



Hashima (Gunkanjima)

Hashima lies around 4.5km west of the Nagasaki peninsula, 2.5km southwest of the Mitsubishi Mining Company's main coalmine on the island of Takashima, and 19km southwest of Nagasaki harbor. It is a tiny island with a seabed coalmine. It measures 480m north to south and 160m east to west, with a circumference of 1,200m and an area of 63,000m². The island is surrounded by a sea wall, and has multi-storey reinforced concrete apartments, giving it the appearance of the warship Tosa. For this reason it has become known as "Gunkanjima" (" Battleship Island").

After the mine was closed, the island was deserted and fell silent for many years. On January 5 2009, however, Hashima was included as part of a tentative list of modern industrial heritage sites in Kyushu and Yamaguchi that are being considered for World Heritage status. Thus, the island begins a new chapter in its history.

Hashima (Gunkanjima)

Hashima Safety Protocols

- Do not leave the designated observation area.
 - Do not do any of the following things in the observation facilities:
 - (1) Dangerous actions such as climbing fences
 - (2) Actions which dirty the facilities
 - (3) Drinking alcohol (including on the boat)
 - (4) Smoking
 - (5) Cause annoyance to other people.
 - Follow the instructions of the safety guide and other staff.
 - Wear appropriate clothing and footwear that allows for safe use of the observation facilities.
 - Do not drop litter.
 - People who cannot walk unaided, such as young children or people with disabilities, must be accompanied by a guardian or caretaker.
- Depending on the weather and sea conditions, it may not be possible to use the observation facilities. In the event that the facilities are unusable, facility usage fees will be refunded.
 - For reasons of safety, intoxicated individuals are restricted from using the observation facilities.
 - Elementary school students and young children must have a letter of consent from their parent or guardian.

Entry Fees

Costs of boat travel to the island must be paid separately.

	Individuals	Groups (over 15 people)
Standard (above 12 years)	¥300	¥240
Elementary School Students	¥150	¥120

Contact Details

Nagasaki City Call Center (Ajsai Call) (TEL 095-825-5175)

For General Tourism Information Contact

Nagasaki Tourist Information Center (TEL 095-823-3631)



Hashima (Gunkanjima)

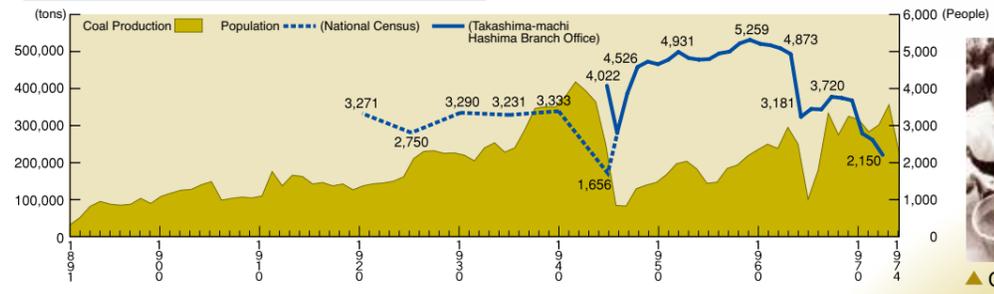
The History of Hashima

Coal was discovered on Hashima around 1810. Although the Saga clan carried out some small-scale coal mining, it was when the mine came under the control of Mitsubishi Gōshi Kaisha (Mitsubishi Limited Partnership) in 1890 that full-scale seabed coal mining operations began.

As the amount of coal being excavated increased, the population of Hashima grew, and in 1916 Japan's first reinforced concrete high-rise apartment building was constructed to house the many people living on this small island. At its peak the population of the island was around 5,300, giving it a population density nine times greater than that of Tokyo at the same time.

The Energy Revolution caused a shift away from coal towards oil power. As demand for coal fell, the mine's production gradually shrank along with the island's population. In January 1974 the mine was closed, and in April of the same year the island became uninhabited.

