

# Historic Buildings of Misumi West Port



**Quay**  
The design of Mulder's 756 m-long quay was blended splendidly with the technique of stone masons of Amakusa. Orderly ashlar masonry is its special feature, and it is designated as a National Important Cultural Property.



**Ryujokan**  
Built in 1918 as a memorial project for the 50th anniversary of the Meiji Emperor's enthronement, it was used as a town hall and library. Urashima-ya was built at this location when the port was opened. It is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.



**Drainage Channel**  
Made to draw sea water at high tide and drain water at low tide, this roadside ditch also has the dual role of a natural sewer and a way to control mountainside runoff. Its bottom and sides have stone pitching. The western edge, the west side, the east side and the back side are National Important Cultural Properties.



**Old Uto County Office**  
Constructed in 1902, it was a model of western architecture in the Meiji Era due to its plastered exterior walls and interior. It is still used as a seamanship facility. It is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.



**Old Misumi Marine Transportation Warehouse**  
Called dozo-zukuri, this earthen-walled warehouse was constructed in 1887. Repaired in 1985, it is currently used as a restaurant. It is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.



**Old Misumi Summary Court**  
It was opened in 1890 and relocated and newly constructed at the current location in 1920. It was used as the court until 1992. Currently it is open to public as "the House of Law". It is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.

Registration as World Cultural Heritage Sites 2015  
"Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining"

# Misumi West Port

Only remaining Meiji Era port in Japan

## The Way to the Registration as World Heritage Sites

### What are the World Heritages Sites?

They are the remarkable and universal common properties for humanity which are registered on the World Heritage List based on the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" (World Heritage Convention).

### How many kinds of World Heritage Sites are there, and how many are registered?

There are 3 kinds of World Heritage Sites, and 1031 sites are registered. (As of July, 2015)

① Cultural property (802 sites)

Historically, culturally and academically important relics, constructions, and ruins

② Natural heritage (197 sites)

Important natural landscapes and habitats of creatures regarding preservation, appreciation and research

③ Mixed heritage (32 sites)

Sites that satisfy the conditions of both natural and cultural heritages

### What is the tentative list?

The member states of the World Heritage Convention submit the sites to UNESCO for consideration as additions to the tentative lists. Without being listed on the tentative lists, it cannot be inspected when the nomination is submitted.

### The process of registration as a World Heritage Site

The following is the general flow of the registration procedure to become a World Heritage Site.

#### 1. Submission of the tentative list

The member states of the World Heritage Convention make the tentative list and submit it to the UNESCO World Heritage Center.

#### 2. Submission of nomination

Among qualified sites, each state can recommend no more than 2 sites (one cultural and one natural heritage site) per year as a rule.

#### 3. Inspection by inspection authority

Cultural heritage sites are inspected and reported on by International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), natural heritage sites by International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

#### 4. Discussion at the World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee makes the final decision on registration.

#### 5. Registration to the World Heritage List

### It must have "remarkable and universal value"

- More than one requirement has to fulfill the registration standards stated by the World Heritage Committee.
- The originality of its design, material, and location must be preserved.
- The site must contain all the necessary elements in order to be evaluated.

### The system to protect the value of the heritage site should be well developed into the future

- Prudent protection measures by national laws.
- Formulation of a conservation and management plan and preparation of a management system.

The required conditions to be a World Heritage Site

## Contact Information

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# The Misumi West Port supported the Meiji Era Industrial Revolution in Japan

The Misumi West Port, one of the largest ports of the Meiji Era, was opened in 1887. It was designated as a special national port of export in 1889 and flourished as a distribution center. Despite suffering economic decline, the facilities of those days such as a stone quay remain in their original form. This is the only port of the Meiji Era that still exists in Japan.

## The port as a whole represents the heritage of industrial modernization

The noteworthy point of Misumi West Port is that the modern port town was constructed on the reclaimed foreshore for which a mountain was cut. In the design by Mulder, curved lines were frequently used, whose scale, along with the width of channels and roads, were far beyond the Japanese standard at that time. There were warehouses along the quay, and both western and Japanese buildings were constructed and arrayed.

### World Heritage Sites

"Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining"

"The Kyushu/Yamaguchi Modernized Industrial Sites", which consist of 22 properties including Misumi West Port, was recorded in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in January 2009 - revised to 23 properties in April 2013.

"Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining" were registered as World Cultural Heritage Sites in July 2015.

### Its function as a modern port town

The port was designed by Mulder, a Dutch hydraulic engineer. Not only did he design the quay but also roads and channels in Misumi's hinterland. The design of roads and channels was at a scale far beyond the Japanese standard of the time. Current National Route 57, which crosses the Misumi West Port and serves as the main road connecting Kumamoto and Amakusa, is still used with its original width at the time of the opening of the port. Upon the opening of the port, the Uto County Police Station, Misumi Summery Courts, and Uto County Office were opened and the town flourished as a port town with trade, administration, and justice.

### Stone Masons of Amakusa

The Misumi West Port was constructed by stone masons from Amakusa. They were led by Hide Koyama, who was also involved in constructing Oura Church and the Glover House in Nagasaki. The polished stones were piled up stones in curved lines, which was unusual at that time in Japan.

### Three Biggest Port Constructions of the Meiji Era

The Misumi West Port, the Mikuni Port (Fukui Prefecture), and the Port of Nobiru (Miyagi Prefecture) were Japan's first full-blown modern port facilities. Started in May 1884 and completed in June 1887, they were the three biggest port constructions of the Meiji Period.



### The function as the exporting port for the coal

Until the Miike Port was opened, the Misumi West Port had the role, along with Kuchinotsu Port in Nagasaki Prefecture, of exporting coal from the Miike coal mine to Shanghai, China. At that time, the coal transported by sea was temporarily stored in the Umatate area (near the No. 1 Bridge - called Tenmon-kyo - of the Five Bridges of Amakusa) and loaded onto large ships anchored offshore. Then it was exported through Misumi customs and the customs at the Port of Kuchinotsu.

July 2015

## "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining" are registered as world cultural heritage sites

From the end of the Edo Period to the end of the Meiji Era, Japan focused on heavy industry and accomplished the rapid industrialization of iron and steel, shipbuilding, and coal mining. There remain 23 sites in mainly Kyushu and Yamaguchi which show the success of this transition to industrialization in the relatively short period of 60 years after the closing days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. These sites also show the process of how the traditional cultures of the West and Japan nicely blended. These two points require appreciation. The Misumi West Port is a port which contributed to Japan's industrialization in terms of coal mining. The coal from Miike, transported by sailing vessel, was loaded onto steamships at the Misumi West Port and exported to Shanghai and other areas in China. This historical value, along with its cultural value of being the only remaining original port of the Meiji Era, is sufficient reason for its selection as a World Heritage Site.

The number of the sites proposed is 23, and the following three are located in Kumamoto: **Miike Coal Mine Manda Pit** (City of Arao) - a historic site and Important Cultural Property

**Miike Coal Mine Coal Railway** (Cities of Arao and Omuta) - historic sites

**Misumi West Port** (City of Uki) – an Important Cultural Property and Important Cultural

