

JAPAN Environment Quarterly

FEATURE : Looking back the year of the Japanese Presidency of the G20 in 2019

G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth / The Issue of Marine Plastic Litter / Launch of the AP-PLAT and Compilation of the Adaptation Action Agenda

CURRENT TOPICS :

G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter / The UN Climate Action Summit and Related Events / Outcomes of the Twelfth Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia

NATIONAL PARKS of JAPAN : Shikotsu-Toya National Park



Looking back the year of the Japanese Presidency of the G20 in 2019

G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth

June 15-16, 2019 Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan



Joint press conference by the then Minister of the Environment, Yoshiaki Harada (right), and the then Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Hiroshige Seko (left)

For the year running from December 2018 to November 2019, Japan assumed the G20 Presidency. Aside from hosting the summit, the G20 Presidency also organises ministerial meetings. On 15-16 June 2019, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry jointly organised the “G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth”. This historic meeting was the first time that G20 environment and energy ministers gathered under one roof.

G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth

The Ministerial Meeting was co-chaired by the then Minister of the Environment, Yoshiaki Harada, and the then Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Hiroshige Seko, and discussions took place on 1) Accelerating the Virtuous Cycle of Environmental Protection and Economic Growth by Innovation, 2) Resource Efficiency and Marine Plastic Litter, and 3) Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure Including Ecosystem-based Approaches. A “Communiqué” compiling the content of discussions, as well as accompanying documents (“G20

Karuizawa Innovation Action Plan”, “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter”, “G20 Action Agenda on Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure”), were adopted based on approval from 20 countries and regions.

One of these outcome documents, the “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter”, was also mentioned in the G20 Osaka Leaders’ Declaration, an outcome document of the subsequent G20 Osaka Summit. Likewise, the Blue Ocean Vision, which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, was shared among all nations. Furthermore, the first follow-up meeting to the implementation

framework was held in October, where countries reported on and shared their countermeasures and best practices (related articles on p.8 and p.9).

Although Saudi Arabia assumed the G20 Presidency from December 2019, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan will continue to cooperate in the follow-up on initiatives based on these outcomes.

G20 Innovation Exhibition

Various side events were organised alongside the main meeting. At the “G20 Innovation Exhibition” held in Karuizawa from 14 to 16 October, state-of-the-art Japanese energy and environmental technologies based on the themes of hydrogen energy, countermeasures for marine plastic litter, and innovation and the Regional Circular and Ecological Sphere, were showcased. The key message of the meeting, “Accelerating the Virtuous Cycle of Environmental Protection and Economic Growth by Innovation” was proclaimed to those both in Japan and overseas.

Nagano Declaration on working together to build sustainable societies

On 14 June, the Governor of Nagano prefecture handed over the “Nagano Declaration on working together to build sustainable societies” to Minister of the Environment Yoshiaki Harada. The Declaration was endorsed by 119 local governments and organisations from both Japan and around the world.

Launch of the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT)

On 16 June, Minister Harada joined Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar of the Ministry of Environment and

Forestry of Indonesia, Permanent Secretary Wijarn Simachaya of the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment of Thailand, and other

related organisations in declaring the launch of the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT).



Tea ceremony using hydrogen energy



Handing over the Nagano Declaration to the Environment Minister
(left) ABE Shuichi, Governor, Nagano Prefecture
(center) HARADA Yoshiaki, Minister of the Environment
(right) HAMANAKA Hironori, Chair, ICLEI Japan

OI Michihiro
Director
International Strategy Division
Global Environmental Bureau

The Issue of Marine Plastic Litter

Bringing additional pollution to zero on a global scale



Marine plastic litter washed ashore

The issue of marine litter, and marine plastic litter in particular, is drawing considerable attention both in Japan and around the world. This article explains the current state of the marine plastic litter issue and Japan's measures to address it.

What's happening with marine plastic litter?