Change in Island Population and Coal Production



▲ Rooftop vegetable garden
▲ Children carrying soil up to a rooftop

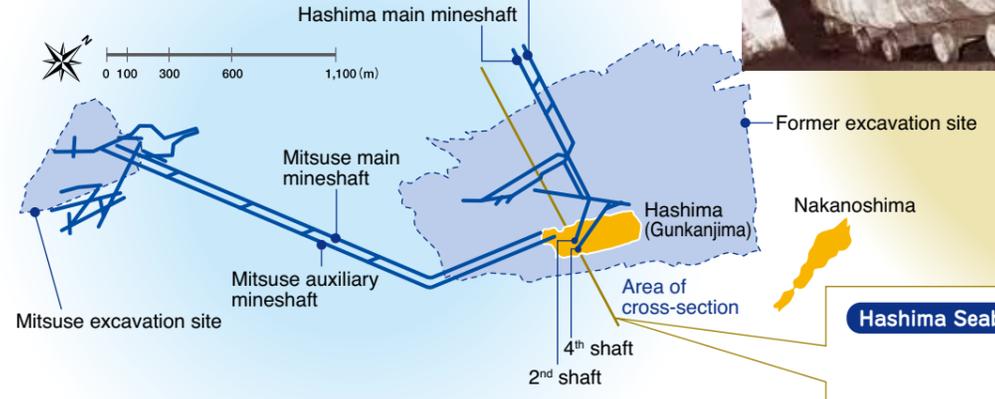
Work in the Coalmine

Between 1891 and 1974, around 15.7 million tons of coal was excavated by the "men of the pit." Mining the seabed coal reserves of Hashima took the miners to points over 1,000m below sea level. After making the grueling journey down the steep slopes of the shafts, they worked in terrible conditions, braving temperatures of 30°C and humidity of 95%, not to mention the ever-present danger of gas explosions. In the mine, an often-exchanged greeting was "Goanzen ni" (literally, "safely"). By this, the miners meant "take care not to have an accident."

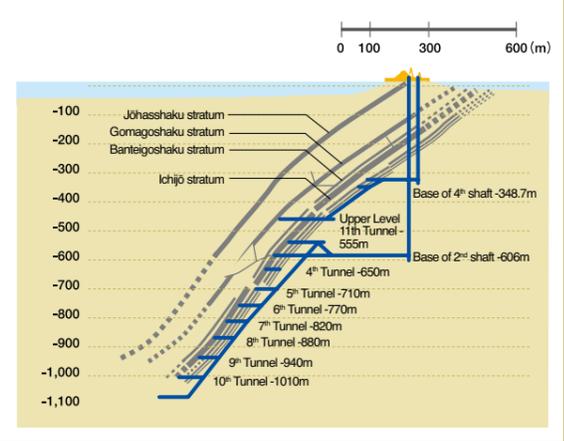


◀ Carrying coal waste out of the mine.
▶ Pushing a fully loaded 'coal tub' to the main mining cart tracks.

Diagram of Hashima Seabed Coalmine

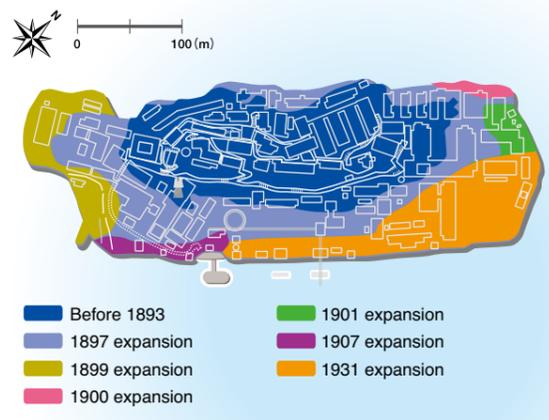


Hashima Seabed Coal Mine Cross-section



Island Expansion

Originally, Hashima was just a small, barren shelf of aqueous rock. However, as mining methods continued to develop, the island was expanded. Embankments were constructed six times through land reclamation, until the island reached its present size and shape. Originally, Hashima was only a third of its current size.



c.1910



c.1959



The Children's Amusement Park and roadside areas were used for open-air markets, which thrived with trade between residents and stall-holders.

