

25. The Ubagami-Daijingu Festival and Esashi-Oiwake (Esashi)

The Origin of the Ubagami-Daijingu festival goes back 360 years. It was begun as a celebration of the large catches of herring and even today the city gets caught up in festival fever from August 9th through 11th every year. Thirteen spectacular floats (yama) pulled by people go around the city to the sound of traditional music called gion-bayasi. Esashi-oiwake has its roots in magouta, which is a type of Japanese folk song sung along the former Nakasendo highway. It has been passed down by many people in the severe climate of this northern country. There are a number of Esashi-oiwake fans not only inside Japan but also all around the world. Esashi-oiwake tells of the herring boom of the old days to people today.



26. The Former Fort from the 15th Century in Kaminokuni (Kaminokuni)

This is the remains of Fort Katsuyama-Tate, which lies half way up Mt. Iou in Kaminokuni. It was built by Nobuhiro Takeda, known as the father of the Matsumae Clan in the 15th century and more than 200 Japanese families and Ainu people lived there together. There are still many missing pieces in the middle history of Hokkaido. However, a great deal of material that connect the missing pieces have been discovered through searching the Mt. Iou tomb grounds in Katsuyama-Tate. The remains of the fort, which gives people a terrific view of the Sea of Japan, allows people to feel the romance of this time period.



27. Castle Fukuyama (Matsumae) and Its Temple District (Matsumae)

This was the last castle built in the Edo era (1603-1867) and was the battleground between the former Shogunate army and the loyalist army in the Hakodate war. There lies the only modern temple district in Hokkaido to the north of the castle and there are five temples, such as Ryuun-ji, Hougen-ji, and the family temple of the Matsumae family as well as their graves. Also, this is an area famous for cherry blossoms which bloom the earliest in Hokkaido. It is important to learn the history of the town of Matsumae in order to know the history of Hokkaido before its colonization.



28. Goryokaku and the relics of the Hakodate war (Hakodate etc.)

The Hakodate war started with the invasion of the deserters from the former Shogunate in the fall of 1868 and ended the next year with their surrender at Goryokaku as a result of the counteroffensive by the army of the new government that next spring. The battle spread all over the south east of Hokkaido and now many ruins and relics are seen in this area, such as Washinoki where the deserters lead by Takeaki Enomoto landed, the Goryokaku fortress of the short-lived Republic of Ezo, the hurriedly built Fort Shiryokaku, the Fukuyama Castle which was badly attacked in the war, offshore of Kamome-jima island where the warship Kaiyo-maru was sunk, the Otohe seashore where the army of the new government landed, Futamataguchi where those two armies had a huge battle, the Ippongi checking point where Toshizo Hijikata was killed in the battle, and so on. These spots and relics remind people of the intensity of the battles.



29. Mt. Hakodate and the remains of the Batteries (Hakodate)

Hakodate, which is famous for the gorgeous night view, has another face. Mt. Hakodate, from which people can see the Tsugaru channel, began to be fortified in the middle of the Meiji era (1868-1912) and there still remain a number of brick walls, a concrete bunker, and the batteries. This is one of the biggest military engineering heritage sites and there are only a few in Japan. The mountain itself is a treasury of animals and plants for it was restricted to step on it until the end of World War II. It is now popular as a hiking course to enjoy nature.



30. Seibuchiku area in Hakodate (Hakodate)

Hakodate is one of the cities that announced the dawn of modern Japanese history with the opening of its port in 1859 along with Yokohama and Nagasaki, and it has been developed as an entry point for Western cultures. In the Seibuchiku area, there are such historical harbor facilities as the old red brick warehouses and the dock. Also, there are modern examples of fashionable Western style architecture, such as the former Public Hall of Hakodate Ward and the Greek Orthodox Church, and houses and stores that were skillfully designed in mixed Japanese and Western styles.



31. The Tramways (Hakodate, Sapporo)

Hakodate tramway, which started as a horse-drawn railway car in 1897 and became an electrified tram network later in 1913, is still a very popular means of transportation among Hakodate people. The railway adds some spice to the scenery and has a great role in the tourist city Hakodate. The Sapporo tramway, which started in 1918, expanded its routes and had the cars improved, and it later became the heart of its transportation. However, now there is only one line left as a result of the opening of the subway. The Sasara Tram for snow removal gives a poetic touch to winter in Sapporo.



