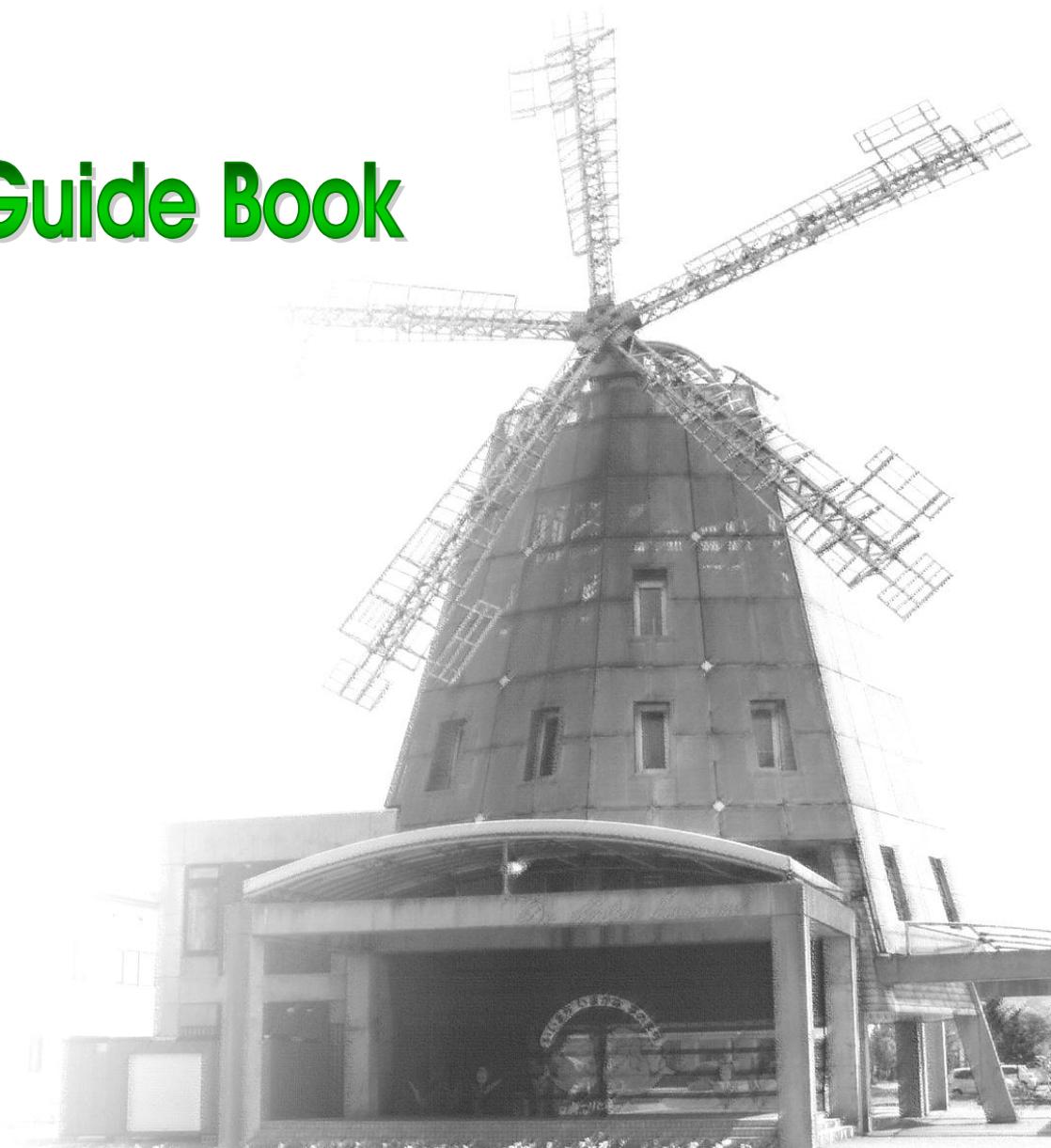


Welcome to  
the Town of  
**Imakane**

**English Guide Book**



***The good town of Imakane; Town of Dreams***

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# Facts and Figures

## Location

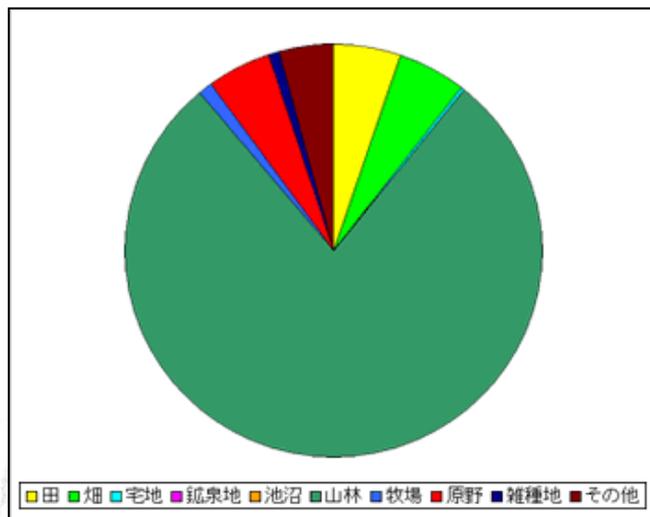


The town of Imakane is located in southern Hokkaido; the town of Oshamanbe to the East, and the town of Setana to the West. It's approximately 2 hours (by car) north of Hakodate, and 4 hours (by car) south of Sapporo. Its geographical coordinates are 42°25' N 140°01'E.

The town is surrounded and filled with many mountains and lush forests. Imakane also has the Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River running through it; it's ranked as one of the cleanest rivers in all of Japan.

## Land Area by Type

<u>Land Type</u>	<u>Area (km<sup>2</sup>)</u>
Rice Field	29.44
Farmland	29.95
Mineral Spring	2.53
Residential Lot	0
Wetlands	0.19
Forest	443.16
Ranch	5.57
Uncultivated Field	29.52
Other	27.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>568.13</b>



# Population

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>			<u>Number of Households</u>
