



## The Footsteps of Industry. Business

The genealogy of businessmen referred to as “Otaru Merchants,” can be divided according to the birthplace of each merchant. Many buildings from this period still remain. During the Edo Period, the Omi Merchants dealt in herring as trade contractors for the Matsumae Clan. Later the Matsumae Merchants inducted by the Omi Merchants appeared in Otaru. Genzaburo Kanko who set up shop in Sakaimachi, Yokichi Fujiyama who built and donated the Otaru Community Hall, Kichibei Yamada who was the first president of the Otaru Chamber of Commerce and who later became the second Chief of Otaru Ward, are representative of such merchants. The Kaetsuno Merchants (merchants from Kaga, Echizen, Etchu, and Noto) played a major role in the economics of Otaru during its economic bubble. Sotoyoshi, the head of the Suhara household in Toun-cho, was the grandson of the three Suhara brothers from Etchu. Kichijiro Noguchi, the founder of the present day Kitano Homare Sake brewery was from Kaga Prefecture. His son Kichiro, who carried on the family business, took part in the basic designing of the Wakoso (1922). It is the Echigo Merchants who further developed the fortune made by the Kaetsuno Merchants. Miyakichi Sakatani of the second generation of merchants was the head of the Sakatani household of Toun, which dealt mainly in maritime business, banking and agriculture. Naoharu Takahashi who built the Suhara residence, placed business warehouses in Ironai that stored azuki beans and made a fortune. Ken Okazaki, who dealt in rice, grain and household goods, owned and managed warehouses and later built the Noh Stage which was donated to the city. Both were Echigo Merchants. It is possible to trace the footsteps of, the many active and successful businessmen who lived in pre-war Otaru, such as Enkichi Kimura, who was a great land owner, and the “Herring Trio” which included Kohachiro Baraki, Eisaku Shiratori, Ryukichi Aoyama.

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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## No. 7

### Natori Takasaburo Store

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Location:1-8 Ironai 1-chome, Otaru

Built:1906(Meiji 39)

Structure: 2 story timber framed stone building

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Before the establishment of the ward system that was implemented in 1899 (Meiji 32), the Okobachi River was the boundary between the northwestern side(Takasaburo Natori Store side)which was called Takashima-gun and the southeastern side, which was Otaru-gun. For this reason the area was called Sakaimachi (sakai meaning boundary), and the Takashima Bridge was built over the Okobachi River. This building, built by Takasaburo Natori, originally from Koshu, was built 2 years after the Ironai Fire, the largest fire that swept through Otaru in 1904. For this reason, fire prevention measures were thoroughly incorporated into the structure, which is timber framed and lain with Sapporo soft stone.The building features a tiled hip roof and windows on the second floor which have sliding stone doors. For fire prevention, stone and wood buildings were placed alternately, with udatsu (stone wings,or fire walls) built on the sides of the building. Natori Store,located on a corner lot, also features these stone wings on either side of the building.

Present Day Natori Co., Otaru Branch - Otaru Taisho Glass Palace

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 34

## Kaneko Motosaburo Store

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Location:1-22 Sakaimachi, Otaru

Built:1887(Meiji 20)

Structure: 2 story timber framed stone building

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This store was owned by politician and businessman, Motosaburo Kaneko, who assumed the post of the first ward mayor of Otaru and was later elected into the House of Representatives. As a businessman, he made his fortune through his dealings in marine products, maritime transportation and selling fertilizer. In 1891 (Meiji 24), he started what became the first newspaper in Otaru, the Kitakado Shinpo, inviting journalist Chomin Nakae to be the main writer, and for some time the building served as the print shop for the paper. The stone wings on either side of the building, the tiled roof and mortar sliding doors depict the typical construction style of timber framed stone houses that were built during the Meiji Period in Otaru. The building features hirairi structure, where the main entrance is on the side of the building parallel to the roof and a roof supported by a king post truss. The first floor was comprised of a shop and Western style living quarters. Instead of a ceiling, the rafters are exposed. The walls and ceiling portion of the western living quarters were plastered, and the center of the ceiling had ornamental construction. Two rooms are placed on either side of the storage room located in the middle of the second floor, one on the right and one on the left. Inside of sliding doors on the second floor, sash windows are installed.

