

Former Temiya Line Walking Path: Tracing Otaru's Railway Legacy

A 1.6-kilometer walking path follows a section of Hokkaido's first railway line through Otaru's historic banking and commercial districts to the Temiya Railway Facility. The preserved tracks and level crossing gates of the discontinued Temiya Line offer a glimpse into the city's past as a bustling hub of trade, where trains once rumbled within arm's reach of homes. The Temiya Line was the first section of the Horonai Railway, which opened in 1882 to connect the new coal mine in Horonai (now Mikasa City) to a coal loading pier at Temiya in Otaru Port.

The Temiya line ran from the Temiya Railway Facility to Otaru Station, which was later renamed Minami-Otaru Station. Steam locomotives transported coal on the Horonai Railway to Otaru via Sapporo for shipment to the main island of Honshu, and carried goods and passengers between Otaru and destinations in central Hokkaido.

Passenger trains made one trip per day between Temiya and Sapporo, and the journey took three hours. As the rail network in Hokkaido developed, passenger trains from Sapporo and Hakodate passed through the new Otaru Station further inland. Freight and coal continued to use the Temiya Line, with limited local passenger services. Passenger trains on the Temiya Line were ultimately discontinued in 1962, but freight services continued until 1985. A passenger station platform near the Ironai banking district is a reminder of the Temiya Line's integral role in Otaru's development.