

Uniquely Japan, Uniquely Alpine: The Transformation of the Kamikōchi Mountain Valley into an Alpine Landscape, 1892–1938

FYNN HOLM, University of Bern

While the Japanese mountain valley Kamikōchi is today marketed as an alpine landscape that is both “foreign” and “Japanese,” the Alps-like aesthetics of the valley are the result of a series of anthropogenic alterations. The renaming of a non-European mountain range as “Alps” was a common practice among Western colonial powers, but in the case of the “Japanese Alps,” to which Kamikōchi belongs, it was the Japanese themselves who took the Swiss Alps as a model landscape and strived to emulate European industrial and touristic mountain land-use patterns. Comparing the valley to the Swiss Alps then changed how stakeholders perceived the valley and its possible economic utilization for the emerging Japanese empire.

“The Japan of picturesque romance is passing away and is being replaced by a land of materialism,” lamented Yoshiyuki Kagami in *The Japan Times & Mail* in 1930.¹ Only far away from urban life, argued Kagami further, would natural beauty still live in Japan “in defiance of the ingressing machine era.” The best place to experience the remnants of this beauty were, in his opinion, the vast mountain ranges in central Honshū popularly known as the Japanese Alps: “In the meadows adjacent to the upper waters of River Adzusa [*sic*] near Kamikōchi, the Japanese Zermatt, are flourishing cattle farms, such as those which are so familiar a sight in the Swiss Alps.”² His effort to compare a Japanese

Electronically Published on January 19, 2023.

Environmental History, volume 28, number 1, January 2023. © 2023 Forest History Society and American Society for Environmental History. All rights reserved. Published by the University of Chicago Press on behalf of American Society for Environmental History and the Forest History Society. <https://doi.org/10.1086/722505>

landscape with a faraway mountain range in Central Europe that most of Kagami's readers had never seen with their own eyes encapsulates the complicated relationship the Japanese had with their own mountain geography. Indeed, to this day, Kamikōchi is marketed to domestic and foreign tourists alike as a place that is, according to the official website, "Uniquely Japan; Uniquely Alpine."³ This raises an interesting question: How did a Japanese landscape (see fig. 1) become "Alpine," a word with etymological roots related to the famous mountain range?⁴

Kamikōchi is a high mountain valley located 1,500 meters above sea level in the central portion of what is today known as the Northern Japanese Alps (*kita nihon arupusu*). On its western flank, the valley is enclosed by the Yari-Hotaka mountain range, whose peaks slightly over three thousand meters make them the highest mountains in Japan except for Mt. Fuji. Rugged and rocky contours give this range a distinctive alpine look, but unlike the Swiss Alps, they are volcanic in origin. On the valley's eastern side, the Jōnen mountain range ascends more gradually, while the erosion that shaped the gentle curves also produced soil for its many forested slopes. The topography of the valley floor lies between the montane and subalpine zone and is dominated by the changing course of the Azusa River with a varied endemic flora. Most of the valley is covered by evergreen coniferous trees with some occasional grasslands and shrublands near ridges and along the streams.⁵ Because the Azusa River leaves the valley on its southern side through an extremely narrow gorge, access into the valley has been historically difficult.

The discovery of the Kamikōchi mountain valley as an Alpine landscape is often attributed to the English missionary Walter Weston (1861–1940). While the term "Japanese Alps" was coined by the English archaeologist and mountaineer William Gowland in 1888, the name became widely popularized through Weston's 1896 book, *Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps*.⁶ For Weston, calling the mountains around Kamikōchi "Japanese Alps" was a convenient way of introducing a new mountain range to a British readership that was familiar with Switzerland. Weston acknowledged that the mountains were not as high or impressive as the Swiss Alps, "[b]ut the picturesqueness of their valley; and the magnificence of the dark and silent forests that clothe their massive flanks, surpass anything I have met with in European Alpine wanderings."⁷

In a 2005 article, Kären Wigen showed that Japanese urban elites such as Shiga Shigetaka (1863–1927) and Kojima Usui (1873–1948)



Figure 1. View on the Yari-Hotaka mountain range from near the Kappa Bridge in Kamikōchi. Credit: Author (2019).