Present Day Otaru Music Box Museum Co., Callion Sakaimachi Store

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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## No. 36

### Tanaka Sake Brewery

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Location: 2-5 Ironai 3-chome, Otaru

Built: 1927 (Showa 2)

Structure: 2 story timber structure building

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This piece of rare architecture conveys the charm breweries possessed during the age when sake brewing flourished in Otaru. Presently, the area is cut off from the central part of town by the Otaru Rinkaisen Avenue that runs along the coast, but if you take a close look at the Tanaka Sake Brewery, you can get a glimpse of how energetic and prosperous Ironai originally was. The brewery was founded by the Ichitaro Tanaka and has conducted business in this building for 85 years. Brackets extend from under the eaves in the front where the column support beams are placed. This type of construction is also known as segaizukuri (segai building), and was a common form of roof construction for shops and houses in Otaru from the latter part of the Meiji Period to the early Showa Period. The righthand side of the first floor which used to be the office, was renovated and turned into an exhibition and tasting corner. While the building is now used to showcase and sell merchandise, the original state of the building has been restored for preservation. On the second floor of the building, which is not usually accessible to the public, the floors, shelves and Japanese room with its study were refurbished, the walls and ceiling plastered. The decorative ceiling in the Western room has also been carefully restored.

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 68

## Tsukamoto Store

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Location:6-27 Ironai 1-chome, Otaru

Built:1920(Taisho 9)

Structure: 2 story timber framed iron-mesh concrete

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The store was first built in 1896(Meiji 29) by Genzaburo Tsukamoto from Omi, but the building burnt down in the Ironai Fire in 1904, and was rebuilt in its present location. Formerly, besides the main building with a tiled gable roof, there were a stone and a clay kura(storehouse), and a 4 story reinforced concrete new building(built in 1933) stood on the premises. Located on Ironai Ave., the first thing that catches the eye is the dark black walls of the building, but even more striking is the structure of the building itself. A timber framed iron-mesh concrete structure is used, where iron mesh is attached to the exterior of the timber frame, then plastered with concrete. It is a form of fire-proofing buildings, and became the next method of construction from the end of the Taisho Period to the early Showa Period, following the typical timber framed stone construction that was prevalent during the Meiji Period in Otaru. The Tsukamoto store is one of the first of its kind to be built in its day. The Kobori Store which also has black walls is built in the same fashion.

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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## No. 8

### Iwanaga Clock Store

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Location 1-21 Sakaimachi, Otaru

Built 1896(Meiji 29)

Structure: 2 story timber framed stone building

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左右対称の外観が、当時高級品であった時計を扱っていた格式を感じさせる建築である。一方で、瓦葺きの切妻屋根に載るシャチホコ、持送りも含めた軟石による装飾的な軒、2階正面花卉状のアーチからは、華やかさが感じられる。平成3年（1991）には2階ベランダ部分などが当時の姿に改修されている。施工は大虎（加藤忠五郎）による。

現在／(株)小樽オルゴール堂堺町店

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 15

## Hayakawa Store

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Location:4-7 Ironai 2-chome, Otaru

Built 1905(Meiji 38)

Structure: 2 story timber framed stone building

The store was originally built by Kenichiro Kawamata who was from Niigata, and who received permission from the Hayakawa Store that sold paper, tea and stationery, to open a branch store under the same name. Later the store name was changed to Kawamata Store. The present building was rebuilt after the major fire that swept through Otaru in 1904. Distinct characteristics of the building include the stone wings that protrude from the sides of the buildings, intended to prevent fire, express wealth and enrich the aesthetics of the city. Of all the stone wings in Otaru, those of the Hayakawa Store were especially glamorous with motifs of the rising sun, pine and plum trees, and cranes, hawks and tortoises, all done in stucco relief.

