

## The Kitakysushu District that became Suzuki & Co.'s "Kingdom"



The Dairi District in the Moji Ward of Kitakyushu City was home to Suzuki & Co.'s second largest development after its headquarters in Kobe. Suzuki & Co. also operated more factories on the opposite coast on Hikoshima Island, and Naokichi Kaneko once boasted that he would cover both Kobe and the Kanmon Straits\* with the Suzuki & Co. emblem. The trading company chose the Kitakyushu region for its high-quality water, booming labor market, and the nearby Chikuho coal fields. The area was also well connected by train, and Kaneko is famously quoted as saying that a good location is the key to successful business.

The details of Suzuki & Co.'s development in the region are well documented in local historical records. Documents state that following the Russo-Japanese War, businesses began acquiring land and forming the boundary of what would become Kitakyushu's industrial zone. The primary motivating factor for this growth was the promotion of capital from Japan's central bank. The records note that one of the most prolific companies present in the region was Suzuki & Co., which built its facilities in the Dairi District.

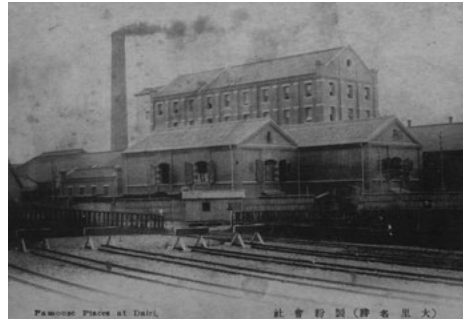
Other organizations that put down their roots in Dairi include Dairi Sugar Manufacturing Co. (present-day Kanmon Sugar Manufacturing Co.), Dairi Flour Mill (later merged with present-day NIPPON Corporation), Imperial Beer (later Dainippon Beer, present-day Sapporo Beer), Dairi Shusei Seizosho, (Present-day Nikka Whiskey Distilling Co., Moji Factory), Kobe Steel Moji Plant (present-day Shinko Metal Products Co.), and Nippon Yakin Kogyo Co. (present-day Toho Kinzoku Co.). There were also saltworks, ironworks, and rice mills in the district. A number of buildings constructed during the Suzuki & Co. era are still in use today.

The Kitakyushu City website features an informational pamphlet on the Dairi District which describes how Suzuki & Co. established its "kingdom" in the area and introduces historical landmarks associated with the trading company. A land mark indicating the location of Suzuki & Co.'s former facilities can be found on a street corner in Dairi's residential district, and the scale of Suzuki & Co.'s impact can be felt throughout the town.

\*Kanmon Straits: The stretch of water separating the islands of Honshu and Kyushu.



Present-day Kanmon Sugar Manufacturing Co.  
(formerly Dairi Sugar Manufacturing Co.)

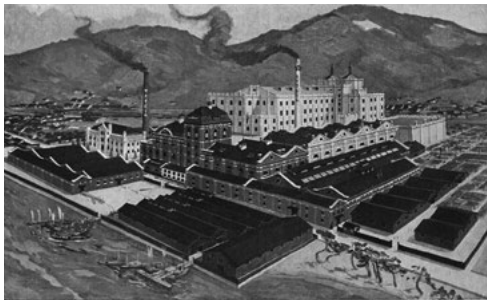


Dairi Flour Mill (later merged with present-day NIPPON Corporation)



Dairi Flour Mill storehouses that are now used by Nikka Whiskey Distilling Co.'s Moji Factory (formerly Dairi Shusei Seizosho)

## The “Kingdom” of Suzuki in Kitakyushu City’s Dairi District



大正十四年六月十日 下関製鐵所全景図可成 櫻麥酒株式会社 工場

Imperial Beer (Present-day Sapporo Beer)



Kitakyushu Beer & Brick Museum, Moji Ward

Suzuki & Co.  
landmark



Landmark on the grounds of Shinko Metal Products facilities