



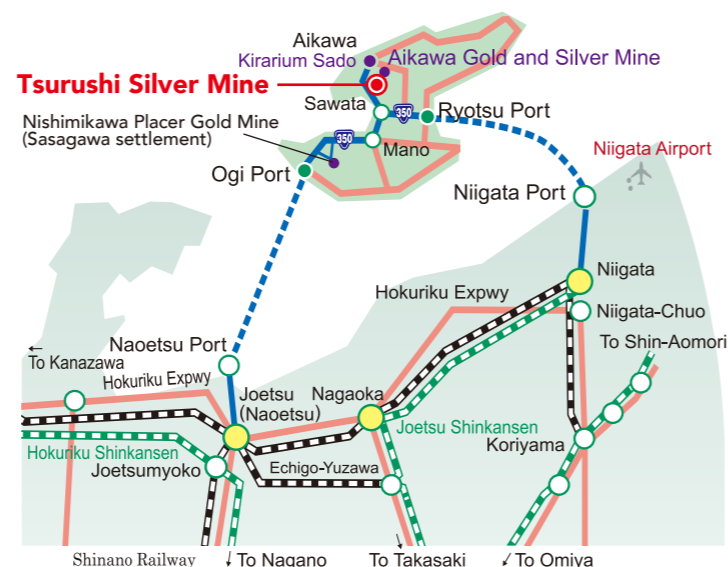
Sado ikkoku kaigan zu (Picture map of coastline on Sado)
(Excerpt from Tatsumi to Sawane villages)
Aikawa History Museum

To all the visitors

The Tsurushi district, including the area of the Tsurushi Silver Mine (currently Sawane and the mountainous part of Sawane-Ikari), has poor footing and includes hazardous locations. Visitors should also be cautious of dangerous wildlife, such as bees and snakes. As no tourist facilities are provided, visiting as part of a guided tour is strongly recommended.

- Please observe rules and etiquette so as not to disturb residents or other visitors.
- Some areas, including the mine sites, are dangerous. Do not enter restricted areas under any circumstances.
- Damaging ruins or historic buildings, or taking any excavated artifacts, soil, stones, animals or plants is strictly prohibited.
- Please take your trash with you.
- The use of fire is strictly prohibited at the tour sites. Smoking is only allowed in designated areas.
- Please observe traffic rules when touring the sites. (Parking on the street or on private property is prohibited.)

Access to Tsurushi area



- From Ryotsu Port: About 50 minutes by car (on National Route 350)
- From Ogi Port: About 75 minutes by car (on National Route 350 and Prefectural Route 45)

NOTE: There are no direct route buses to Tsurushi Silver Mine. Please use rental cars or taxis

Let's GO! on an Adventure to the Gold and Silver Mines

Walking the streets of Sado through the lens of "Edo Glasses"



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Tsurushi Highlight Map



The History of Tsurushi Silver Mine

It is said that the Tsurushi Silver Mine was discovered in 1542 by Toyama Mouemon, a merchant of Echigo Province (present-day Niigata Prefecture), while he was crossing the sea to reach Sado. The Tsurushi Silver Mine is one of the oldest mines on Sado, second only to the placer gold mine, and it is thought that the tunnel mining technology, as well as the smelting technique called cupellation, were both borrowed from the Iwami Silver Mine. These techniques drastically increased the silver production in tunnels like the Tsurushi-mabu Tunnel and the Hyakumai-mabu Tunnel, ushering in an age of prosperity at the mine known as the Tsurushi *sengen*, literally "1,000 houses on Tsurushi."



TSURUSHI



01 Tsurushi Tunnel
(Tsurushi-mabu Tunnel Site and Honguchi-mabu Tunnel Site)

According to historical documents from the Edo period(1603-1868), mine proprietors who came to Sado from the Iwami Silver Mine of present-day Shimane Prefecture opened the Honguchi-mabu Tunnel in 1595. This tunnel later came to be known as the Tsurushi-mabu Tunnel, or Tsurushi Tunnel, and remained one of the major tunnels where mining operations were carried out until its closure. Existing picture maps from the Edo period show that underground tunnels were excavated to target multiple underground ore veins.



02 Tsurushi Silver Mine Local Magistrate's Office Site

The Tsurushi Silver Mine Local Magistrate's Office was established for the management and administration of the Tsurushi Silver Mine at the end of the 16th century when the Uesugi Kagekatsu clan of Echigo Province (present-day Niigata Prefecture) was in control of Sado. When Sado Island came under the control of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603, its management and administration were functionally transferred to Aikawa. Nevertheless, the site is believed to have continued to function as a branch office of the Sado Magistrate's Office until around the mid-17th century. Excavation surveys revealed that the site consists of three sections with different functions: the upper area for ore-dressing, the middle area for smelting, and the lower area for administrative facilities.



03 Tsurushi-Aramachi District

The Tsurushi-Aramachi District is the site of a former mining settlement located adjacent to the east of the Tsurushi Silver Mine Local Magistrate's Office Site. Numerous irregularly shaped terraces of various sizes, likely living and working spaces, can be found on the steep slopes facing the south. These remains indicate the rapid establishment and expansion of the settlement in the late 16th century, when increasing silver output led to a growth in the number of mine workers living in the area. As the silver output declined in the mid-17th century, it is believed that many people then left the area, leading to its eventual abandonment.