Present Day Vivre sa vie + mi yyu

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 32

## Okagawa Pharmacy

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Location:7-7 Wakamatsu-cho, Otaru

Built:1930(Showa 5)

Structure: 2 story timber structure building

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Established in 1895(Meiji 28) and built by Zendayu Okagawa from Fukui, and who ran one of the few pharmacies that existed in Otaru at the time, the present building was constructed by Matsutaro, the son of Zendayu. The building features Mansard roofing (a four-sided hip roof), and attic with dormer windows. The back side of the house has a gable roof, and a soft stone kura built next door. Corbels on the first floor, capitals (topmost part of a column) underneath the eaves on both sides and the decorative architecture around the dormer windows are also impressive. At present it is used mainly by the younger generation for the purpose of serving daily meals, selling merchandise, lodging and as a place where events are held.

Present Day Former Okagawa Pharmacy

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 33

## Kubo Store

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Location:4-5 Sakaimachi, Otaru

Built:1907(Meiji40)

Structure: 2 story timber structure building

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Kubo store was a Western clothing and accessories store established in 1907(Meiji 40). The building was used both for the retail and wholesale of merchandise. The first floor is now a cafe that showcases the beautiful stairs and ceiling of the former store, and the second floor has three Japanese style rooms. The timber framed stone building can be used now as a gallery. There was originally another kura which stood in the back and was connected near to the stairwell inside the store. The stone entrance frame and plastered door are evidence of this.

Present Day Sakai Residence

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 37

## Watanabe Sake Brewery

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Location:6-1 Inaho 4-chome, Otaru

Built:1930(Showa 5)

Structure: 3 story timber structure building

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Located on a corner lot on Yanagawa Avenue, the tower on the corner of the building has become a landmark of the district. Brown tiles covering the exterior walls, with ancient Greek meander, and egg and tongue artwork on the eaves and a sake cask sign hung from the second floor are all captivating aspects of the architecture. The interior is also decorative with embossed tin ceilings and other characteristic features. The kura next door is connected on the first and second floor, with decorative stucco patterns of plants and phoenix above the entrance on the second floor.

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No. 41

## Toide Trade Company Otaru Branch

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Location:1-1 Irifune 1-chome, Otaru  
Built 1926(Taisho 15)

Structure: 3 story timber with partial brick structure

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At one time this was the mouth of the Irifune River (turned into a culvert during the early Showa Period), and the building faced the Irifune Nanasaro Street where a barge for loading cargo was docked. The store sold formal wear and originally had its main branch in Toyama prefecture. In contrast to the Chuetsu Bank Otaru Branch next door, the vertical exterior lines of this building are very impressive. There is a 3 story brick warehouse built behind the building. Inside the building, the brackets installed at the topmost part of the iron pillars on the first floor support the second floor.

Present Day Souvenir Otarukan

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photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No.52

## Arata Trading Company

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Location 2-17 Ironai 1-chome, Otaru  
Built 1935(Showa10)  
Structure: 2 story timber structure building

The main office of Takichi Arata, who started out in the shipping industry and later expanded the company into the shipping industry. The symmetry of the exterior is typical of an office building, and though it has been renovated, the plastered walls of the interior, lighting fixtures and windowsills still hold their original form. The Takahashi Warehouses in the back, and the fact that the building is connected to the former Tsushin Dentetsu Hama Building by an inner court, bring about the historical scenery of that time.

Present Day Ishihara Yujiro Memorial Hall Photo Studio

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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No.72

## Kobori Store

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Location:14-4 Sumiyoshi-cho,Otaru

Built:1932(Showa 7)

Structure: 2 story timber framed reinforced concrete building

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Unusual for Otaru, the Kobori Store, like the Tsukamoto Store, also had dark black walls. The exterior of the timber framed reinforced concrete building(a method of construction where thick mortar is plastered on a concrete mesh), the window frames, and tiled hip roof all add a sense of solidity. All of the openings such as windows and doors have weatherproof shutters to keep the cold out; the windows are double-paned, and a steam heating system is installed. A stucco kura stands in the back.

Present Day NPO Hokkaido Shokunin Gijyuku Daigakko (Hokkaido Craftsman Skills College)

text Tomonori Hara Phd, Architectural History (Engineering)

photo Makoto Iwanami, photographer

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