

39. The Notsuke peninsula and the Utase Boats (Bekgai and Shibetsu)

The Notsuke peninsula is the biggest sandspit in Japan, and runs for a total of 26 km. Pit dwellings from the Satsumon era have been uncovered there. During the Edo era, a marine checkpoint was built there and it was an essential gateway to Kunashiri Island as well as a home for the Samurai who worked as northern guards. From spring to autumn visitors are attracted by the unique scenery of Todovara and Narawara, and are enchanted by the Utase boats as they drift on Notsuke bay. The boats are used to catch Hokkai shrimp, and they are famous symbol of Notsuke bay, with their blurred shadows in the fog appearing almost as an illusion.



40. Wakka / Koshimizu primeval flower garden. (Kitami, Koshimizu)

The Wakka primeval flower garden constitutes the largest area of uncultivated land along the shores of Japan. Facing the sea of Okhotsk and Lake Saroma, the garden is home to more than 300 kinds of flowers which are in full bloom from spring to autumn, and it has been called "Ryugu Kaido" (the road to the palace of the sea god.) The local people and the fishermen's cooperative association have been taking the lead in new challenges to preserve the natural flora by restricting the entry of vehicles, and implementing a project of afforestation. Although the number of indigenous flower species did decrease for a time, many have reappeared since 1993 as a result of the burning off of couch grass, the planting of bulbs and the removal of non-native species. The scenic view of a colony of arctic iris and a herd of horses along Lake Tofutsu is unique.



41. The Pierson Memorial House (Kitami)

This house was built in 1914 as a private residence of the American missionaries Mr. and Mrs. G.P. Pierson. They had previously been engaged in missionary work throughout Hokkaido and finally decided that Notsukeushi (present day Kitami), which in the Ainu language means "the end of the land," would be the terminal point of their missionary activity, too. The abolition of licensed prostitution and other charitable activities has ensured that their ambition is still an anchor of spiritual culture and remains close to the hearts of the people of Kitami. The architect was W.M. Vorise, known as the founder of the Omi Brothers Company.



42. The Forest Railroad Steam Locomotive "Amamiya No. 21" (Engaru)

"Amamiya No.21" was the first national 11-ton class locomotive built by the Amamiya Manufacturing Company in Tokyo. In 1929, the engine was employed on the forest railroad line between Maruseppu and Buri to haul daily supplies and logs cut from the national forest. Although locomotive transportation was abolished in 1962, the locomotive engine was transferred from the Kitami Forest Bureau to Maruseppu town in 1977, thanks to the people's enthusiastic request to preserve it. The town built a forest park called "The Forest of Relaxation," and Amamiya No.21 was set there on new tracks. This is the only locomotive engine preserved in working condition in Hokkaido.



43. Ancient Remains along the Okhotsk Coast (Abashiri Area)

Deposits from various historical periods, including the Jomon and neo-Jomon periods and the Okhotsk and Ainu culture, have been found along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea, while many Paleolithic remains have been unearthed in such inland regions such as the Shirataki area in Engaru. The remains found along this coast show a strong resemblance to similar findings in Sakhalin, Siberia and other continental cultures. They contain the well known undisturbed pit dwellings at the Tokoro Remains, the Moyoro shell midden, which is a famous remnant of Okhotsk culture, and the equally famous Shuenshuteibo (red rounded grave) in Shari from the late Jomon era.



44. Ice Floes and Garinko (Monbetsu and etc.)

These ice floes, which are made up of sheets of pack ice that crowd along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea near Monbetsu in winter, are known locally as "obstacles of the ocean," and sight-seers can take a trip in the icebreaker "Garinko," originally built for experimental work in the oilfields off the Alaskan coast and bought by Monbetsu to carry visitors to the Okhotsk Tower about one kilometer offshore where ice floes and various forms of marine life 7.5 meters below at the bottom of the sea can be observed. Monbetsu has declared itself a city for the study of ice floes and the city is now campaigning to remind us of its importance.