04 Hyakumaidaira Mining Zone

The Hyakumaidaira Mining Zone is an important mining area, believed to be among the earliest developed at the Tsurushi Silver Mine. According to the locals, the place where silver was extracted came to be known as Hyakumaidaira ("100-mai Flatland": mai was a unit used to measure the production of gold and silver) because Toyama Mouemon, who discovered the mine, paid a monthly tax of one hundred silver mai to the local lord. Traces of numerous large-scale surface mining operations, some exceeding five meters in diameter, are densely concentrated along the mountain ridgelines and streams surrounding Hyakumaidaira, clearly illustrating how actively silver mining activities were once carried out in this area.



05 Byobusawa and Shidekisawa Mining Zone

The Byobusawa and Shidekisawa Mining Zone was developed from the Keian era (1648-1652) and onwards by the first-generation Akita Gon'uemon, a mine proprietor. Located near the central area of the Tsurushi Silver Mine, the zone contains a high concentration of historical sites related to surface mining and tunnel mining along ridgelines and mountain streams. Large-scale chase mining sites, locations where miners excavated diagonally into the ground as they followed exposed ore veins on the slopes along the stream, can be found in the Byobusawa Mining Zone.



06 Otaki-mabu Tunnel Site

The Otaki-mabu Tunnel is one of the mining sites where tunnel mining took place in the early 17th century. The site was then further developed in the 19th century. The tunnel entrance lies behind a waterfall basin, and the name Otaki is thought to have been derived from the large waterfall by the entrance. A robotic survey of the tunnel was conducted, and the comparison between the survey results and historic Edo picture maps revealed that the tunnel layout closely corresponded to that of the picture maps.
※For safety reasons, entry into the tunnel is strictly prohibited.



07 Tomb of the Akita Family
(Mine Proprietors)

This site is the burial ground of the Akita family, a lineage of mine proprietors who played a prominent role in the development of the Tsurushi Silver Mine. It consists of two gorintō (five-ring stone pagodas) surrounded by additional family graves. The first-generation Gon'uemon is said to have come from Dewa Province from the area that present-day Akita Prefecture is located. It is believed that he used the profits gained from further developing the Tsurushi Silver Mine to establish Kinpokusan Shrine and Kisshō-ji Temple in Nishi-Ikari Village (present-day Nishino District). The second-generation Gon'uemon later became a mine proprietor at the Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine, and his descendants continued to serve as officially appointed mine proprietors under the Sado Magistrate's Office until the end of the Edo period.



08 Kinpokusan Shrine

Kinpokusan Shrine was established at its present location between 1624 and 1643 by the first-generation Akita Gon'uemon, a mine proprietor at the Tsurushi Silver Mine. It is one of the village shrines associated with Mount Kinpoku. A festival is held annually in mid-April, featuring traditional performing arts such as Aikawa-style Onidaiko drumming (deity mask dance) and the Okina dance (old man's mask dance) accompanied by bean scattering. The shrine festival was said to have been initiated by Akita Gon'uemon using the wealth gained from the Tsurushi Silver Mine. The portable shrine (mikoshi) bears plaques inscribed with the words "Gold and Silver Mines" and "Great Prosperity."



09 Remains of the Smelting Site
at the Tsurushi Silver Mine

At the northern edge of the Tsurushi settlement in Sawane District, a place known as "Kanakuso-daira" remains, a name derived from the impurities produced during the smelting process. This site is believed to have been the location where the smelting facilities (tokoya) of the Tsurushi Silver Mine once stood. Although these facilities were abandoned as the mine declined, copper cannons were cast here at the end of the Edo period(1603-1868). At that time, Honma Takusai employed a wax-mold technique to cast decorative patterns on the cannon barrels. This technology later developed into what is known as the "Sado Wax-Mold Metal Casting Technique."



10 Tsurushi-Tanaka District

This area is believed to have been a settlement of mine workers that prospered alongside the development of the Tsurushi Silver Mine. Historical records indicate the presence of wards such as Daiku-machi and Aimonno-machi, as well as several temples, including Sentoku-ji Temple. In the early 17th century, the administrative residences (inya) of Tanaka Seiroku and Kawamura Hikozaemon, who served as Sado magistrates, are said to have been located here. As silver production declined, the residents of Daiku-machi and Aimonno-machi were collectively relocated to Aikawa. Historical documents reveal that these names have remained unchanged to this day.



11 Tsurushi-michi Pass
Nishi-Ikari-michi and Tsurushi-michi Pass

This mining road ran from Sawane, on the coast of Mano Bay, through the Tsurushi Silver Mine, and towards the Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine. The Tsurushi-michi Pass is considered to have been a principal mining route in the end of the 16th century. Nishi-Ikari-michi Pass merges into the Tsurushi-michi Pass as the path extends toward the Kami-Aikawa District. After the road to and from Aikawa was developed in 1628, the Tsurushi-michi Pass and the Nishi-Ikari-michi Pass, which are steep mountain routes, no longer served as the main roads to Aikawa. Nevertheless, they continued to be used as local roads linking the surrounding areas.



12 Sawane Moto Castle Site
and Sawane Castle Site

The Sawane District along Mano Bay was once part of the domain of the Sawane-Honma clan, who were retainers of the Honma clan of Kawaharada. Toward the end of the Sengoku period, the clan relocated its residence from Sawane Moto Castle to Sawane Castle, which stood atop the quarry cliffs. It is said that the Sawane-Honma clan supported the Uesugis, and that the Uesugi forces landed on the beaches near Sawane Castle during Uesugi Kagekatsu's invasion of Sado. After 1589, the castle functioned as a garrison for Uesugi officials before it was eventually abandoned.