

Touring the Many Landmarks of Otaru

From the Unspoilt Landscapes of Shukuzu to the Microcosm of Modern Architecture

Herring Fisheries, Town and Architecture of Shukuzu

The remnant of herring fishery architecture is most prevalent and very much alive even today in Shukuzu. It developed as a herring fishery hub back during the Edo period, and continued to prosper through the beginning of the Taisho period. Although migration of herring stopped in the early years of the Showa Period, for the first time in many years, a large school of herring returning to spawn were spotted in 2010. It is still a district where fishing is prevalent, and has the most historical fishery buildings along the Sea of Japan that are still standing. The little town of Shukuzu that stretches from the hills to the sea still possesses an unspoilt landscape from the early days of Otaru.

Presently, the historical landmarks related to herring fisheries stand along the Otaru shoreline on prefectural highway route 454. There is the Former Tanaka Residence (Construction Company for Herring Fisheries), which is now a Tangible Cultural Asset of Hokkaido, the Omi Banya (watchtower), a Historical Landmark of Otaru, Shiratori Eisaku Banya, Ebisu Shrine, Ibaraki Residence, the Aoyama Villa and Stone Warehouse that were recognized as National Tangible Cultural Assets, and the recently restored Ibaraki Fisherman's Residence.

Citizens of Shukuzu are utilizing such unique characteristics to expand their activities. They emphasize their passionate love for the community through lively events such as the Herring Festival, tours to historical monuments, sleepovers for kids during summer vacation and fireworks displays.