

History of Kishū Yuasa

Yuasa traditionally was an important way station on the Kumano Pilgrimage Route where nobles stayed on their way to their destination - the three sacred shrines (Kumano Sanzan). In Medieval times, when the Pilgrimage became popular among the bushi (or samurai) and civilians, the Route was often dubbed as the “ants procession” for its popularity. In late Muromachi Period (1336~1573), Yuasa continued to develop as the section of the Route along the mountain ridges shifted west towards the coast, and experienced further growth during Edo Period.

In the Early Modern Period, Yuasa flourished as an important center for land- and sea-based transport and trade, various commercial activities and industries. The town also prospered from fishing and fishnet manufacturing. The fishing industry expanded as far as Kyushū to the south and Hokkaido to the north. The most distinct industry, however, was the shōyu (soy sauce) brewing, which is said to have been discovered as a by-product of the kinzanji-miso introduced from China during the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). During the Edo Period (1603~1868), the market expanded under the protection of the Kishū Feudal Domain (now Wakayama Prefecture), and the soy sauce brewing became Yuasa’s major industry. The record says as many as ninety-two shōyu makers operated in Bunka Period (1804~1818). After the Meiji Restoration (1868), as the government subsidy terminated, the industry reduced in scale, but Yuasa still was a major economic and political center in the province of Arida-gun in the Modern Period. Today, the traditional townscape remains largely intact, without being affected by the surrounding infrastructure development.



Yuasa Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings



Yuasa’s traditional townscape was designated as a Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings (judenken) in the category of the Historic Industrial Town (shōyu, or soy sauce making) in 2006. The Preservation District (6.3ha, East-West: 400m, South-North: 280m) comprises a number of districts, including Kita-machi, Kajiya-machi, Naka-machi, and Hama-machi located on the coast to the west of the old Kumano Pilgrimage Route. The shōyu industry was most active in these districts towards the end of the 16th century. Today, many shōyu-related shops and warehouses built in the traditional fashion dating back to the Edo Period remain in the area. The older buildings are low, two-story structures, with roofs that resemble the shape of an open book laid face-down, a style known as kirizuma-zukuri, and are tiled with alternating flat and rounded tiles, a style known as hongawara-buki. The area is made up of a network of small streets (shōji) branching off four main avenues (tōri), and even today is suffused with the aroma of shōyu brewed in the traditional manner.



Transport Information



Train

ShinOsaka
• Tennoji

JR Kinokuni
Line limited
express
(about 90min)

Yuasa

For inquiries please call us at
0737-63-2525 (Yuasa Town Office)
0737-63-3535 (Yuasa Society of Commerce and Industry)

Attention

- Please consider people living in this area.
- Don’t throw away your trash!
Please cooperate for a clean town.
- Be careful of the cars when you are walking.

Yuasa – Where the Fragrance of Tradition Lives On

Yuasa Preservation Districts for Groups
of Traditional Buildings

Historic industrial town (soy sauce)
designated December 19 , 2006



Wakayama Prefecture Yuasa Town