32. The Cherry Trees on Nijikken Road in Shizunai (Shizunai)

Nijikken Road which runs between Shizunai and Nukappu used to be an imperial road to their pastures which was opened for breeding a large sized horses from the native Japanese horses on Kiyotaka Kuroda's advice in 1872. There stand 3,000 cherry trees, including 90-year-old Ezoyama cherries, that stand in a 7km straight line along a road that is 36 meters wide and leads to Ryuunkaku (imperial buildings). The scenery with the majestic Hidaka Mountains as its background is one of a kind in this country.



33. Moru Hot Springs (Otofuke)

The water from moru hot springs comes up through peat under the ground and is characterized by its light black color. There are some around Tokachi and some gush around the Ishikari plain and Toyotomi. The name "Moru" comes from the pronunciation of the German word "Moor," which means peat. The main element of the water is botanical corrosion and it is distinguished from other hot springs by its botanical elements more than its mineral elements. Also, it is considered that the heat source, in addition to the geothermal energy, comes from the fermenting process of botanical deposits underground.



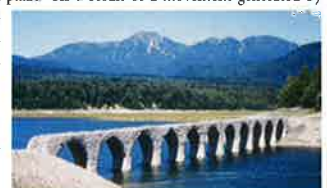
34. Rawan Butterburs (Ashoro)

Rawan butterburs, which get 2 to 3 meters in height, are huge butterburs that only grow along the Rawan River in Ashoro. It is said that at one time they grew up to 4 meters in height and allowed people to ride horses under the bush. However, it has not yet been discovered why they grow that high. They are very delicious and are rich in minerals and fiber. Today, many new products have been processed from Rawan butterburs through collaboration by companies, specialists, and the town office of Ashoro and, as a result, Rawan butterburs have been promoted as an original Ashoro brand product.



35. The former national railroad and concrete arch bridges of the Shihoro line (Kamishihoro).

This was designated as Hokkaido's 1st rate railroad heritage and was built during the early Showa Era to aid the industrial development of the central Tokachi plain. As a result of a movement generated by citizens, companies, specialists, and town officials, 34 bridges have been preserved. Among them is the Tashubetsu Arch Bridge, which has become well known as "The Bridge of Illusions," since its appearance changes according to the water level of Lake Nukabira. The enthusiastic activity of local citizens has become widely known as a model for the preservation and utilization of the nation's industrial heritage.



36. Kiritappu Wetland (Teshikaga)

The wetland includes all the natural features that constitute a complete wetland spectacle, while also being significant scientifically. An area of the wetland called "The Peat Bog Botanical Colony of the Kiritappu Wetland" was nominated as a natural treasure of Japan early in 1923, and alpine flora grows here in abundance. From spring to autumn, we can enjoy the beauty of flowers in bloom and observe many species of wild birds, especially swans and the Japanese crane. The local people have established an official trust to protect the wetland, and their activities for wetland preservation have been widely promoted.



37. Lake Mashu (Teshikaga)

Surrounded by the primeval forests of Akan National Park, Lake Mashu is known throughout Japan as "The Mysterious Lake" since it is often hidden by a veil of milk-white mist, and its water is renowned for being one of the most transparent in the world. Although no rivers flow into or out of the lake, the water level remains constant. It is a typical example of Hokkaido's well-known scenery with a combination of lakes and mountains. The work of local people to promote the preservation of Lake Mashu and its environment, formulated in the document "The Lake Mashu Declaration," has been highly praised.



38. The Konsen Highland Windbreak (Nakashibetsu and etc.)

This remarkable band of trees forms a windbreak that stretches across the townships of Nakashibetsu, Bekkai, Shibetsu, and Shibechea. A space shuttle photograph has shown that its magnificent grid structure is unique to Hokkaido. This band of wood is 180 meters wide and 643 km in length. It acts as both a windbreak and as a habitat and a passageway for wildlife. This windbreak is also historically important since it marked the island's division during the era of colonization.

