

Yoichi – A Town where Your Wishes can Come True?



From Yoichi, a small former herring fishing town near Otaru, comes a tale of a “Good Fortune Pilgrimage”. One lady expressed gratitude in a letter for her good fortune of marriage receiving after she visited a shrine to pray for the swift recovery of her mother from illness, and went on to visit a series of shrines in the order specified in a curious tradition. There are also stories of people giving offerings to the shrines as thanks for winning large sums of money, and of a couple who won a lottery after completing Yoichi’s “Good Fortune Pilgrimage”.

Yoichi’s “Good Fortune Pilgrimage” starts at the Yoichi Shrine (Access by Chuo Bus 18, 20, or 21 from the Yoichi Crossroads bus stop near Yoichi Station; alight at the Tomizawa 8-chome bus stop near Yoichi Port; 12 minute walk.) and goes round the following route:

- Yoichi Shrine
(1.6km)
- Monument to Rohan Koda (a Meiji-era novelist)
(0.5km)
- Former Fukuhara Fisherman’s Compound
(0.9km)
- Former Yoichi Fisherman’s Tax Office (Unjoya, in Japanese) and Moire Shrine
(1.8km)
- Sankichi Shrine

The reason for the “good fortune” lies in the Japanese characters meaning “fortune” and “luck” that are contained in the names of each place on the route.

- The “Yoi” part of Yoichi Shrine means “good”.
- The “Ko” character from “Koda” in Monument to Rohan Koda, means “happiness”.
- The “Fuku” character from “Fukuhara” in Fukuhara Fisherman’s Compound, means “fortune”.
- The “Un” character in “Unjoya” (Yoichi Fisherman’s Tax Office), means “luck”.
- The “San” and “Kichi” characters of Sankichi Shrine combined have the meaning of “three good fortunes”.

Putting these all together gives “Good + Happiness”, “Good + Fortune”, and “Good + Luck” = “Three Good Fortunes” in the best combination of words relating to luck.

It has become a popular rumor among people in the know that “By visiting the five places in Yoichi, your fortune will improve.” Why don’t you give it a try?

Be sure to visit the places on the “Good Fortune Pilgrimage” only in the correct order given above so that “Ko” (happiness), “Fuku” (fortune), and “Un” (luck) make up the “San Kichi” or Three Good Fortunes!



On the back of this leaflet there are spaces for stamping the ink stamps that you will find at each of the locations.

On the “pilgrimage”, many Japanese people pay their respects (and make their wishes!) at the various shrines along the route. In the Former Fukuhara Fisherman’s Compound, there is both a home shrine and a Buddhist altar, while there is a large home shrine inside the Former Yoichi Fisherman’s Tax Office.

Note that an admission fee of ¥300 for adults and ¥100 for children is charged for visiting the Former Fukuhara Fisherman’s Compound and the Former Yoichi Fisherman’s Tax Office, which are open 9a.m.-4:30p.m. daily except Mondays (Tuesday when the Monday is a public holiday) and the year-end period.

Yoichi is located around 20km west of Otaru along National Route 5 and on the JR Hakodate Honsen railway line. Other places to see in Yoichi are the Nikka Whisky Distillery, the Yoichi Space Dome space experience commemorating Japanese astronaut Mamoru Mori, and the Fugoppe Grotto, which has prehistoric wall carvings. The Yoichi area is also known for its great variety of fruits and seafood.

The beckoning cat, or “Maneki Neko”, in the background illustration and on the rear of the leaflet is a symbol of good luck in Japan. It is often placed in stores or restaurants by the owners to encourage good business, or at lottery ticket sales booths for good luck.

<p>(1) Yoichi Shrine <i>Located near Yoichi Port near the foot of Yoichi’s Shiripa headland. The shrine also has a sacred Saikachi tree on the grounds.</i></p>	<p>(2) Monument to Rohan Koda <i>Monument commemorating the famed Meiji-era novelist, Rohan Koda, who spent two years in Yoichi in the mid-1880s.</i></p>
<p>(3) Former Fukuhara Fisherman’s Compound <i>Restored Meiji-era herring fisherman’s compound. Designated as an Important National Cultural Property.</i></p>	<p>(4) Former Yoichi Fisherman’s Tax Office (Unjoya) and Moire Shrine <i>Restoration of a herring fisherman’s tax office from 1853. Designated as an Important National Cultural Property.</i></p>
<p>(5) Sankichi Shrine <i>Located near Route 5 behind the service station close to Yoichi Post Office, 10 minutes walk from Yoichi Station.</i></p>	<p>Hoping that your wishes come true...!</p> 

You can get memorial stamp at all places.

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