Marine litter, including marine plastic litter (plastic waste discharged into the oceans), causes a range of problems such as deterioration of the marine environment, decline in coastal functions, harmful effects on seascapes, obstacles to ship navigation, and impacts on fisheries and sight-seeing. Further, concerns have risen in recent years over the

impacts of microplastics (generally, tiny plastic pieces less than 5 mm in length) on marine ecosystems. According to a report released by the World Economic Forum in January 2016 "The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics", at least eight million tons of plastic is discharged into the oceans annually, and the amount of plastic in the oceans (by weight) is predicted to exceed the amount of fish by 2050. Hence, the issue of marine plastic litter is a challenge faced on a global scale.

International trends involving the marine plastic litter issue

Within the context described above, the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision", which aims to reduce

additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, was shared among leaders at the G20 Summit held in Osaka in June 2019. Likewise, the "G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter", a framework for ongoing reporting and sharing on each country's initiatives to realise the vision, was approved.

The first follow-up meeting based on the implementation framework was held in Tokyo in October 2019 (see page 8 and 9). The meeting garnered the participation of about 100 persons including practitioners from 17 countries including G20 nations, international organisations and research institutions, who confirmed the promotion of policies and

measures via mutual learning. As outcomes of the meeting, a report on the measures and best practices of various countries and a roadmap for resource efficiency were formulated, and a Chair's Summary was compiled on the meeting and future initiatives. Additionally, Saudi Arabia, which assumed the G20 Presidency from December 2019, declared that the G20 will continue to address this issue this year.

Measures in Japan

Parallel to cooperation in the international arena, Japan is also advancing measures here at home.

A “National Action Plan for Marine Plastic Litter” was decided upon at a meeting of relevant cabinet members on 31 May last year. This plan compiles Japan's proactive and concrete measures to address marine plastic litter aimed at realising a world without additional pollution. Moreover, the “Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics”, which sets milestones related to plastic resource

circulation, was jointly decided upon by relevant ministries and agencies on 31 May. In addition, upon revision of the “Act on Promoting the Treatment of Articles that Drift Ashore” last year, changes in the Basic Policy based on the law were also determined at the 31 May cabinet meeting.

Specifically in terms of innovation, Japan supports the development and diffusion of alternative materials, for instance, marine biodegradable plastics and functional paper packaging. We also host forums aimed at creating new initiatives by integrating the wisdom of diverse stakeholders, including private companies, NGOs, local governments and research institutes.

A national campaign entitled, “Zero Marine Litter Week” began in May 2019, with about 430,000 people participating in clean-up activities. These clean-up activities based on public involvement were the largest among the G20 nations. We

will continue to endeavor to carry out strategic public relations activities to further raise awareness.

In closing

Based on the above, Japan will promote measures to: recover and appropriately dispose of plastics based on a holistic life-cycle approach; promote the 3Rs; advance innovation; carry out public campaigns and accumulate scientific knowledge. Further, we will share the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” with members of the international community outside of the G20 and call for participation in the “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter”. As the nation that proposed the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” and a developed nation and frontrunner in addressing global challenges that has proactively engaged in promoting the 3Rs for plastics and sound treatment of waste, Japan will continue to lead initiatives toward implementing solutions to the problem of marine plastic litter.



ABE Tatsuya

Deputy Director
Office of the Marine Environment
Environmental Management Bureau

Launch of the AP-PLAT and Compilation of the Adaptation Action Agenda

Launch of the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT)

At the UNFCCC COP22 in 2016, the Ministry of the Environment expressed its intent to establish the “Asia-Pacific Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT)” by 2020 to provide information and datasets on climate change impact assessments and adaptation to support practical adaptation actions in Asia-Pacific areas.

Taking opportunity of the G20 ministerial meeting on environment, former Minister of the Environment Harada declare the launch of AP-PLAT a year earlier than planned with Indonesia (G20 member) and Thailand (outreach country) and other key organisations.