were inspired by Western travelers and promoted mountaineering as a form of patriotic landscape worship.⁸ In 1894, two years before Weston's book, Shiga published *Nihon fūkeiron* (Japanese landscape), in which he argued that Japan had one of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes in the world. Indeed, Shiga contended, the people's interaction with environmental factors such as climate, soil composition, animals, and plant life over thousands of years created the customs and habits of the Japanese race and their "national essence" (*kokusui*). Shiga, who was critical of Western influences on Japanese society, believed that mountaineering was the best way to promote a sense of bio-regional pride among his compatriots. As he was no mountaineer himself, he plagiarized several passages from Western mountaineering books about Japan, letting his readers believe that he had firsthand knowledge.⁹

Inspired by Shiga, the writer Kojima Usui ascended Mt. Yarigatake near Kamikōchi in August 1902, naively believing himself to be the first climber to reach the top.¹⁰ After learning that Weston had been on the peak before him, Kojima met with him in 1905. Weston prompted the young Japanese mountaineer to form the *Nihon sangaku kai* (Japan Alpine Club), of which Weston would become the first honorary member.¹¹ Kojima belonged to a first generation of Japanese mountaineers that propagated the name *Nihon arupusu* (Japan Alps) to justify scientific mountain research, to promote recreational activities such as climbing among the urban elite, and to educate and enlighten that elite as subjects in a modern Japanese state. As Kären Wigen put it, "in the cosmopolitan world of mountaineering, a full-blown alpine apparatus signified great power status."¹²

Beyond the intellectual consequences discussed by Wigen, the "discovery" of a European mountain landscape inside the Japanese empire also had significant environmental consequences. While the valley was (and is) marketed as an untouched remainder of Japan's past natural beauty, Kamikōchi was actively transformed into an alpine landscape through a series of intentional and unintentional anthropogenic alterations. While Kamikōchi was first described as "Alpine" by British mountaineers, it was the Japanese themselves who took the Swiss Alps as a model landscape and strived to emulate European industrial and touristic mountain land-use patterns, bringing the valley aesthetically closer to their Swiss counterpart by building cattle farms, constructing dams, and erecting tourist resorts. Paradoxically, while becoming more

Swiss-like, the valley was advanced as an example of an unaltered Japanese landscape that required protection against Western-style environmental exploitation. As an alpine landscape, Kamikōchi is today perceived as both “foreign” and quintessentially “Japanese” at the same time.

Environmental historians have frequently drawn attention to the social construction of mountains, describing the processes that create the cultural and economic significance of highland landscapes. For instance, in their seminal work *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, the political historians Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz contended that mountains are cultural constructions that are defined according to social, political, and scientific needs.¹³ Jim Ring provided an illustration for this contention by showing that the Swiss Alps, despite being millions of years old, were only “made” into the place of longing and magnificent beauty in the early nineteenth century by early British tourists and mountaineers.¹⁴ Patrick Kupper likewise argued in his book *Creating Wilderness* that the Swiss National Park had been established at the beginning of the twentieth century with the goal of restoring an allegedly “alpine ur-nature” for scientific purposes as well as a playground for the emerging tourism industry. The process of “creating” shows how human imagination of an ahistorical wilderness had real ecological consequences for how the environment of the park developed, for example, by importing certain species such as ibex and wolf while banning others such as sheep.¹⁵

Other accounts have demonstrated how mountains served to assist colonial expansion, as explorers used European landscapes as the baselines against which mountainous areas around the world would be measured. Jon Mathieu argues, for instance, that the European Alps functioned as a model mountain range for explorers and scientists when describing unknown mountain ranges they discovered and named during colonial expeditions. Newly discovered mountain ranges were often called “alps” in order to erase the naming conventions of the indigenous population and to strengthen the claim of the colonizers that these landscapes belonged to their respective European empire.¹⁶ Moreover, having developed a scientific apparatus and experimented with industrial and economic models in the Swiss Alps, these new innovations were exported and applied to other mountain ranges around the world, despite fundamentally different cultural and ecological foundations, often with detrimental effects for the local ecology and the livelihood of indigenous

mountain people. In this way, the Swiss Alps often functioned as the default model mountain range for European scientists, explorers, and colonial officials.¹⁷

