Enjoy the best Oiwake in Japan at the home of the song

Esashi Oiwake Hall

- Admission fees: Adults 500 yen; elementary, junior high and high school students 250 yen (10% discount for groups of 15 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Performances: Apr. 29 - Oct. 31 (three times a day at 11:00, 13:00 and 14:30) Except the 3rd Fri., Sat. and Sun. in Sept. (dates of the National Esashi Oiwake Contest)
- Closed: Mondays, the day after national holidays, Dec. 31 - Jan. 5 (open every day between Apr. 1 and the end of Oct.)
- Inquiries: Aza Nakauta-cho 193-3, Esashi Tel. (0139)52-0920

Traditional Japanese folk music of people living in northern regions; All you need to know about Esashi Oiwake.

Oiwake songs derived from *mago-uta* (horseman's songs) sung in Nakasendo in Shinshu (now Nagano), and spread throughout Japan as a popular song during the Edo period. After the song was introduced to the Echigo region, it was changed into a boatman's song, and brought to Esashi roughly 200 years ago by the *kitamaebune*.

In Esashi, troupe leader Sanoichi then added the Kenryo-bushi to the Oiwake to create the unique sound of the Esashi Oiwake, which has since been refined and passed down by many singers.

Enthusiasts are attracted by the tunes of the emotional Esashi Oiwake, which is said to be the be-all and end-all of typical Japanese folk songs.

Tangible cultural properties designated by the town

Former Sekikawa Residence

Matsumae Clan's No.1 merchants who helped develop Esashi for generations

The former residence of the Sekikawa family, the main merchants of the Matsumae Clan who operated Esashi's most prosperous shipping agency from approximately 300 years ago until around 1900, contains a large number of preserved valuable ancient documents and furnishings, which convey the conditions during Esashi's peak period. The restoration of the residence was completed in 1986, and the preserved contents have been displayed to the public along with the building since 1987.

- Admission fees: Adults 100 yen; elementary, junior high and high school students 50 yen (10% discount for groups of 15 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: Mondays, the day after national holidays, closed between Nov. and Apr.
- Inquiries: Aza Toyokawa-cho 55, Esashi Tel. (0139)52-4220

Nationally designated Important Cultural Property

Former Nakamura Residence

Shipping agency that conveys the golden days of herring fishing

The former Nakamura residence, which remains in Nakauta-cho, was constructed by Ubei Ohashi, one of the seafood merchants form the Oumi area who thrived along the Sea of Japan coast in the Edo period.

Echizen stones shipped by the *kitamaebune*, which sailed between Esashi and the Hokuriku region at the time, were piled to form the foundations, and the large two-story gabled building is made entirely from Japanese cypress. A central courtyard connects the main house with a storehouse library, a lower warehouse and detached rooms, and is typical of merchant's architecture of the time.

- Admission fees: Adults 300 yen; elementary, junior high and high school students 100 yen (10% discount for groups of 15 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: Mondays, the day after national holidays, closed between Dec. 31 and Jan. 5 (open every day between Apr. and the end of Oct.)
- Inquiries: Aza Nakauta-cho 22, Esashi Tel. (0139)52-1617

Welcomed by the Happo Nirami no Ryu (dragon glaring in eight directions)

Hokkeji Temple

- Admission fees: Adults 300 yen; elementary and junior high school students 150 yen (10% discount for groups of 30 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: Irregular holidays
- Inquiries: Hokkeji Temple, Aza Hon-cho 71, Esashi Tel. (0139)52-0355

A dragon on the ceiling watches time pass by. Stateliness still conveyed today.

Hokkeji Temple was constructed in 1521 in the Katsuyama district of Kaminokuni, moved to Esashi and restored in 1665, before the main temple was built five years later. The stateliness of the Muromachi period is still conveyed today.

In addition, the temple gate was built over 300 years ago as the main gate of the Hiyama Bugyosho (magistrate's office), and it also is one of the oldest structures in Hokkaido. The seven meter-square Happo Nirami no Ryu painted on the ceiling of the main temple is believed to have been drawn by Ike no Taiga, one of Japan's leading literary artists.