On Hashima, in addition to schools, hospitals and shops, there were also leisure facilities such as a cinema and pachinko hall. However, there was no space to grow trees, and so the PTA and other groups cooperated to carry soil onto the roofs of the apartment buildings and grow flowers and vegetables there. These are thought to have been Japan's first rooftop vegetable gardens. The inhabitants must have wanted to add a little greenery to this barren island, and create a space where they could relax and feel secure. This scheme was unique to Hashima.

Life on the Island

Hashima Timeline

1810	Coal is discovered on Hashima (coal was discovered on Takashima in 1695). At this time Hashima is merely a barren shelf of aqueous rock.
1870	Koyama Hideoji of Amekusa begins work on opening the Hashima coal mine. Later, the mine's administrators included Nabeshima Magoroku, lord of Fukuroi in the Saga domain.
1887	The first mineshaft is opened by Nabeshima. It is 44m deep. In 1897, the shaft is closed following a fire.
1890	Mitsubishi bought the mine from Nabeshima Magoroku for ¥100,000. Hashima becomes a branch of the mine on Takashima, and the corporation begins coal mining here in 1891.
1895	The second shaft is opened. It is 168m deep. Improvements to the shaft are completed in 1904, extending its depth to 615m. The shaft remains in use until the mine is closed.
1916	Japan's first reinforced concrete apartment is constructed on the island.
1925	The fourth shaft is opened. It is 353m deep, and is mostly used for ventilation. It is also used as a substitute for the second shaft when the latter is inaccessible. The fourth shaft remains in use until the mine is closed.
1934	Building work is completed on Hashima Elementary School.
1941	The mine produces its highest recorded yearly output of coal, at 1,100 tons.
1945	The ship <i>Haikyu-maru</i> is struck by a torpedo and sinks whilst being loaded with coal.
1955	The districts of Takahama-mura Hashima and Takashima-machi are consolidated to form Takashima-machi Hashima.
1965	Excavation of the new shaft at Mitsuse begins. The shaft remains in use until the mine is closed.
1974	Hashima coal mine is closed on January 15 of this year. On April 20 of the same year the island becomes uninhabited. It remains in this state until the present day.

Layout of Buildings at Time of Mine Closure

Around half these buildings remain.

- Employee Housing
 - Miners' Housing
 - Mine Buildings
 - Other Buildings
- Observation Facilities (Observation Areas, Route)**
◆ Leaving these designated areas is forbidden.



The swimming pool was moved here in 1958 from in front of the school, after it was damaged in a typhoon. The 25 meter long pool and attached children's pool used sea water until a year or two before the mine was closed. There was however another pool at the kindergarten on the roof of Building No. 65, which used tap water since its construction in 1952.

Swimming Pool



No. 30 and No. 31 Apartment Buildings



The No. 30 Apartment, constructed in 1916, was formerly known as 'Glover House.' It is Japan's oldest 7-storey reinforced concrete apartment building, and served as housing for Hashima's miners. The courtyard has stairwell corridors and steps, and the basement contained a shop. A communal bath was located in the basement of the No. 31 Building, and the first floor had a post office and barbershop.



Selected coal was transferred to the storage facility via this conveyor belt, where it was kept before being loaded onto coal-carrying ships. The braces of the conveyor belt survive today.

Coal Storage Conveyor Belt

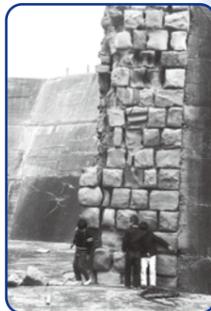


This brick building was the nerve center of the mine. In the General Office building, there was a large communal bath area for the miners. The bathtub is said to have always been pitch black. Around the office there were once many other buildings, but now most of them have collapsed.

General Office

Amakawa Sea Wall

As the island was expanded in the Meiji Period (1868-1912), sea walls were also built. Stone walls of this type - held together with an adhesive called "Amakawa" - were widely constructed. To this day these retaining walls survive all over the island, contributing to Hashima's unique scenery.



Lifelines

Securing supplies of electricity and water was a compelling problem for Hashima. Originally, electricity was provided using a generator on the island, but as the population grew the amount of electricity produced proved insufficient. Therefore, in 1918, undersea electricity cables were laid from Takashima.

