

Facilities

① The Archives of Hokkaido



The Archives of Hokkaido store a collection of historical materials and records, and serve as a facility to provide useful information for your historical study and researches.

② "AKARENGA" Branch of Hokkaido Museum

This is the satellite room, a branch of the Hokkaido Museum, which is located in the Nopporo Forest Park in Atsubetsu-ku, Sapporo. Visitors can find out information about the various museums in Hokkaido, as well as learn about the nature, history and culture of the prefecture through the interesting, stimulating displays. ☎011-898-0466 (Hokkaido Museum; Japanese only)



③ Karafuto/Sakhalin Related Resources Library

This Resources Library displays materials about Southern Karafuto, and introduces current situation in exchange with Sakhalin. It is a library that gives people an opportunity to learn about the history and the situation about Karafuto (Sakhalin).



④ The Red Brick Northern Territories Museum

In the Red Brick Northern Territories Museum, are panels and materials that describe the history of the Northern Territories. The various displays in this room provide information on the Northern Territories issues. ☎011-204-5069 (direct; Japanese only) <http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/sm/hrt/hopporyodo/akarenga.htm>



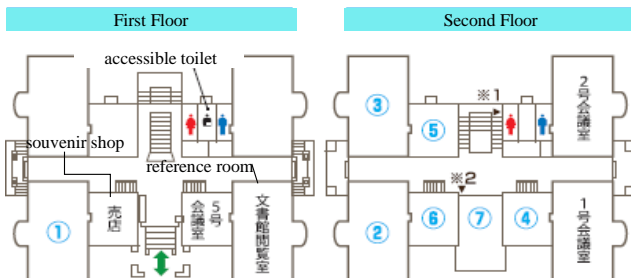
⑤ Exhibition Room of Hokkaido's International Exchanges and Local Products



This exhibition room displays commemorative goods from affiliating and/or sister-city relationships, as well as special products from various cities within Hokkaido.

⑥ Tourism Information

This part of the building displays posters depicting four different seasons in Hokkaido, and also has a computer prepared specifically for searching tourism information. It provides guests with tourism updates for various parts of Hokkaido, promoting them for visitors from in and out of the prefecture.



⑦ Commemorative Room

Successive governors worked in this room. With fixtures different from those in other rooms, entrance and window frames are decorated with elaborate arabesque design engraving.



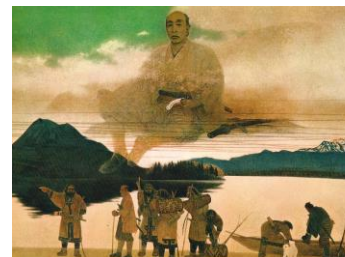
Historical Paintings



Akarenga is decorated with 20 paintings produced by artists from Hokkaido. They feature historical facts regarding development from the closing years of the Edo era to the middle of the Meiji era.

※1
Dr. Clark's Departure from Shimamatsu in Farewell to His Students
Tadao Tanaka, painted in the western style

※2
Takeshiro Matsuura at Lake Akan
Eien Iwahashi, painted in the Japanese style



Highlights

◀ Air vents and roof



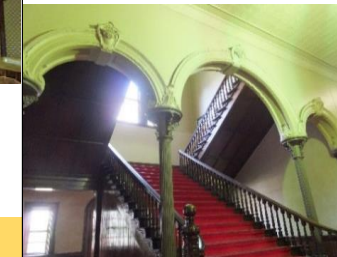
Air vents that look like chimneys and roof cresting have a design that caught on in Western architecture in the Meiji era, and lightning rods are designed to double as decoration.

▶ Bricks

About 2.5 million bricks were made in Shiroishi and Toyohira villages (presently in Sapporo). The French-style brickwork, where longitudinal and transverse bricks are laid alternately, is relatively rare in Japan.



◀ Three-section arch



The main hall features a beautiful three-section arch. The staircase is decorative as typified by western architecture with ornaments in the middle of the arch, sculptures on upper steel poles, the circular design (rosette) modeled for roses engraved on the side of the stairway, etc.

▶ Double windows

A variety of devices to provide protection against the cold winter can be seen in various places. For example, windows appear single paned, but they are double paned. Glass doors are normally folded in three inside the wooden frames installed on both sides of windows.



◀ Beautiful back



With its simple and stylish design and two towering chimneys, the back of akarenga looks beautiful. Compared with lively make-up of the front, the back is plain with little decoration, emanating an air typical of brick buildings.

The Symbol of Hokkaido

The Former Hokkaido Government Building, whose red appearance contrasts beautifully in every season, has gained wide popularity with its nickname akarenga, or “Red Bricks”. Completed in 1888, the American neo-baroque style brick building was designed by engineers of the Hokkaido Government and was constructed with many local building materials.

It played a pivotal role in Hokkaido over 80 years until the new government building was constructed. Measuring 61 m in frontage, 36 m in depth and 33 m in height up to the tower top, akarenga is equivalent in size to a present-day 10-story building.

The building used to be one of the largest in Japan. The octagonal dome towering on the building was constructed in 1873 according to the plan by Horace Capron, an American advisor to the Development Commission, modeling for the octagonal dome of the Hokkaido Development Commission Sapporo Main Office, which was burned down six years later.

In those days, an architectural style of topping buildings with domes was popular in the U.S.A. as the symbol of independence and enterprising spirit. In 1886, the Hokkaido Government was established and the first Governor Michitoshi Iwamura, nostalgic about the octagonal dome, ordered the construction of a dome on top of akarenga when the government building was built.