ESASHI MAP

Youth Training Facility

Kaiyo-maru

- Admission fees: Adults 700 yen; elementary, junior high and high school students 300 yen (20% discount for groups of 20 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: open every day between Apr. and Oct.
- Inquiries: Aza Ubagami-cho 1-10, Esashi Tel. (0139)52-5522

The romance of late Edo revived. The whole history reproduced.

A feudal government battleship built in the Netherlands in the latter years of the Edo period. The ship played an active part in the Boshin War under the control of Enomoto Takeaki but ran aground and sank in a storm off the coast of Esashi in 1868. Later the ship was restored based on the blueprints that remained at the shipbuilders in the Netherlands.

Approximately 3,000 salvaged relics are now displayed in the restored ship. Canons and the latest weaponry of the day, as well as half-Japanese half-Western daily necessities rouse the interest of visitors, who can also experience the noise of artillery guns, the operation of the boat and the weight of cannonballs at hands-on sections around the ship.

Important Cultural Property of Hokkaido

Yokoyama Residence

- Admission fees: Adults 300 yen; junior high school students 150 yen; elementary school students 100 yen (10% discount for groups of 30 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: open every day between late Apr. and end of Nov. (reservations required during other seasons.)
- Inquiries: Aza Ubagami-cho 45, Esashi Yokoyama Residence Tel. (0139)52-0018

An old family home in which a hint of Kyoto remains. A herring mansion inherited by generations

The Yokoyama family dates back more than 200 years from now, and successive generations have been engaged in fishery, commerce and the shipping trade from this very site. The residence was built roughly 160 years ago, and designated as the Important Cultural Property by the Hokkaido Government in 1963.

Daily necessities used in the golden days of the herring boom are displayed in the main building and the No. 4 warehouse, which have been preserved as valuable building to introduce the lifestyles of the times.

Streetscapes with a historic atmosphere

Esashi Inishie Road

Esashi, the town that flourished under the herring fishing business and cypress lumber trade with the *kitamaebune* until the early Meiji era.

Many of the buildings from the boom days (wholesale warehouses, merchants' residences, tradesmen's houses, shrines and temples) still remain in the downtown districts of Esashi along the coast.

With the aim of preserving the historical buildings for future generations and introducing them to as many visitors as possible, the town of Esashi launched a project in 1989 to preserve and promote the historical aspects of the town, and work on the streets was completed in November 2004.

The transformation was dramatic, with the creation of the nostalgic and distinctive streetscapes of Inishie Road.

Hero of Esashi's Folklore

Shigejiro

Esashi's ever loved famous man of wit.

Shigejiro is a man believed to have actually existed in the Edo period, when the town's prosperity prompted the saying, "Even Edo is not as busy as Esashi in May."

Shigejiro was said to be extremely quick witted and made the whole town laugh.

Important Cultural Property of Hokkaido

Former Hiyama Nishigun Office Building/ Esashi Town Historical Museum

Learn all about the town of Esashi

Esashi's nature, archaeology, history and people are introduced in both permanent displays and temporary exhibitions held several times a year, allowing visitors to experience hands-on activities related to Esashi.

The building was constructed in 1887, and is designated as an Important Cultural Property by the Hokkaido Government.

Gorgeous cloths are restored on the walls and ceilings of the building.

- Admission fees: Adults 300 yen; elementary, junior high and high school students 100 yen (10% discount for groups of 15 or more)
- Opening hours: 9:00 - 17:00
- Closed: Mondays, the day after national holidays, Dec. 31 - Jan. 5 (open every day between Apr. and the end of Oct.)
- Inquiries: Aza Nakauta-cho 112, Esashi Tel. (0139)54-2188

The symbol of Esashi

Heishi Rock

Scenic Beauty of Kamome Island

Five hundred years ago, there was an old woman who predicted a freak of nature would occur. The woman was handed a bottle by an elderly man, and threw it into the sea on the man's advice, and consequently many shoals of herring came to Esashi where the bottle was thrown, saving the residents from starvation.