AP-PLAT was created to support decision-making by national and regional governments based on consideration of climate change risks and highly effective adaptation aimed at addressing the wide-ranging impacts of climate change in the Asia-Pacific region. The following are three pillars of AP-PLAT:

- 1) Development of scientific knowledge and information on climate change risks and adaptation practices;
- 2) Development and provision of supportive adaptation tools which are usable for actions;
- 3) Human resource development and capacity building for further implementation.

Based on these pillars, AP-PLAT will build practical



Launching ceremony of AP-PLAT at the G20 Karuizawa meeting (16 June 2019)

partnerships for the co-creation of scientific knowledge and useful tools among both state and non-state actors in national and regional level in the Asia-Pacific area with knowledge and leaning exchange together. Through the collaborative works with partners, the platform aims to realize policymaking and accelerate efficient adaptation measures to respond to climate change threats.

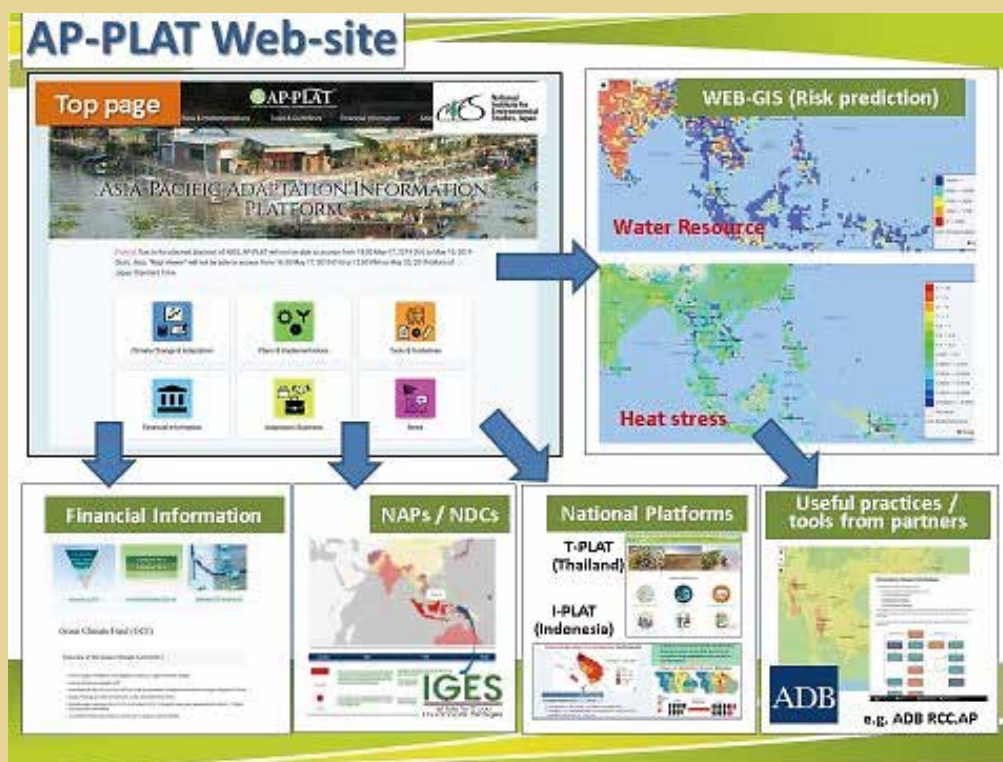
G20 Action Agenda on Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure

In discussions on adaptation and resilient infrastructure at the G20 ministerial meeting, several points were mentioned: adaptation initiatives contribute to disaster prevention and sustainable development; ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) approaches enable synchronous achievement of environmental conservation and sustainable use of local resources;

the importance of planning based on the latest scientific knowledge; and the need for collaboration with the private sector.

Also at the meeting, G20 members and outreach countries adopted the “G20 Action Agenda on Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure” that brings together wide-ranging initiatives such as initiatives on which a country is seeking to collaborate with other countries, efforts which a country hopes to promote in other countries, and best practices. The action agenda was designated as an accompanying document to the G20 Leaders’ Declaration at the G20 Osaka Summit.

