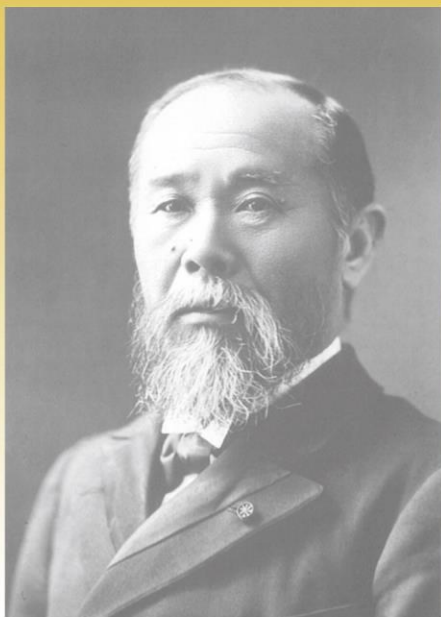


Hirobumi Ito Museum

WELCOME TO HIROBUMI ITO MUSEUM

Shoin Yoshida once said,

"Risuke (Ito's childhood name) will continue to advance and one day will be a formidable shusenka."



Shoin Yoshida used the word *shusenka* to describe Ito's qualities. A *shusenka* is one who acts to accomplish something. It is said that he instinctively knew who to associate himself with. Hirobumi revered Shinsaku Takasugi, Kaoru Inoue, and Takayoshi Kido (Kogoro Katsura) and worked together with them. With such relationships to support him, Hirobumi Ito steadfastly advanced upwards through life, eventually becoming Japan's first Prime Minister. Shoin Yoshida realized Hirobumi's potential from the first time he met Ito.

The Birth of Hirobumi Ito

Hirobumi Ito (child name Risuke) was born in the Tsukari area of Kumage County (presently Tsukari, Hikari City) on September 2 in the 12th year of the Tempo Era (1841). Ito lived here until he moved to Hagi at age 9. There are many stories that still exist regarding the bright and competitive youth known as Risuke.

Inside the Hirobumi Ito Memorial Park visitors can see the restored house where Hirobumi Ito was born, the well that provided the water for

his first bath, and a second-generation persimmon tree said to have been climbed by Hirobumi Ito during his youth. At this park visitors are afforded a glimpse into the childhood of Hirobumi Ito.

As an Ishin-Shishi (Restoration Loyalist)

After moving to Hagi, Hirobumi Ito attended the *Shoka Sonjuku* School where he was instructed by Shoin Yoshida with Shinsaku Takasugi, Takayoshi Kido.

Afterwards he joined the movement to overthrow the bakufu government of the Shogun, and participated in the burning of the offices of the English diplomatic mission with Shinsaku Takasugi. At the age of 23 he traveled to England with a group of four others including Kaoru Inoue to study at the University of London.

These men were known as the "Choshu Five," and while they were in England they absorbed as much knowledge as possible on the how to modernize Japan.

Six months later, Ito heard that the Choshu Domain had planned to bombard foreign ships with cannon fire. So he returned to Japan with Kaoru Inoue to stop them. While he was not able to halt the bombardment, he did attend the reconciliation meetings with France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Netherlands as an interpreter.



The Young Samurai Known as the "Choshu Five" (Hirobumi Ito is at top right)

Dedicating Himself to the Creation of a New Country

Following the Meiji Restoration, Ito was assigned a number of positions in the Meiji Government including Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, Director of the Legislation Bureau, and Chairperson of the Sanjiin office in charge of formulating state policy. Upon the establishment of the cabinet system in Meiji 18 (1885), Ito assumed his post as the first Prime Minister of Japan, an office he would hold a total of four times.

Afterwards, he was involved in the enactment of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan as the President of the Privy Council, and played an important role in building the foundations of the modern state. He also displayed his formidable strengths as a diplomat, dedicating himself to improve the positioning of Japan in Asia.

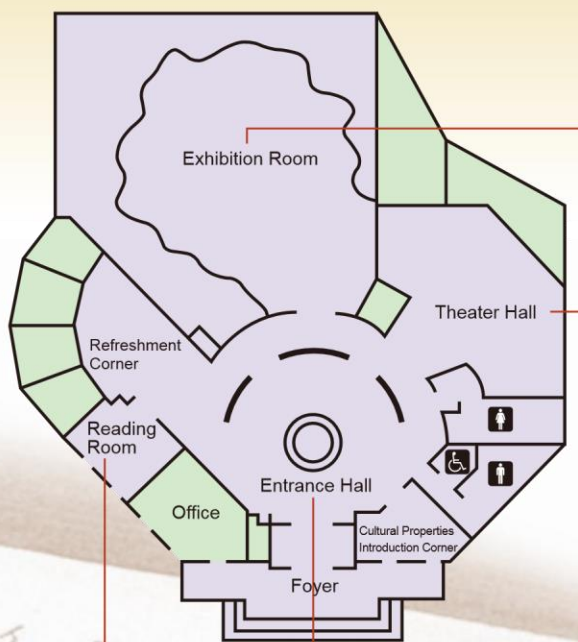
In Meiji 42 (1909), having been appointed the President of the Privy Council, Ito began an inspection tour. While at Harbin Station (currently in the People's Republic of China) he was shot by a sniper and died at age 69.

This is the Place Where the Light of the Restoration Can be Seen

Overview of the Hirobumi Ito Museum

The Hirobumi Ito Museum displays personal items that belonged to Hirobumi Ito, the first Prime Minister of Japan. The museum was opened as a place to introduce Ito's accomplishments and to study trends in Japan from the end of the bakufu period to the end of the Meiji period.

The museum's main building is a one-story reinforced concrete structure with an area of 534.36 square meters. The building's facade was constructed with a Meiji-style brick motif. Furthermore, given its location between Ito's Birthplace and Former Residence of Hirobumi Ito, it serves as a kind of time tunnel between Risuke (Ito's childhood name) and Hirobumi.



Exhibition Room

In the Exhibition Room furniture from Ito's Sorokaku vacation residence in Oiso, Kanagawa Prefecture is on display, as well as his court uniform and other clothes, ink stones and brushes, his personal Buddha statue, and the first issued thousand yen banknote with his likeness (issued in 1963).



Theater Hall

In the Theater Hall a 20 minute video presentation is shown on Ito's feelings of nostalgia on a 100-inch display.



Entrance Hall

Three photographs welcome visitors as they come into the Entrance Hall. Pictures of Ito as a young man (23 years old, before studying in England), at middle age (47 years old, during his first term as Prime Minister), and late in life (69 years old, at Oiso). (From left to right)



Reading Room

In the Reading Room visitors may examine documents related to Hirobumi Ito, and can even access information through a touch-screen terminal. Here visitors can learn about the life and accomplishments of Hirobumi Ito from a number of different angles.



Admission Information

[Opening Hours]

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Last admission at 4:30 PM)

[Holidays]

Mondays (If Monday is a holiday, the museum will be closed the following day);
December 29th-3rd

[Admission]

(Prices in parentheses indicate rates for groups exceeding 20 persons)

Adults 250Yen (200Yen)

Admission is free for high school students and younger children.

*Admission is free for visitors with a disability certificate and an accompanying person.