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>	
1920	4,197	3,913	8,110	1,400
1935	5,501	5,045	10,546	1,792
1945	5,806	5,865	11,671	1,931
1955	6,262	6,266	12,528	2,174
1965	5,444	5,798	11,242	2,566
1975	4,497	4,782	9,279	2,598
1985	4,086	4,345	8,431	2,615
1995	3,459	3,755	7,214	2,505
2005	3,109	3,357	6,466	2,470
2010	2,894	3,163	6,057	2,614
2011	2,865	3,143	6,008	2,628
2012	2,818	3,125	5,943	2,632
2013	2,741	3,039	5,780	2,590
2014	2,729	3,024	5,753	2,655

# Weather

<u>Month</u>	<u>Temperature (°C)</u>			<u>Rainfall (mm)</u>	<u>Snowfall (cm)</u>	<u>Daylight Hours</u>
	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>Average</u>			
January	2.0	-18.4	-5.7	102.0	214	53.5
February	5.8	-14.5	-4.2	119.5	198	29.6
March	9.3	-9.6	-0.3	106.5	100	73.5
April	13.5	-2.5	4.8	106.5	6	119.8
May	24.2	-0.8	9.9	86.5	0	139.8
June	26.6	6.3	16.3	52.0	0	185.9
July	29.2	12.7	20.0	103.0	0	103.9.2
August	31.1	10.2	21.9	297.5	0	146.1
September	26.4	2.9	17.0	205.5	0	139.8
October	24.0	-1.0	11.7	137.0	0	93.3
November	16.5	-5.0	4.5	185.0	53	80.4
December	9.1	-8.7	0.5	140.0	125	37.6
Total	31.1	-18.4	8.0	1641.0	778	778.0

# Town Symbols

The town of Imakane has several symbols to represent the town.