A variety of initiatives on climate change adaptation, disaster prevention and enhancement of resilience, to be carried out at multilateral, bilateral, national and local levels, are included



AP-PLAT website

in the action agenda. A total of seventy initiatives were proposed by seventeen G20 members and EU and five outreach countries, and they were compiled at the ministerial meeting under presidency of Japan. This action agenda aims to contribute to actualize practical adaptation actions to enhance the resilience of infrastructure in G20 members and other countries around the world, through promoting these initiatives and cooperations based on multilateral based, bilateral based, and separate based, and through sharing knowledge and experience lessoned in the past.

Related domestic and international trends: Climate Change Adaptation Act

In recent years, a number of climate disasters due to record-breaking heat waves, torrential rains and typhoons hit many places every year. In Japan as well, climate change has already been observed to yield impacts in various spheres. Along with the progression of global

warming in the future, the risk of heat waves and torrential rains is predicted to further increase.

In light of these circumstances, the Climate Change Adaptation Act was formulated based on the need to clarify the legal status of climate change adaptation and further augment its promotion. The law provides for the establishment of

a system for international sharing of information on climate change and the promotion of technological cooperation on adaptation. AP-PLAT is expected to serve as the foundation for these activities.

The screenshot shows a table titled 'List of Actions' from the G20 Action Agenda on Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure. The table has columns for 'Topic', 'Country/Region', 'Action', 'Status', and 'Remarks'. It lists various initiatives proposed by G20 members and other countries, including those related to infrastructure resilience, climate change adaptation, and international cooperation.

G20 Action Agenda on Adaptation and Resilient Infrastructure (contains actions at the multilateral, bilateral and national levels)

Climate Change Adaptation Act (English translation)

http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail_main?re=02&vm=04&id=3212



Link to website→
<http://www.adaptation-platform.nies.go.jp/en/ap-plat/>



Link to explanation of actions→
http://www.adaptation-platform.nies.go.jp/en/ap-plat/tools_guidelines/G20Actions/

ABE Takeshi

Coordinator of International Environmental Studies
Office of Global Environment and Decarbonizing Innovation Research / Climate Change Adaption Office
Global Environment Bureau

G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter



"G20 Resource Efficiency and Marine Plastic Litter Symposium"

From the 8th to the 11th of October 2019, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, together with the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), organised the G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter and related events.

Overview of the meeting

The “G20 Resource Efficiency and Marine Plastic Litter Symposium”, that preceded the main meeting

garnered roughly 300 participants including the general public. In addition to sharing the outcomes of the G20 Osaka Summit, a panel discussion took place on the topic of the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision”, where issues related to making the vision a reality and future initiatives were discussed. For the main meeting, the “G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter”, representatives from 17 countries, both G20 nations and non-G20 outreach nations, were joined by representatives of international organisations and research institutes, to make up the roughly 100 persons

in attendance. Pursuant to the “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter” agreed upon at the G20 held in Japan in June, the meeting was the first occasion for countries to report on measures and share best practices, as well as to hold discussions on measures and best practices in resource efficiency.

Meeting outcomes

Outcomes of the meeting include recognition of the advantages of sharing information and updating measures and best practices when strengthening initiatives at the national

level, as well as a call for non-G20 countries to actively participate in the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” and the “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter”. Moreover, it was confirmed that non-G20 countries are able to share information and participate at any time by applying to the G20 Presidency nation in writing.

Based on the “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter” adopted at the “G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth” held in June of this year, information sharing for mutual learning by G20 and outreach countries was conducted for the first time concerning measures to address marine plastic litter. The “G20 Report on Actions against Marine Plastic Litter” was compiled based on information reported by participating countries.

Concerning resource efficiency, the “Roadmap for the G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue” was formulated to include details on the concrete activities of countries in order to facilitate more effective initiatives in other countries, based on agreement at the G20 Osaka Summit.