Accommodation Guide

1 Hotel New Esashi Tel. (0139)52-3311
From 6,970 yen per night incl. breakfast; from 8,400 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

2 Meya Ryokan Tel. (0139)52-0072
7,350 yen - 10,500 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

3 Minato Ryokan Tel. (0139)52-0308
5,775 yen - 6,825 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

4 Hotel Terakoya Tel. (0139)52-0855
From 6,300 yen per night without meals; from 8,400 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

5 Ryotei Kuki Tel. (0139)52-2020
From 35,000 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

~~6 Minshuku Kagetsu Tel. (0139)52-2155~~
From 7,350 yen per night incl. two meals, tax included)

7 Tsuji Ryokan Tel. (0139)52-0062
6,300 yen - 10,500 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

8 Fujiya Ryokan Tel. (0139)52-0115
From 5,775 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

~~9 Hotel Michishio Tel. (0139)53-6431~~
Western-style room from 6,825 yen, Japanese-style room from 6,300 yen per night incl. two meals (tax included)

10 Shigejiro Banya Kani Shukuhakusho (simple lodging house) Tel. (0139)52-1177
From 6,300 yen (up to 2 guests per room); plus 2,100 yen for every extra guest (tax included)

Dates, times and prices as of January 1, 2010

Specially selected Courses

Esashi Oiwake Course

Kamome Island Tour — Time required 30 min. Price free of charge

Esashi Oiwake Hall — Time required 60 min. Price admission fee

Monument to Sanoichi, the Father of Esashi Oiwake — Time required 5 min. Price free of charge

Bakumatsu (end of Edo Period) / Kaiyo-maru Course

Kamome Island Tour — Time required 25 min. Price free of charge

Kaiyo-maru Youth Training Facility — Time required 40 min. Price admission fee

Gokoku Shrine — Time required 10 min. Price free of charge

Herring and Kitamaebune Course

Kamome Island Tour — Time required 25 min. Price free of charge

Remains of Orii Shrine — Time required 3 min. Price free of charge

Ubagami Grand Shrine — Time required 10 min. Price free of charge

Yokoyama Residence — Time required 25 min. Price admission fee

Former Nakamura Residence — Time required 25 min. Price admission fee

Former Sekikawa Residence — Time required 20 min. Price admission fee

Time Courses

1 hr. 30 min Course
Kaiyo-maru [40 min.] — 15 min. walk / 3 min. ride — Yokoyama Residence [25 min.] — 5 min. walk / 1 min. ride — Hokkeji Temple [10 min.]

2 hr. Course
Yokoyama Residence [25 min.] — 5 min. walk / 1 min. ride — Esashi Oiwake Hall [40 min.] — 7 min. walk / 2 min. ride — Former Hiyama Nishigun Office Building [35 min.]

3 hr. Course
Kaiyo-maru [40 min.] — 15 min. walk / 3 min. ride — Yokoyama Residence [25 min.] — 5 min. walk / 1 min. ride — Esashi Oiwake Hall [40 min.] — 7 min. walk / 2 min. ride — Former Hiyama Nishigun Office Building [35 min.] — 1 min. walk / 1 min. ride — Former Nakamura Residence [25 min.]

Esashi no Tabi (Travel in Esashi)

"Kawara-ban"

There are lots of things to see in Esashi, including as tourist facilities, historic spots, famous places and local entertainment. Individual Esashi no Tabi Kawara-ban guidebooks carrying more detailed information on each of these tourist attractions are distributed at the respective sites. Why not create your own original pamphlet while traveling around the sites with this guidebook at hand? Original Kawara-ban guidebooks are distributed to Kawara-ban members of the Esashi Tourism Convention Association (for a small fee).

Kawara-ban distribution sites

1. Former Nakamura Residence
2. Esashi Town Historical Museum
3. Esashi Oiwake Hall
4. Kaiyo-maru Youth Training Facility
5. Yokoyama Residence
6. Former Sekikawa Residence
7. Ubagami Grand Shrine
8. Hokkeji Temple
9. Shogakuin Temple
10. Higashi Honganji Branch Temple
11. Esashi Town Meeting Hall
12. Ichiban-gura
13. Nishi Honganji Branch Temple
14. Kongoji Temple

Others