The story of Kamikōchi contrasts with these instances, however, because the Japanese eagerly sought to adopt the European model in an effort to buttress nascent Japanese nationalism and world power status. Although Westerners began the custom of referring to the Japanese central mountain range as the “Japanese Alps” and thus imagined its valleys as “Alpine,” Japanese stakeholders found the custom appealing, useful in preserving an alleged Japanese “ur-nature” as an important national symbol while also following the example of European and US mountain development plans for touristic purposes. Japanese policy makers adapted Western ideas and technology to the local context to build their own colonial empire while demonstrating that they were an equal to the Western powers. Many Japanese ideas and customs that had developed over centuries were thus rapidly re-framed and readapted into a new form that was seen by observers as neither entirely Western nor entirely “Japanese.” These fundamental changes affected not only political thought, socioeconomic structures, and cultural identity but also Japan’s perception of “nature” and how to make use of its natural resources.¹⁸ Tracing the development of alpine landscapes in Japan thus demonstrates that peripheral landscapes could be redefined for domestic reasons, a development that was not limited to the Japanese home islands, but would also be transmitted to other East Asian mountain landscape in Japanese colonial territories, including Taiwan and Korea.¹⁹

Creating an Alpine Landscape

Early twentieth-century hikers experienced the Kamikōchi Valley as a romantic, wild hinterland far away from human civilization (see fig. 2). As late as 1927, Kojima Usui described Kamikōchi as an “untouched wilderness.”²⁰ In the political Japanese discourse of the time, peripheral mountain landscapes were often seen as an antimodern ideal and antidote to the ills of the modern world.²¹ References to poetry and literature were often made to invoke the notion of a genuine and nationalistic Japanese “love for nature” that was allegedly more environmentally friendly—and thus superior—to Western industrialized usages of natural resources.²² This was, of course, never truly the case. Even prior to the

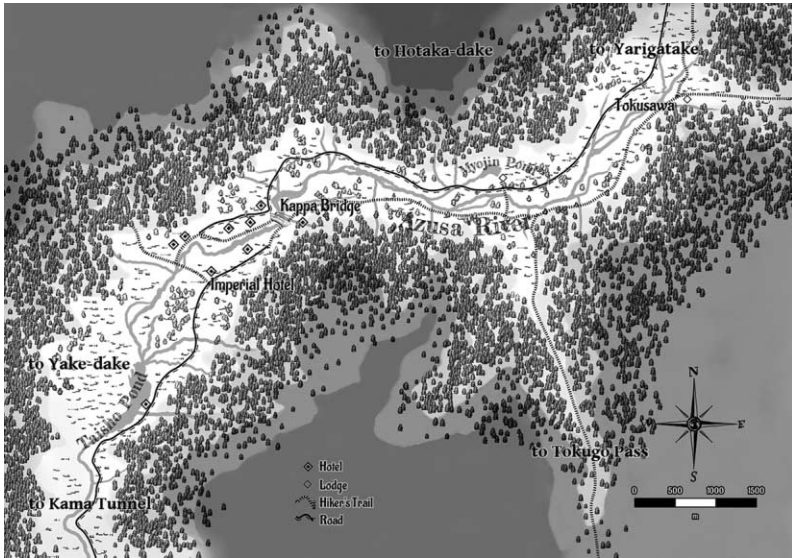


Figure 2. Map of the Kamikōchi Valley as seen today. Credit: Author.

Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan had had to contend with massive environmental problems such as deforestation, which touched even the far-removed Kamikōchi Valley.²³

During the Edo period (1603–1868), the valley had been managed by the Matsumoto domain, which early on designated it as a protected area to preserve the forests against overuse. Forest caretakers were hired in a contract system to oversee the logging in the valley and bring the valuable timber to the plain. Even so, documents from the eighteenth century described the forests as “exhausted.” During its heyday, more than four hundred woodcutters worked during the summer months in Kamikōchi.²⁴ The timber was transported out of the valley either on the back of the workers over the Tokugo Pass, or floated down the Azusa River, where larger tree trunks tended to be destroyed while passing through a narrow gorge. Despite having been used exhaustively for timber, many old and large trees were left standing in the valley, as they were too large to transport over the pass or to float through the gorge. This selective logging helped provide the forests of Kamikōchi with its picturesque alpine appearance that was so appreciated by early mountaineers looking for a pristine Japanese wilderness.²⁵