Remarks by Minister of the Environment Koizumi at the "G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter"



Opening remarks by State Minister of the Environment Ishihara at the "G20 Resource Efficiency and Marine Plastic Litter Symposium"



"G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue 2019 and Follow-up of G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter"

MIYAKE Yoshifumi

Senior Environment Staff
Office for Promotion of Sound
Material-Cycle Society
Environmental Regeneration and
Material Cycles Bureau



The UN Climate Action Summit and Related Events

The UN Climate Action Summit

From 22 to 25 September 2019, Minister of the Environment, KOIZUMI Shinjiro, made an official trip to New York to attend the opening ceremony of the UN Climate Action Summit. He also participated in multiple side events including meetings of the Coalition for Urban Transitions and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC).

At the summit, 65 countries expressed their intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. In his concluding remarks at the summit, UN Secretary General António Guterres stressed the need for more countries and businesses to have concrete ambitions and for initiatives in carbon pricing to green our economies. Prior to the summit, on 20 September, Minister Koizumi expressed Japan's intent to participate in the "Carbon Neutrality Coalition", a group of pioneering nations working to achieve decarbonisation.

Moreover, at the "SDG Summit 2019" on 24 September, Prime Minister Abe highlighted achievements reached in promotion of the SDGs over the past four years, including the outcomes of the G20 Osaka Summit and TICAD7. In related efforts, the Ministry of the Environment held the following two side events in July at the UN High-Level Political Forum 2019, a meeting aimed at follow-up and review of the SDGs.

Side event, "Satoyama Initiative-Society in Harmony with Nature: An Inclusive Approach for Communities on Landscapes and Seascapes"

This side event was jointly organised by the Ministry of the Environment, Cabinet Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).

The outcomes of the G20 ministerial meeting in Karuizawa and the concept of the "circulating and ecological economy", which is aimed at achieving the SDGs and decarbonisation, were introduced at the beginning of the session. In the panel discussion, presentations were made on localisation of the SDGs towards realising sustainable cities.

Side event, "SATOYAMA – Society Living in Harmony with Nature: An inclusive approach from Communities, Landscapes and Seascapes"

This side event was jointly organised by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, the Government of Bhutan, the Government of Costa Rica, the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, IGES, the Secretariat of the Convention on the United Nations Development Programme and the UNU-IAS.

Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, MORISHITA Satoru, speaking from the standpoint of a major donor, remarked on the Satoyama Initiative's outcomes to date and its contribution to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. IGES President, TAKEUCHI Kazuhiko, gave the keynote address on the role the Satoyama Initiative

plays in the SDGs and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Concrete lessons learned from case studies were shared in the panel discussion.



Climate and Clean Air Coalition meeting



Side event on SATOYAMA



**SATOYAMA
INITIATIVE**



The International Partnership for
the Satoyama Initiative
<https://satoyama-initiative.org/>

KONDO Kota

Officer
International Strategy Division
Global Environmental Bureau

TANAKA Eiji

Senior Coordinator for Biodiversity
Biodiversity Policy Division
Nature Conservation Bureau



Outcomes of the Twelfth Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia

The role of the EST Forum going forward

In October 2019, the Ministry of the Environment held the Twelfth Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development. Important discussions took place on promoting EST (Environmentally Sustainable Transport) in the Asian region.

Overview of the forum's activities to date

The rapid advancement of motorisation has gone hand in hand with economic development and urbanisation in the Asian region, leading to a striking escalation in environmental impacts. In order to come together to address environmental problems such as air pollution, as well as societal issues including lack of access to transportation and disparity across

regions, Japan and the UNCRD proposed the “Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia” in 2005 to promote the concept of EST. Since then, forums have been held nearly every year in various locations in Asia.

Overview and outcomes of 12th Forum

The Twelfth Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 28 to 31 October 2019. Among the approximate 300 participants from 22 Asian nations were high-level government officials working in the areas of environment and transportation, mayors and representatives of international organisations. Discussions revolved around the main theme, “Achieving Smart and Resilient Cities Through Low Carbon and Intelligent Transport System”. Fifteen Japanese cities and companies gave presentations and numerous best practices in environmentally sustainable transport both in Japan and overseas were introduced.

