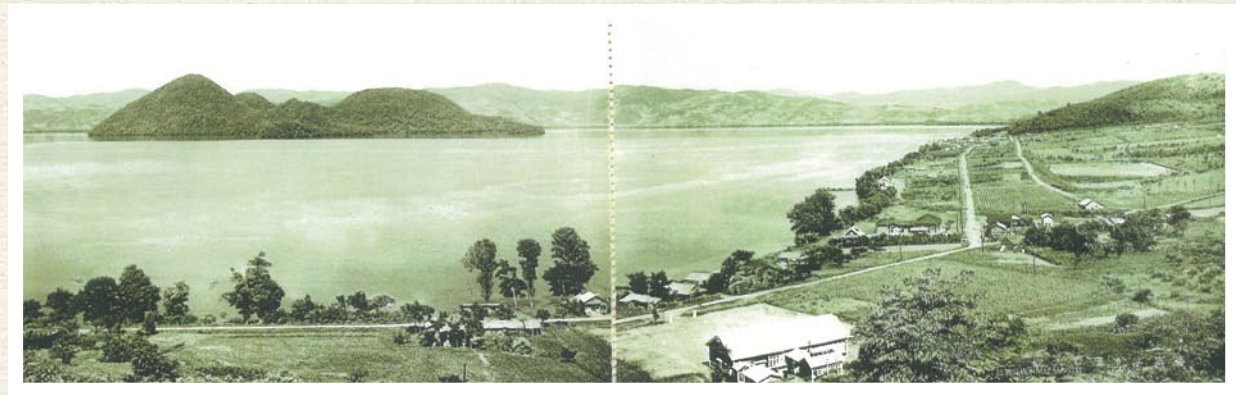


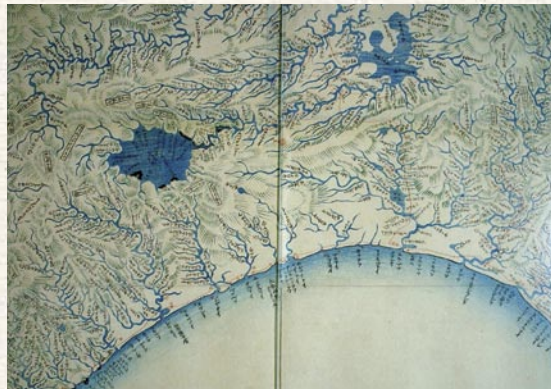
The History of Development in the Area

The neighbouring area of Shikotsu-Toya National Park was once home to the Ainu, the indigenous people of Hokkaido. Around the middle of Edo era, Matsumae clan advancing to the southern Hokkaido placed bases around Lake Shikotsu (in Chitose, Usu, Abuta and other locations) for trade with the Ainu. The full-blown development of Hokkaido only began in the late 19th century when the Meiji government was established. For this reason, Hokkaido has followed a different path from that of the Honshu.



Toya lakeshore in early Showa era

By courtesy of Takeshiro Matsuura Memorial Museum



Drawing of Lake Shikotsu area by Takeshiro Matsuura in the mid-19th century

Column

① Discovery of Lake Shikotsu by Takeshiro Matsuura

Takeshiro Matsuura (1818-1888) was the first person who made a survey and left a record of Lake Shikotsu. He was an explorer who played an active role in the investigation of Hokkaido and Sakhalin at the end of the Edo period. From 1857-1858 as the shogunate's "Geographical Investigator of the East and West Ezo Mountains and Rivers", he investigated inland Hokkaido in detail and left an extensive record. He arrived at the Shikotsu lakeshore in 1857, after departing from Chitose and going along Chitose River in the mountains. The exploration is noted in his "Yubari Diary".



The History of Development: Toya Lakeshore

The reclamation of this region began from the plains along the coast. The Hokkaido Agency was established in 1886 in Sapporo in order to unify Hokkaido and consequently, the traffic between Hakodate and Sapporo via Lake Toya increased. In 1887, 76 individuals from Kagawa Prefecture immigrated to current Takarada district and the population on the lakeshore increased gradually. Tourism on the Toya lakeshore began when hot springs were discovered in the early Taisho era. The Muroran Line and Chitose Line of the National Railways, connecting Hakodate and Sapporo through this region, were opened at the end of this era. A railroad from Abuta (now JR Toya) station to the Toya lakeshore opened in 1929 (abandoned during the Second World War), and hotels and golf courses began to be developed in the area.

The area was nominated for designation as a national park before the war. Following Akan and Daisetsuzan, the area was finally designated a national park in 1949, its accessibility being appreciated due to its proximity to Sapporo. In the late 1950s and 60s, with the popularity of tourism during this period of rapid economic growth, the Toya lakeshore grew rapidly as a sightseeing area.



Toya lakeshore near Chinkojima around 1954

Column

② Nature Restoration of the Mount Eniwa Olympic Downhill Skiing Course

At the Sapporo Winter Olympics held in 1972, Mount Eniwa was the venue for the downhill ski events. There was controversy surrounding the issue of cutting down trees within the national park in order to set up ski runs, however it was approved with the condition that the facility would be demolished after the events, and trees would be planted to restore the environment. For the event, ski runs for men and women spanning 2km, a ropeway, and several buildings were constructed. Immediately after the Olympics, restoration work began, and by 1974 demolition, tree planting, and construction work on the slopes for reforestation had all been carried out. In addition, maintenance work continued for a long time afterwards. Currently, the remains of the ski runs have mostly faded, but the transplanted trees are still smaller than those in the surrounding area.

By courtesy of Kenji Moriya



Bifue Gold Mine's railroad operated between 1936 and 1951

Forest/Mine Exploitation and the National park

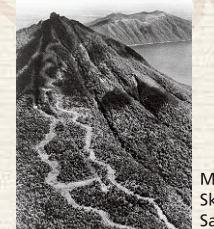
Though a high degree of nature quality remains around Lake Shikotsu, it had a history of industrial activities such as mining before it was designated a national park. In Japan, where land is very limited, reconciling conflicts with industries such as mining and power generation was often the biggest issue when designating areas as national parks. Since the beginning, the national park system in Japan has been shaped by the attempt to seek balance with various industrial activities.

Oji Paper Company built their factories in Tomakomai, established a railroad from Tomakomai to the Shikotsu lakeshore in 1908, constructed a power plant on Chitose River, and cleared the forests around Lake Shikotsu. Exploitation of mines was vigorous at the time, and there were a few within the park such as the Bifue Gold Mine on the Shikotsu lakeshore and the Horobetsu Mine in Noboribetsu. Some of them continued operating for a while even after the area was designated a national park, although now, all the mines within the park have been abandoned. Some structures from the time, such as the railway bridge, still remain, now as part of the park's historic scenes.



Railway bridge designated as a cultural property of Chitose City

By courtesy of Hokkaido Newspaper



Mount Eniwa Downhill Skiing Course in the Sapporo Winter Olympics