Drinking water was originally provided by distilling seawater, but it was later brought to the island in water supply ships. This water was stored in an elevated water tank and distributed to communal water hydrants in several areas on the island. In 1957, an undersea water supply pipe was laid between Hashima and the town of Sanwamachi on the opposite shore. This led to the lifting of water rations on the island. However, with the exception of the senior employees' residences (Building No. 3), baths were not installed in homes and public baths were used instead. Boiled seawater was used for baths; fresh water was used only for drinking.

Before the introduction of propane gas in the mid-1950s, coal furnaces were used on the island, which is why the apartment buildings have chimneys.



▲ 「Hashima households boasted the highest adoption rate of electronic devices in the prefecture (Mid 1950s to Mid 1960s).」

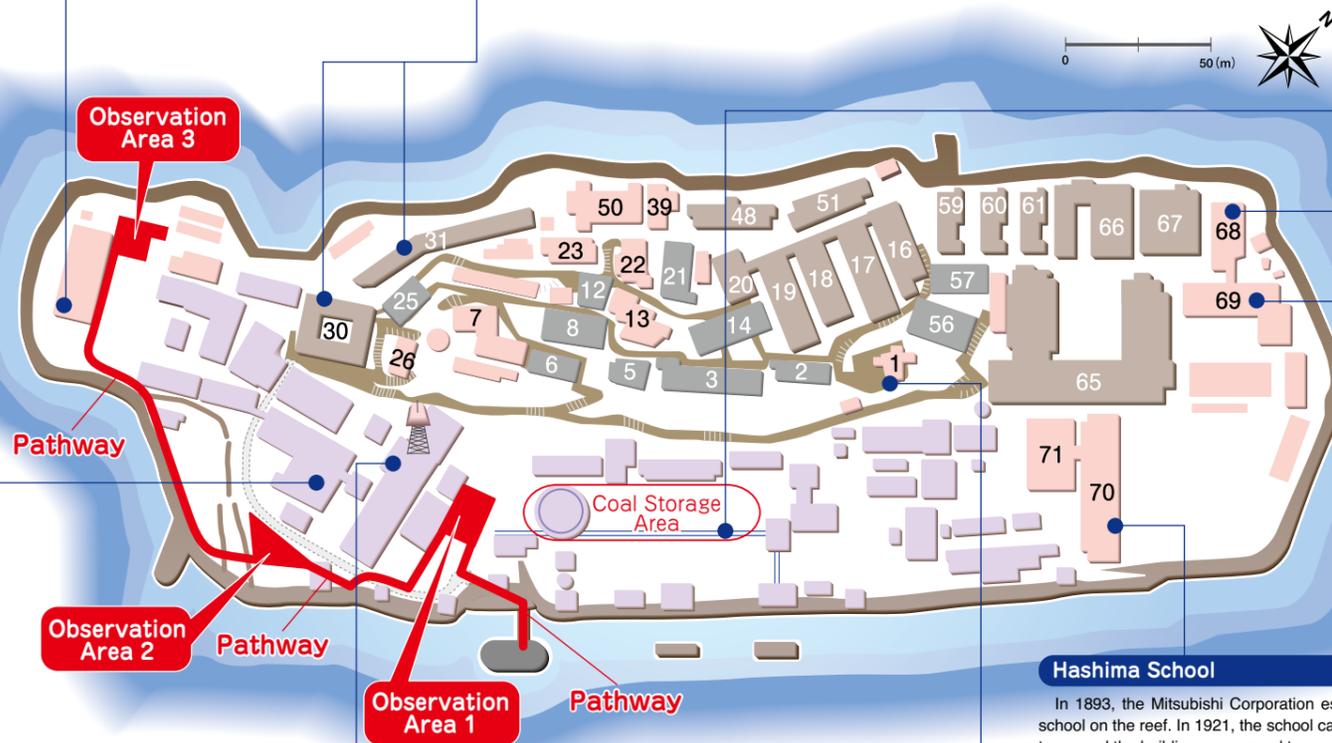
Remains of Jetty at Entrance to Second Mineshaft

Today, the mine facilities - including the principal second mineshaft - are mostly in ruins. However, the steps leading to the jetty that provided access to the second mineshaft have survived.



