

Hot-bulb Engine

The hot-bulb engine (*yakidama*) was a simple internal combustion engine first developed in the United Kingdom in 1886. An early version, the Hornsby-Akroyd oil engine, was brought to Japan a few years later and adapted by domestic manufacturers. The hot-bulb engine was simple to use, easy to manufacture, and ran on cheap fuel. The engine was adopted in earnest by fishermen in Kushiro after a fatal offshore accident in 1913, when some tuna boats were caught in a heavy storm offshore. They could not get back to the port in time and 63 fishermen died. The hot-bulb engine cut down the round-trip time to the fishing grounds and opened up a wider fishing area.

Boats with a hot-bulb engine were called *ponpon* boats for the rhythmical sound of the engine. Hot-bulb engines were gradually replaced by more powerful diesel engines in the 1950s. The hot-bulb engine on display in the museum was made in 1952.