## Town Crest

The Town Crest of Imakane incorporates many meanings that represent the town. Starting with the meandering Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River (the surrounding circle) and the mountain in the center (the triangle), the shape also represents the kanji characters for Imakane as well. Lastly, the whole crest is in the shape of the hiragana character of *no*, which is representative of the farming and agriculture in the region.



This crest was chosen as part of a competition for the town's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary (October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1967).

## Town Motto

いいまち 今金 夢のまち

The good town of Imakane; Town of Dreams.

## Town Flower

Tulip



## Town Tree

Japanese Yew ( *Ichii* )



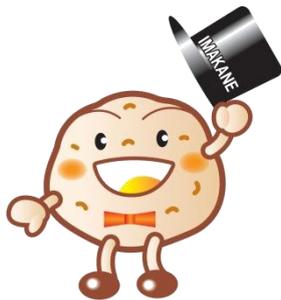
## Mayor of Imakane



The current Mayor of Imakane is Mr. Hideto Sotozaki.

## Town Mascot Characters

Danshakun the Potato

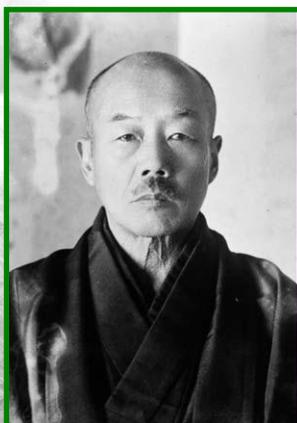


Imarun



## Naming Origin

The name Imakane originates from the names of two of the original settlers to the area. By taking the first kanji character of each of their names, they were able to create the name of Imakane.



Imamura Toujiro  
今村 藤次郎



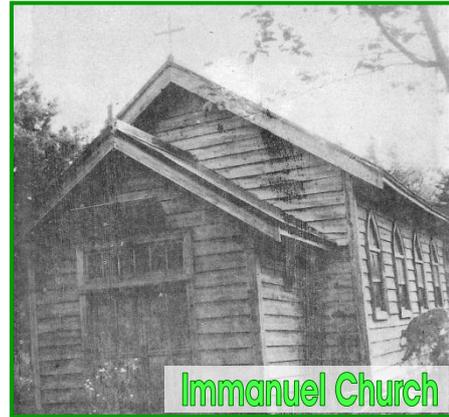
Kanamori Ishirou  
金森 石郎

Imakane  
今金

# Town History

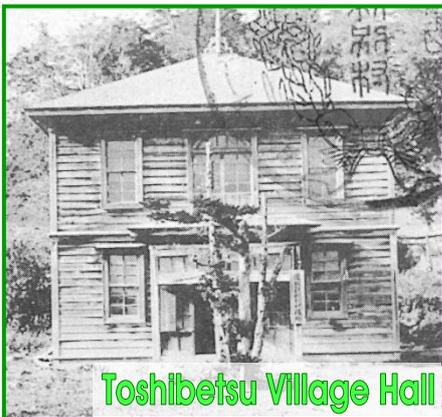
## From Mining to Farming

Before the Imakane area became known as an agricultural center, the area was known for its mining and drew many people from the main island of Honshu. Proof of this can be seen in the upstream region of the Toshibetsu River, where evidence of mining/panning for Alluvial Gold (gold dust/flakes) can be found.



Immanuel Church

There is also evidence at Kanikan Peak where the mining of Gold Ore took place. The aforementioned mining and large influx of people are believed to have started at the beginning of the Edo Period (17<sup>th</sup> century) and continued on afterwards. Near the beginning of the Meiji Era (mid 19<sup>th</sup> century), Manganese was discovered as well, and the mining of it continued from the end of the Meiji Era until approximately 1945.



Toshibetsu Village Hall

Settling in the Imakane area for the purpose of farming and agriculture began in the 24<sup>th</sup> year of the Meiji Era (1891) with the arrival of Yuki Yoshi Shikata and a group of Christian settlers in the Immanuel (currently known as Kamioka) area. In the 26<sup>th</sup> year of the Meiji Era (1893), Toujirou Imamura and Ishirou Kanamori settled in the area where Imakane is currently located.

