawa Residence

Important Cultural Property

Following the appointment of 28th-generation Egawa Hidenaga as governor by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the Egawa household maintained a line of hereditary governors ruling over this area up until the Meiji period. Home to the Egawa household for generations, the Egawa Residence is a nationally-designated important cultural property.



Egawa Residence - Front Gate



The main building (552m²) is known for its impressive framework that supports the massive roof, which stands at over 12 meters tall. It is estimated that this main building in its original form was built around the time of the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. Certain members of the framework date back to the Muromachi period (1336-1573), indicating that the Egawa family had lived in this area since long before.

Vaccination

Tannan stressed the need for vaccination (smallpox), but little was known about vaccination at the time, with many even fearing it.

In response, Tannan began by first vaccinating his own children. Once the fears of the people had been relieved, he issued an "official notice of Western-style vaccination" in 1850 and had his whole territory vaccinated against smallpox. The people were saved from smallpox thanks to Tannan's firm resolution. The shogunate took note of this success, and a vaccination institute was established in Edo by Genboku Ito, Shunsai Otsuki, and others. This facility was kept in operation by the Meiji government, and would later become the University of Tokyo's Faculty of Medicine.



Egawa Tannan was declared a master by Takashima Shuhan and taught the likes of Sakuma Shozan

The place where Japan's future was deliberated

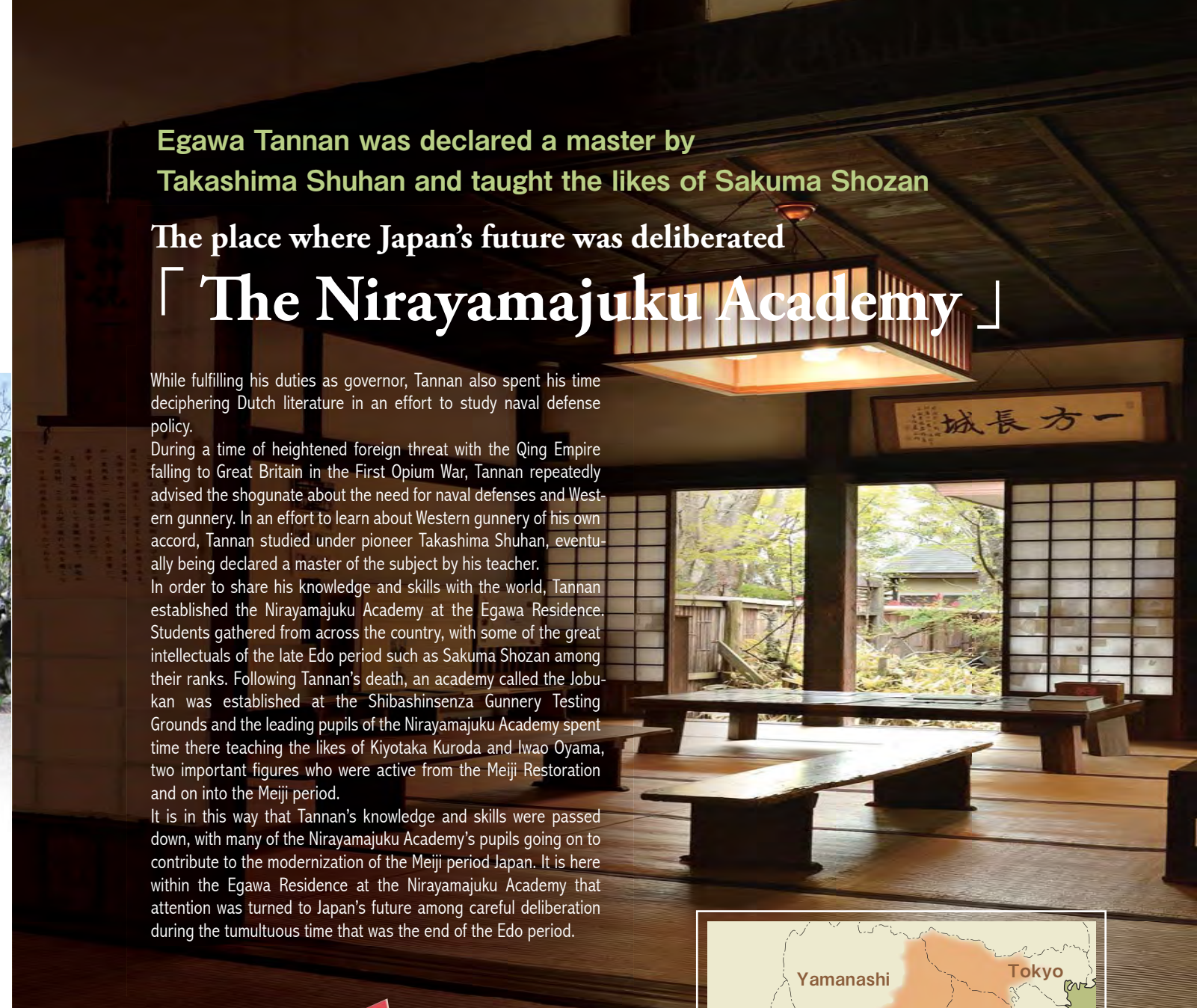
「The Nirayamajuku Academy」

While fulfilling his duties as governor, Tannan also spent his time deciphering Dutch literature in an effort to study naval defense policy.

During a time of heightened foreign threat with the Qing Empire falling to Great Britain in the First Opium War, Tannan repeatedly advised the shogunate about the need for naval defenses and Western gunnery. In an effort to learn about Western gunnery of his own accord, Tannan studied under pioneer Takashima Shuhan, eventually being declared a master of the subject by his teacher.

In order to share his knowledge and skills with the world, Tannan established the Nirayamajuku Academy at the Egawa Residence. Students gathered from across the country, with some of the great intellectuals of the late Edo period such as Sakuma Shozan among their ranks. Following Tannan's death, an academy called the Jobukan was established at the Shibashinsenza Gunnery Testing Grounds and the leading pupils of the Nirayamajuku Academy spent time there teaching the likes of Kiyotaka Kuroda and Iwao Oyama, two important figures who were active from the Meiji Restoration and on into the Meiji period.

It is in this way that Tannan's knowledge and skills were passed down, with many of the Nirayamajuku Academy's pupils going on to contribute to the modernization of the Meiji period Japan. It is here within the Egawa Residence at the Nirayamajuku Academy that attention was turned to Japan's future among careful deliberation during the tumultuous time that was the end of the Edo period.



Father of Bread

Western-style bread drew the attention of Tannan for its potential as an army provision or reserve food item, and he is considered to be the first person to bake bread in Japan. In honor of this meritorious deed, Tannan was given the title "Father of Bread" by the Japan Bread Council.



Father of Bread Monument



The illusory prefecture with Izunokuni at its center

Expansive Nirayama

Toward the end of the Edo period, the territory that the Egawa household presided over as governor of Nirayama stretched beyond Izu to include Suruga, Sagami, Kai, and even Musashi. Inheritance of this territory continued into the Meiji period. It was known as Nirayama Prefecture and included parts of present-day Kanagawa, Yamanashi, and Tokyo, with Izu Nirayama (the Egawa Residence) serving as the seat of the prefectural government. Even after Ashigara Prefecture, which included western Kanagawa and Izu, was established in 1871, the Egawa Residence continued to serve as a branch government office.