Hashima Shrine

This shrine was a spiritual cornerstone for the miners who risked their lives working in the pit. On April 3 every year, great celebrations took place all over the island to mark the shrine's Yamagami Festival. Before the main altar there was once a worshipper's hall, but it has collapsed. Today only a small shrine remains.



Hashima School

In 1893, the Mitsubishi Corporation established a standard elementary school on the reef. In 1921, the school came under the management of the town, and the building was moved to approximately the school's current location. The building that survives today was constructed in 1958, with the first four floors serving as an elementary school, floors 5 and 7 serving as a junior high school, and floor six housing an auditorium, library and music room. In 1970 a gymnasium and lunch hall were added, along with the island's only elevator, which was used to transport school meals.



Hashima Hospital and Quarantine Ward



Completed in 1958, this hospital was built to protect the health of the mine workers, who risked their lives in the pit, and their families living on the island. For the people on Hashima, the existence of this hospital was undoubtedly reassuring.

List of Buildings

Building Name	Date of Construction	Type / No. of Floors	Living spaces	Use
No. 1	1936	Wooden / 1 Floor	—	Shrine
No. 2	1950	RC / 3 Floors	9	Employee housing
No. 3	1959	RC / 4 Floors	20	Employee housing (for management, with baths)
No. 5	1950	Wooden / 2 Floors	1	Mine manager's residence
No. 6	1936	Wooden / 2 Floors	—	Employee dormitories
No. 7	1953	Wooden / 2 Floors	—	Employee clubhouse
No. 8	1919	RC, Wooden / 3 Floors	4	Communal bath (1 st floor) / Employee housing
No. 12	1925	Wood / 3 Floors	3	Employee housing
No. 13	1967	RC / 4 Floors	12	Town housing (for teaching staff)
No. 14	1941	RC / 5 Floors	15	Employee housing (central housing)
No. 16	1918	RC / 9 Floors	66	Employee housing
No. 17	1918	RC / 9 Floors	54	Employee housing
No. 18	1918	RC / 9 Floors	50	Employee housing
No. 19	1918	RC / 9 Floors	45	Employee housing
No. 20	1918	RC / 7 Floors	26	Employee housing
No. 21	1954	RC / 5 Floors	15	Police dispatch post (1 st floor) / Miners' housing
No. 22	1953	RC / 5 Floors	12	Senior citizens' club (1 st floor) / Town Hall (2 nd floor) / 'Kamome-so' town housing (for civil servants)
No. 23	1921	Wooden / 2 Floors	6	Housing (1 st floor) / Senpukuji Temple (2 nd floor)
No. 25	1931	RC / 5 Floors	6	Lodgings (1 st & 2 nd floors) / Employee housing
No. 26	1966	Prefab / 2 Floors	8	Subcontracted employee housing
No. 30	1916	RC / 7 Floors	140	Former miners' housing (subcontracted housing)
No. 31	1957	RC / 6 Floors	51	Communal bath (basement) / post office (1 st floor) / Miners' housing
No. 39	1964	RC / 3 Floors	—	Community center
No. 48	1955	RC / 5 Floors	20	Miners' housing (Pachinko hall etc. in basement)
No. 50	1927	Steel Frame / 2 Floors	—	Shōwakan Cinema
No. 51	1961	RC / 8 Floors	40	Miners' housing
No. 56	1939	RC / 3 Floors	6	Employee housing
No. 57	1939	RC / 4 Floors	8	Shop (1 st floor) / Miners' housing
No. 59	1953	RC / 5 Floors	17	Shop (basement) / Miners' housing
No. 60	1953	RC / 5 Floors	17	Shop (basement) / Miners' housing
No. 61	1953	RC / 5 Floors	17	Communal bath (basement) / Miners' housing
No. 65	1945	RC / 9 Floors	317	Miners' housing / Rooftop kindergarten
No. 66	1940	RC / 4 Floors	—	Miners' training camp (Keimeiryō)
No. 67	1950	RC / 4 Floors	48	Miners' training camp (single dorms)
No. 68	1958	RC / 2 Floors	—	Quarantine ward
No. 69	1958	RC / 4 Floors	—	Hashima hospital
No. 70	1958	RC / 7 Floors	—	Hashima school
No. 71	1970	RC / 2 Floors	—	Gymnasium

RC: Reinforced Concrete