

In the footsteps of Toshiro

According to the chronicles, Kato Shirozaemon Kagemasa, also known as Toshiro and Shunkei, traveled to China in 1223 to learn how to make pottery. Then he returned to Japan and endeavored to travel throughout the country to find earth suitable to make pottery ware. In 1242, he discovered high-quality clay in the Seto region and created Seto ware. This is the reason why Toshiro is called Toso, the pioneer of pottery, in the Seto region. Every year, the Seto Toso Festival is held during the third weekend of April to commemorate Toshiro's great accomplishment.

We can find lots of documents and chronicles related to Toshiro, but almost all of these documents were written during the Edo period (1603-1868), about 400 years after the life of Toshiro. Therefore, it is still a mystery as to whether Toshiro really existed or not.

- 1748** Date of the oldest chronicle related to Toshiro
- 1752** Buddhist memorial service for the 500th anniversary of Toshiro's death
- 1824** Establishment of Suehiko Shrine
- 1850** Memorial tablet placed in Hosenji Temple
- 1855** Toso 650th Anniversary Festival
- 1905** Granted fifth court rank posthumously
- 1910** Toso 700th Anniversary Festival
- 1925** Construction of the current Suehiko Shrine
- 1927** Granted the dharma name Indengo from Eiheiji Temple
- 1952** 700th Buddhist anniversary of Toso's death
- 2012~2015** Toso 800th Anniversary Festival

Important dates about Toshiro(Toso)



Toso 800th Anniversary Festival

100 years after the magnificent Toso 700th Anniversary Festival, a series of events were organized between 2012 and 2014 for the Toso 800th Anniversary Festival.

Logo and Mascot

A logo and a mascot were created to symbolize the Toso 800th Anniversary Festival. The mascot "Toshiro-kun" is still largely beloved by the citizens today.



Seto Toshiro Triennale

This ceramic art competition has been held once every three years with the unique concept of "collect the earth of Seto yourself", "make the clay yourself", and "create your own works".



Investigating the inside of the Hexagonal Pottery Monument

Legend says that this hexagonal pottery monument contains small stones, each of which shows one character of the Lotus Sutra written by the daughter of Kato Kageo who participated actively in the construction of the monument.

About 150 years after the completion of the hexagonal pottery monument, for the Toso 800th Anniversary Festival held in 2013, the upper cover of the monument was opened for the first time and the inside was investigated.



Surprising discoveries

- 1 By examining the characters, it has been discovered that not only one person, but several people drew the characters.



- 2 Lots of the stones contained more than one character. A maximum of 20 characters was discovered on one single stone.



An approximate calculation carried out during the investigation revealed that the monument contains about 74,000 written characters. Therefore, people believe that the entire Lotus Sutra, which consists of 69,384 characters, is written in the hexagonal monument.

