

Properties of The Sado Complex of Heritage Mines, Primarily Gold Mines

Photos ①-⑦ by ©Hoichi Nishiyama



① Nishimikawa Placer Gold Mine (Mt. Toramaruyama)

It is estimated that placer mining has been conducted at this gold deposits since the end of the Heian period (the end of the 12th century). Mt. Toramaruyama is the largest mining site in Nishimikawa Placer Gold Mine. Even today, the mountain slope whose soil used to be scraped for gathering gold still never allow any plants to grow, with its red colored surface exposed.



③ Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine (Doyu-no-warito opencut)

For over 400 years since the end of the 16th century, this was in operation as one of the largest gold and silver mines in Japan. This is an exceptional case in the world that historic remains and mining towns in different periods still survive in one area. Doyu-no-warito is the symbol of the Sado Gold and Silver Mine, with the remains of surface mining on the Doyu Vein in the Edo period.



⑥ Oma Port

This port, with its completion in 1892, was used for transporting ores and carrying in raw materials such as coal. Stone embankment, truss bridge, loader pier, and crane pedestal still remain.



⑧ Katabe-Kanoura Quarry

This was the quarry for the materials for bed stones of mills. 14 quarrying areas and 105 wedge holes have been confirmed.



② Tsurushi Silver Mine (Otaki Mabu Tunnel)

This silver mine was a forerunner to the first discovery of Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine. There are many visible traces that show transition from surface mining to tunnel mining. Otaki Mabu Tunnel is described on the records and illustrations in the Edo period and is one of the representative tunnels in Tsurushi.



④ Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine (Odate Vertical Shaft)

This is the first Western style vertical shaft for precious metal mining in Japan, which was completed in 1877. It was used for lifting up and down ores, miners and materials, reaching 352m at deepest. This is also one of the structures symbolizing modernization of domestic mining industry.



⑤ Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine (Kitazawa Flotation Plant)

This facility was completed in 1938, operating for dressing and smelting ores. The subsequent expansion enabled the facility to process 5 tons of ores a month, being the Asia's largest mining plant.



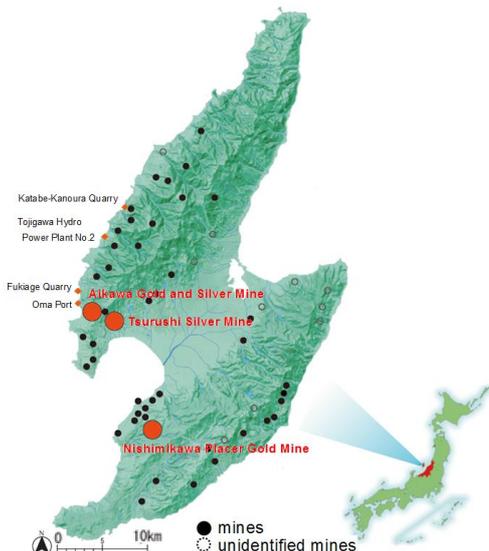
⑦ Fukiage Quarry

Quarrying was conducted here for a long time from the pre-modern times to the modern times in order to acquire the materials for runner stones of mills. A large number of wedge holes still remain on the rocks of the shore.



⑨ Tojigawa Hydro Power Plant No.2

From the Meiji era onward, thermal power plants have been constructed to provide the mine with electric power. In order to reserve additional power, the hydro power plant was constructed on the Tojigawa River. The Plant No.2 was completed in 1919 and continued its operation until 1977.



■ Access to Sado Island

Transportation between Niigata on mainland and Sado Island

- Niigata Port - Ryotsu Port: 2 hours 30 minutes by Ferry, 65 minutes by Jet Foil
- Teradomari Port - Akadomari Port: 65 minutes by High Speed Craft
- Naoetsu Port - Ogi Port: 1 hour 40 minutes by High Speed Ferry (Out of service in winter)

Access to Aikawa Gold and Silver Mine

- From Ryotsu Port by car: 30 km, 60 minutes
- From Ryotsu Port by Honsen Line local bus for Aikawa: 60 minutes
(Shuttle bus for the gold mine available, depending on the season and the day of the week)
- From Ogi Port by car: 45 km, 1 hour 20 minutes
- From Akadomari Port by car: 60 km, 1 hour 40 minutes

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