In the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the Meiji Era, separation from the village of Setana occurred and the village of Toshibetsu was created. It was then in the 22<sup>nd</sup> year of the Showa Era (1947) on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of becoming a separate village that the area was renamed to Imakane, in honor of the settlers Mr. Imamura and Mr. Kanamori.

# Points of Interest

## Educational Institutions (As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014)



**Imakane Junior High School**  
Principal: Mr. Masahiko Hagino  
Vice-principal: Mr. Takeshi Oka

Teachers: 18  
Students: 152



**Imakane Elementary School**  
Principal: Mr. Mitsunobu Taniguchi  
Vice-principal: Mr. Tatsuya Sano

Teachers: 23  
Students: 211



**Tanekawa Elementary School**  
Principal: Mr. Akihiro Yasuda  
Vice-principal: Mr. Sakae Yoshioka

Teachers: 8  
Students: 16



**Imakane Special Needs High School**  
Principal: Mr. Toshijiro Takashima  
Vice-principal: Mr. Masato Sato

Teachers: 63  
Students: 74

## Educational Institutions (cont.)



**Nintei KodomoEn Imakane (Kindergarden)**

Director: Ms. Shigeko Kariya

Vice-director: Ms. Makiko Kakimoto

Teachers: 30

Students: 122



**Tanekawa Seasonal Nursery School**

Director: Mr. Akihiro Yasuda

Teachers: 3

Students: 10



**Suzukane Seasonal Nursery School**

Director: Mr. Katsuhiro Watanabe

Teachers: 3

Students: 12



**Child Development Assistance Centre**

Director: Mr. Shun'ichi Tanaka

Teachers: 5

Clients: 51



**Gakudo Hoikusho (After-school Care Centre)**

Director: Mr. Katsuhiro Watanabe

Teachers: 12

Students: 69

# Tourist Attractions



## Pirika Dam

After the flooding of the Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River in August of 1962, construction of this multi-purpose Dam began in 1979. Opening in 1991, Pirika Dam is the longest of its kind in Japan at 1480m in length. A combination dam (concrete slab and rock fill), it serves four purposes; electricity production, flood control, supply of irrigation water, and maintaining natural water flow.



## National Historical Site Pirika

Discovered in 1978, this area was found to be rich in artifacts from the Japanese Paleolithic period (from 20,000 to 10,000 BC). As research and digging continued, it was recognized to be an important area to Japanese history, and as such, in 1994 it was declared a national historical site. Today, visitors can view artifacts found at the site in the Pirika Paleolithic Culture Center, as well as learn about life during the period through various displays and activities.



## Okupirika – Yama no Ie

Originally opening at the same time as Okupirika Onsen, Yama no Ie was owned and operated privately by Toshio Toujo until its closure in 1980. It wasn't until 1988 that it was re-opened by the town of Imakane, and with it the construction of the current structures. Located in the middle of a luscious forest and surrounded by mountains and several hiking trails, Yama no Ie is popular with those who are truly looking to "get away from it all".



## Kur Plaza Pirika

With the goal of increasing tourism to the area, Kur Plaza Pirika was conceived as a part of health and recreation facilities in the Pirika area. Opening in 1990, this hotel features spacious Japanese-style rooms, with washrooms located in common areas. Bathing facilities are available via the adjoining Pirika Onsen, and dining is available on the main floor in the restaurant Rera. Using local ingredients, the menu at Rera is popular with locals and visitors alike.



## Pirika Ski Hill

Located next to Kur Plaza Pirika, this ski hill features runs for all levels (from beginner to advanced), along with spectacular views of the unaltered surrounding nature. Popular with skiers and snowboarders of all ages, patrons can enjoy the powder snow from morning until night, and even take ski and/or snowboarding lessons from the Pirika Ski School. Pirika Ski Hill is open from December until March.