Although the inside of akarenga was burned by a fire in 1909, the red brick walls luckily sustained little damage. Restoration work was initiated the following year and was completed in 1911.

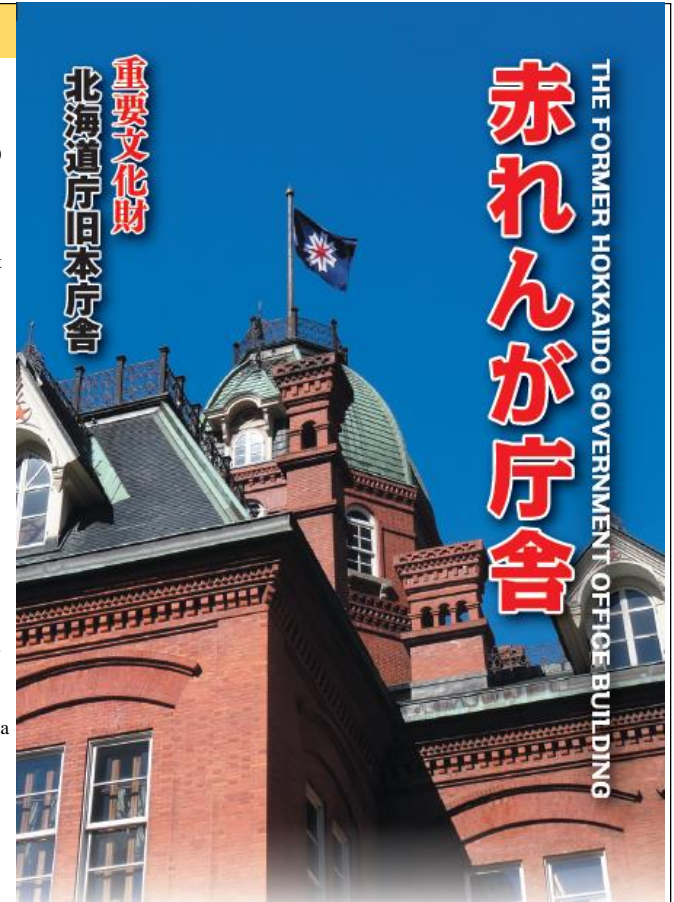
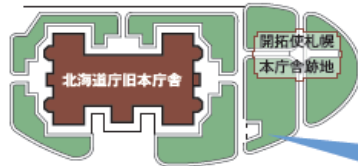
In 1968, it was restored to its original state in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Hokkaido, and its permanent preservation was determined.

Today, there are a few western-style architectural structures from the Meiji era as fabulous as akarenga in Japan, and it was designated as a National Important Cultural Property in 1969.



The Footsteps of Hokkaido and Akarenga

- 659 Abe no Hirafu's Ezo expedition; Abe no Hirafu sends off local administrators the following year
- 1205 Andō-shi from Tsugaru becomes a magistrate of Ezo
- 1514 Andō-shi leaves Ezo in charge of Kakizaki-shi (later renamed Matsumae-shi)
- 1593 Kakizaki-shi is recognized by Toyotomi Hideyoshi as the ruler of Ezo
- 1799 Takadaya Kahei establishes the Etorofu Sea Route
- 1800 Inō Tadataka measures the land of Ezo
- 1808 Mamiya Rinzou discovers the Strait of Mamiya, also known as Tatar Strait
- 1845 Matsu'ura Takeshirou probes the land of Ezo
- 1869 Ezo is renamed to Hokkaido as Hokkaido Development Commission is established; 11 countries and 86 municipalities are established
- 1870 The population within the prefecture grows to 100,000
- 1871 Horace Capron is invited from the States to become the advisor for the Development Commission
- 1873 Development Commission Sapporo Main Office is opened
- 1876 Sapporo Agricultural College is established; William S. Clark is invited from the States to become the vice-president
- 1879 Development Commission Sapporo Main Office is burned down
- 1880 A railroad is established between Sapporo and Temiya, Otaru
- 1882 Development Commission is abolished; three prefectures are set up in Hakodate, Sapporo and Nemuro
- 1886 The three prefectures are abolished; Hokkaido Government is established
- 1888 The Akarenga Government Building is completed
- 1889 The Akarenga outdoor elements are completed (trees, ponds, etc.)
- 1896 The octagonal dome and the ventilating stack are removed from Akarenga
- 1901 The First Hokkaido Prefectural Assembly is held
- 1909 The fire attacks the Akarenga Government Building
- 1911 The rebuilding construction of Akarenga is completed
- 1920 The first national census is implemented; approximate population 2.36 million
- 1950 The first Sapporo Yukimatsuri (Snow Festival) is held
- 1967 Development Commission Sapporo Main Office and Akarenga designated as national historic sites
- 1968 Hokkaido One Hundred Years Anniversary is held
Akarenga restoration construction is completed
- 1969 Akarenga is designated as an Important Cultural Property of Japan
- 1972 Winter Olympics is held in Sapporo; the front yard is designated as an environment protective area for its luscious greens
- 1986 The first Asian Winter Games is held
- 1988 Seikan Tunnel is established between Hakodate and Aomori



Symbol of Hokkaido



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☎011-204-5019 (Weekdays)
☎011-204-5000 (Weekends & holidays)
* Japanese only

- Opening hours: 8:45 AM - 6:00 PM
- Closing days: Dec. 29 - Jan. 3
- Admission: free

Bird
Grus japonensis

Flower
Rosa rugosa



English