After the reengagement with the West, the newly installed Meiji government (1868–1912) attempted to “modernize” the country after the Western model and become an imperial power itself. Many of the forested mountains came under direct national governmental control, and in 1897 Kamikōchi was designated a “national forest.” This development kept the valley out of the hands of the private sector, curtailing any attempts at developing the region economically, but at the same time logging operations were restarted, which interfered with the urban hikers’ perception of a “pristine” landscape.²⁶

Weston’s early hiking adventures proved pivotal for the touristic development of Kamikōchi. When planning expeditions to Mt. Yarigatake and other mountains nearby, Weston stayed in the Shimizu-ya Inn in Shimashima, a small town at the foot of the mountain range. Upon hearing Weston’s description of Kamikōchi’s picturesque beauty and potential as a base for mountain climbing, the innkeeper Katō Sōkichi visited the high valley for himself and, together with some business partners, made plans to open a hot springs resort hotel. He opened the new inn during the summer of 1905, but since the first season was disappointing, he raised two thousand yen to finance an advertising campaign in Tokyo, where a new mountain fever, initiated by Shiga and Kojima’s travel monologues, was beginning to spread among the sons of noble families.²⁷ In 1909, the inn hosted 1,130 guests, but only ten years later, over 119,000 people were visiting the Northern Japanese Alps annually, of which Kamikōchi was the most important destination.²⁸

As mountaineering became more popular, demands to bring an end to logging operations increased. In 1913, Kojima Usui published an appeal in a regional newspaper:

I take this opportunity to present an open letter . . . regarding the over-logging of the beautiful forests of Kamikōchi Onsen, not for the sake of the hot spring, but for the sake of the heart of mountaineering in the Japan Alps and for the people, who in a spirit of piety and obedience, pay homage to the solemn natural temple that is the Japan Alps.²⁹

In his letter, Kojima compared Mt. Yarigatake to the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps and argued, like Kamikōchi, that the mountain village of Zermatt had been isolated from the human world until it was discovered as a climbing site for the Matterhorn. After the opening of the first hotel in Zermatt in 1838, thousands of climbers visited the region

each year. The discovery of the Chamonix Valley in France near the Mont Blanc massif followed a similar pattern, and now the same would be happening in Kamikōchi with the recent opening of a hot springs resort. However, the “brutal destruction” of the forests threatened the fragile natural balance of the valley with floods and increased erosion. Kojima based his analysis on the observations of a major in the German military and apparent expert on German forests, whom he had met the year prior in Kamikōchi. This expert claimed that any deforestation might be irreversible because of soil loss on the barren mountain slopes. Furthermore, Kojima reminded his audience that Weston had “found the abundance of green forests in the Japanese Alps to be its most beloved feature.”³⁰ Kojima lamented that

the bones of the mountain are exposed, the streams are flooded, the blazing sun shines directly into the valley, the most beautiful canyon in the Japanese Alps is devastated, and the accumulation of the fervent greenery is reduced to white ashes by the burning of mountain slopes. The valley of life and glory is not far away from becoming a valley of death and ugliness.³¹

In arguing for the protection of the mountain range, Kojima referenced the touristic development of Zermatt and Chamonix and drew on German forestry science, underscoring the degree to which he regarded the European Alps as a model for the future of Kamikōchi. At the same time, the traditional Japanese use of mountains as a resource for timber threatened to irreversibly destroy this landscape. Predictably, Kojima ignored the fact that the landscape he experienced as Alpine had been largely produced by the traditional uses he wanted to ban.

Creating an Alpine Pasture

One reason why early mountaineers found themselves immediately reminded of Switzerland when they entered Kamikōchi was the presence of grazing cattle, otherwise rare in Japanese mountain environments. Indeed, the seasonal migrations of cows, goats, and sheep across alpine meadows had for centuries been one of the pillars of the Central European anthropogenic alpine ecosystem, giving the Swiss mountain landscapes much of their appealing appearance so appreciated by mountaineers.³² The forested slopes of the Japanese Alps, in contrast,

provided little room for meadows, and transhumance had been virtually unknown in Japan. During the Edo period, many Japanese farmers held and bred a few horses and cattle despite laws and moral conventions discouraging the consumption of meat. The farmers used the animals for transportation, work in the fields, and—most importantly—for producing manure that could be used to fertilize the crops. Unlike their Western counterparts, however, the animals were seldom let outside and stayed in stables for most of the year, where they were fed fodder the farmers had collected in the mountain commons.³³

