

Aharen Beach and Bonito Fishing

Bonito fishing started in the village of Tokashiki in 1903 and was a prosperous industry in the village of Aharen. This brick structure is a part of the chimney of a factory that made blocks of cured bonito (*katsuobushi*). The catch was dumped directly onto the beach for waiting workers to pick up and carry to the factory. The blocks were manufactured by gutting, filleting and boiling the fish, and then steaming it to reduce the water content. It was then dried over firewood, using the chimney to disperse the smoke.

There was a time after World War II when the boats from Aharen would go out two or three times a day to supply the two *katsuobushi* factories. As bonito fishing expanded with the use of bigger fishing vessels, the lives of the villagers became more comfortable. Until the middle of the Meiji era (1868–1912), many of the houses in Aharen had thatched roofs, but as the profits from bonito fishing increased, more and more tile roofs appeared, showing how the village's fortunes rose hand in hand with the industry.