## Tourist Attractions (cont.)



### Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River

Originating at Mount Oshamanbe and flowing across the Setana plain into the Sea of Japan, the Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River has been ranked one of the cleanest rivers in Japan 14 times since 1987, the most of any river in the country.

At 80km in length, along with being the main source of fresh water for the town of Imakane, it's also a popular recreation destination for fishing and canoeing.



### De Molen Imakane

Built to be a new landmark for the town of Imakane, this windmill is located in the center of town in Holland Park and is surrounded by many tulips (the town flower) in Spring.

Constructed in 1993, De Molen (windmill in dutch) houses office space on the second floor, and an observation/conference room on the third floor. Holland Park is also host to many events and festivals year round.



### Immanuel Church

Originally built in 1896, this church is one of the oldest churches in Hokkaido. Looking to create a Christian Utopia in the wilderness of Hokkaido, Yuki Yoshi Shikata and Youjiro Maruyama, along with several Christian followers moved to the area, naming it Immanuel ("God with us" in Hebrew). With the banning of foreign language use, the area was once again renamed to Kamioka, or "God's Land". Constructed in 1968, the current building is still in use today.



### Tokoyo no Matsu

Located in the Tanekawa area along national route 230, this tree was used as a route marker for settlers and early travelers. While the actual age of the tree is unknown, it is believed to be more than one thousand years old. Named as the town tree (Japanese Yew – *Ichii*), its hollow center and very tall stature continue to grow to this day. It remains as a symbol of traffic safety and is seen as a guardian to those who travel in the area.



### Aishirei Land

Located in the Kamioka district, Aishirei Land was conceived by Aishirei no Kai in 1991. Named after the 140° longitudinal line that runs through the park (a play on words), the group sought to create links of friendship among children that live along the 140° line. Featuring a whale pond, a "field of dreams" baseball field, as well as a stage and other facilities, Aishirei Land is host to many events year round.

# Hot Springs (Onsen)



## Pirika Onsen

Constructed as a part of the Kur Plaza Pirika Hotel complex that opened in 1990, this onsen was conceived as a part of health and recreation facilities in the Pirika area. Separated into male and female baths, each one features both indoor and outdoor pools, along with a sauna and Jacuzzi tub. With waters that contain a mixture of saline, calcium chloride, and sulfur at temperatures of approximately 41°C, Pirika Onsen is popular with locals and travelers alike, and is very popular with skiers during the winter season.



## Okupirika Onsen

Originally opening in 1919, this onsen is a naturally occurring spring that features a main outdoor bath with beautiful views of the surrounding nature, as well as lukewarm spring water (approx. 38°C) which enables patrons to bathe for long periods of time. Unlike most onsen in Japan, the main bath is also communal, and as such, swimsuits are allowed to worn by patrons. Popular with locals, this seasonal onsen (open from May until October) is also famous nation-wide and attracts many visitors every year.



## Hot Springs (Onsen – cont.)



### Tanekawa Onsen

Operated and managed by the community league, this local community onsen originally opened in 1975 and features natural salt water (saline) with separate male and female baths. Construction of the current structure was completed on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1980, which added a spacious lounge area, as well as two large multi-purpose rooms. With an interior remodel being completed in 2007, this onsen is popular with locals for its “at home” feeling, as well as the hand-made soba noodles that are available during the winter season.



### Attakarando

Located near the center of town, this onsen opened in 1995. After the discovery of a natural hot spring near the Shiribeshi-Toshibetsu River, drilling and construction began at its current location. While it was originally conceived as a steel drum onsen (one with the baths being made out of large, steel containers), it was reconceived as a destination spot for travelers and locals. With hot spring water that has a salt water (saline) concentration higher than that of sea water, Attakarando features separate male and female baths that each contain an indoor pool along with a sauna, vibra-pool, and cold water bath. Situated next to Hotel Imakane, this onsen is popular with locals and travelers alike.