45. Villages of the farmer-soldiers and military barracks (various places in Hokkaido)

The history of the farmer-soldiers, the tondehei, began in 1876 in Kotoni (Sapporo county) when they immigrated to Hokkaido for the purposes of colonization and the military defense of the new frontier. Thirty-seven villages were settled in every part of Hokkaido until the colonization of Shibetsu and Kenbushi completed the process in 1900. In Kamiyubetsu, a division of the north and south part of a soldier's village remains unchanged. Barracks are preserved in Kotoni, Shibetsu, Ota in Akkeshi, and Wada in Nemuro, while the company headquarters are preserved in Shinkotoni, Sapporo, and Nopporo, Ebetsu. Seventy-five farmer soldier dolls have been enshrined in Kitami's Shinzenko Temple.



46. Hokkaido Horse Culture

(draft horses and thoroughbreds in Hidaka and other places in Hokkaido)

The history of the horse in Hokkaido is a long one. During the Meiji era, horses toiled alongside the farmers as partners of the work force. A festival to test the strength of the farm horse called Banba developed into the Banei Horse race. At the same time, professional racing stables have been breeding thoroughbreds: at the JRA Hidaka stud farm in Urakawa, breeders are tackling the task of breeding a horse which will be able to compete against the best in the world. "The scenic view of the ranches of Hidaka, known to many as "the home of the horse," attracts many sightseers.



47. Ainu Place Names (many places in Hokkaido)

It is said that about 80 percent of all Hokkaido place names come originally from the Ainu language and that even if the places are unfamiliar to us, we can figure out their geology and location from the names that the Ainu gave them. Although at present the names are written in either katakana or kanji, and in some cases have taken on different pronunciations, they derive originally from the Ainu people's traditional way of life, which was lived in balance with nature. These names offer quite significant clues to understanding the dignity of the Ainu people and their culture.



48. Ainu Patterns (many places in Hokkaido)

All the peoples of the world have evolved unique sets of visual patterns that symbolize important spiritual concepts. The basic designs of Ainu pattern making are moreu (a spiral pattern), aiushi (a thorn pattern), and ramamnoka (a fish scale pattern), and the Ainu combine these patterns and connect them in continuous running lines. The shapes, designs and colors are valued for their impressive beauty, and have lately attracted considerable attention as a part of the Ainu's remarkable culture.



49. Ainu oral Culture (many places in Hokkaido)

The Ainu people have fostered a tradition of an oral culture and have handed down their stories from generation to generation without a break. Through storytellers' performances the listeners learn the stories, such as heroic poems, folk songs in praise of the gods, and tales of everyday life by heart with enjoyment and appreciation. The heroic stories known as Sakorpe or Yukar are magnificent sagas sung to a repetitive melody, and tell tales of superhuman abilities, such as those of men who are able to fly.



50. The Culture of Salmon (many places in Hokkaido)

Salmon is a typical Hokkaido food with a long history: A device for catching salmon has been found among deposits from the Satsunon era, and the Ainu people also lived on salmon fishing. The fishery business has developed through making use of the salmon's habit of returning to their natal river to lay their eggs, and from the early years the settlers have protected mature salmon and carried out artificial incubation project. The return of the salmon to their natal river reveals the drama of life and is an obvious barometer for the protection of the natural environment.



51. Hokkaido Ramen Noodles (many places)

Theories about the origin of ramen abound, but it became rapidly popular among the people of Hokkaido in the years after World War II. Since Hokkaido has a cold winter climate, the thick strong taste of ramen came to be regarded as representative of the food culture of Hokkaido as a whole. Ramen is now a great draw for tourists, and many varieties of ramen have become a famous feature of the cuisine of Sapporo, Hakodate, Asahikawa, Kushiro, and other cities around the island, kindling a craze for local ramen as a result.



52. Genghis Khan (many places in Hokkaido)

The beginnings of the dish known as Genghis Khan are uncertain but it has developed most widely in Hokkaido as a way of serving mutton and vegetables. The original style of Genghis Khan may well have come from the continental mainland, but it can also be said that its present style of special seasoning and delicious mutton has established it as a dish that is unique to Hokkaido. It is a standard dish during the Hanami Festival, and it is now widely popular not only for tourists, but also as a way of connecting people as they sit together around the Genghis Khan grill.

