An Insight into Niihama City

新居浜市の概況

Niihamashi no gaikyō

新居浜市

Niihama City lies in the eastern part of Ehime Prefecture. It stretches long from east to west, facing the Seto Inland Sea, with the Shikoku Mountain Range to the south. Niihama is blessed with scenic beauty and a mild climate.

Originally Niihama City was a fishing village. It has developed as one of Shikoku's leading industrial cities since the Besshi Copper Mine was established in 1691. In 1937, the villages of Kaneko Mura, Takatsu Mura and Niihama Chō united to form the City of Niihama. In 2003, the village of Besshiyama Mura also became part of Niihama City.

With a population of about 120,000 and an area of 234.5 ㎢, Niihama City is the third largest city in Ehime Prefecture after the prefectural capital, Matsuyama City, and Imabari City. Niihama was recognized as one of the leading industrial seaside cities in Shikoku and was nominated as a "New Industrial City" in 1964. There are many companies in Niihama, from the major Sumitomo Group companies to small and medium-sized ones. This means people from all over Japan are living here, making Niihama more progressive than many other local cities.

The Besshi Copper Mine produced 720,000 tons of copper during the 283 years of its operation from 1691 to until its closure in 1973. Its subordinate companies, like heavy machinery companies and chemical companies, are still thriving. They are known as the Sumitomo Conglomerate.

Although Niihama is best known as an industrial city, there are many cultural gems to be found here, such as the dynamic Taiko Festival, Zuiōji Zen Temple, Minetopia Besshi, the Besshi Copper Mine Memorial Museum, Hirose Mansion, the Akagane Museum, and the Ehime Prefectural Science Museum.

With the completion of the Shimanami Kaidō Bridge in 1999, Shikoku Island is linked to the main island by three bridges across the Seto Inland Sea. Niihama is striving to be the center of Shikoku as well as an attractive town. Our motto is "Copper town of smiling faces - industry and environment in harmony."