Representing the Japanese government, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, YAGI Tetsuya, stressed the role of the EST Forum going forward in strengthening cooperation between the public and private sectors towards

decarbonization and integrated initiatives hinged on the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, Japan proposed the introduction of an evaluation process aimed at developing policies in participating countries based on the discussion at the forum. Additionally, 12 Japanese groups and companies displayed posters showcasing their initiatives and technologies, revealing preeminent technologies that could contribute to the actualisation of EST in many countries.

Looking ahead to 2030

Japan will continue to exhibit strong leadership in addressing current global challenges such as achieving the SDGs and the targets of the Paris Agreement. We will strive to contribute to the establishment of environmentally-sound sustainable transport systems in countries around the world via the EST Forum.



Presentation by Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment Yagi

Twelfth Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia



<http://www.uncrd.or.jp/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=1185&menu=198>

HIGURASHI Tomonori

Chief
Environmental Transport Policy
Division
Environmental Management Bureau



Shikotsu-Toya National Park

Live volcanoes and quiet blue lakes —a museum of volcanic activity



Shikotsu-Toya National Park is well known for its caldera lakes and volcanic peaks. More than any other national parks in Hokkaido, here people lead their lives in close contact with nature. Life has gone on for ages, older than the volcanoes, younger than the deep lakes.

A volcano emerges from a barley field

The exquisite natural environment of Shikotsu-Toya National Park includes the smoking volcanic peaks of Mt. Usu and Mt. Eniwatake, the beautiful free-standing Mt. Yotei, and the mountains of Sapporo, enveloped by thick forests over the ages. The park features volcanic landscapes of hot springs and steamy *jigokudani* (fumarolic areas), but one of its most impressive sights is Mt. Showa Shinzan (literally, “new mountain in Showa Period”).

Mt. Showa Shinzan is an extraordinary volcano that abruptly surged up from what was once a flat barley field during a two-year eruption (1943-1945). What is more, the volcano’s birth and growth were recorded in detail by a postal worker. The account that he left behind is known as “The Mimatsu Diagram”, and it has become an important record for the world.



Mt. Showa Shinzan: a volcano that emerged from a barley field

Human life and the lake

Human history cannot be left out when describing the Shikotsu-Toya National Park. The deep forests and lakes have stood alongside villages and cities throughout history, watching over people’s lives and the ways of nature.

In Ainu mythology, a story has been passed down of a god so huge he could walk across the oceans. When one day the god decided to test the depth of Lake Shikotsu, he was surprised that the water came up to his hips. The depth of the lake revealed in the myth tells us that the lake was



Lake Shikotsu: A deep lake with strong connections to human life closely connected to people’s lives long ago.

In the early modern period, a multitude of people including the descendants of SAMURAI settled in Hokkaido. At the time, mines and hydroelectric power plants thrived in the town near Lake Shikotsu, but it was still a very remote area with difficult access by a small steam locomotive.

70th anniversary: heading into the future

On 16 May 2019, the Shikotsu-Toya National Park marked the 70th anniversary of its designation as a national park. With its volcanoes, lakes and rich nature, the park continues to draw tourists to see its sights. From its hot springs and steaming hot swamps, visitors can feel the energy emanating from the young volcanoes. Divers in Lake Shikotsu can sense the depth that amazed even the Ainu god. The straight road, remaining since the times of modern settlement, could lead you into this land of mystery, as it has led travelers in years past.

The Shikotsu-Toya National Park will continue to be a place where humans and nature coexist.

Ministry of the Environment: Shikotsu-Toya National Park website
<http://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/shikotsu/index.html>



TSUKAMOTO Kota

Park Ranger
 Hokkaido Regional Environment Office
 Shikotsu-Toya National Park Office