The relationship between humans and draft animals changed in the 1870s when the Meiji government announced their plans to establish modern leather and meat industries for generating export goods. Furthermore, as it was believed that consuming beef would nurture a strong and healthy population that could stand against aggressive Western colonial powers, over the course of the Meiji period Japanese leaders turned their subjects from largely voluntary vegetarians—with the notable exception of fish and occasional wild meat—into beefeaters. Following the same logic, the consumption of milk products was also highly encouraged, especially for children.³⁴ These policies led to a drastic expansion of cattle raising with the newly colonized open grasslands in Hokkaidō being the prime target.³⁵

In 1880, residents from the nearby Minami Azumi district submitted plans to reclaim land for cultivation in Kamikōchi. The petitioners argued that the Azusa River flowed through flat and fertile land that was ideal for cultivation and that constructing a permanent settlement in the valley would be in the national interest.³⁶ In a second petition in 1886, the locals reaffirmed that the soil was fertile, and that due to its secluded geography, the valley was protected against natural disasters caused by wind, frost, rain, and snow. Besides the cultivation of food crops, they also proposed to invest in mulberry trees for silk production. It turned out that neither mulberry trees nor crops thrived in the short and cold summers of the high valley, and after a few years, the project was abandoned altogether. Despite being short-lived, the agricultural intermezzo did leave behind a lasting ecological impact for the valley. Crab apple trees (*Malus sieboldii*) planted by the would-be colonizers thrived, and today Kamikōchi apple pies—even though made from other varieties of apples—are one of the best-known tourist attractions. Furthermore, pond loaches (*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*) were released into the Azusa River at the time and can still be found today.³⁷

While land reclamation for crop cultivation proved infeasible, another resident of Shimashima submitted a proposal to the local government in 1884 for a Swiss-style ranch, contending that the valley was not suited for raising crops but provided excellent pasturage.³⁸ While initially almost all livestock were horses, as the demand for beef and milk increased, more and more cows were brought to the ranch. By 1897, forty cows and twenty horses were on the farm. By the 1920s, this number had increased to over four hundred animals, of which around 80 percent were cows.³⁹ The animals had a profound impact on the landscape, as their grazing and trampling changed the composition of the local flora in the frequently visited center part of the valley, making it resemble similar pastures in the European Alps. While the animals gave the valley itself much of its alpine scenery, the arrival of the urban hikers also led to increased conflicts between humans and the ranch animals.

One problem was that uncastrated bulls were allowed on the ranch to encourage natural mating among the animals. However, since the animals were not closely watched, they became wilder during the summer months and began attacking unsuspecting hikers. Weston and his wife were once attacked by one aggressive bull, and their guide, a seasoned bear hunter, could only escape from the animal by jumping into the Azusa River.⁴⁰ Other hikers were not as lucky, and the bulls especially singled out hikers in white clothes, a color mainly worn by mountain pilgrims. Locals speculated that the white clothes might have reminded the bulls of veterinarians who had given them painful injections. Whatever the cause for the attacks, the first ranch, which was built near the Myōjin pond, was moved farther back into the valley several times toward Tokuzawa and reduced in size to prevent conflict with mountaineers, while the trampling of the grass by so many hikers and animals also degraded the quality of the pasture over time. Finally, in 1934, the ranch was closed after fifty years of operating to increase the security of the tourists.⁴¹

While the ranches themselves have disappeared, much of the grassland has not yet reverted to forest, providing the middle area of the Kamikōchi Valley the aesthetic of a typical Swiss alpine pasture. Unlike other pastures created during the Meiji period, however, no non-native grasses had been sown in Kamikōchi. This allows indigenous flowers, such as the edible *nirinsou* (*Anemone flaccida*), to thrive today undisturbed on the grassland.⁴²

Flooding the Valley

On June 5, 1915, catastrophe struck, changing Kamikōchi forever when a volcanic eruption at Mt. Yake-dake caused a three-hundred-meter-wide mudflow to race into the Azusa River. Rocks and mud blocked the exit of the river, which in turn overflowed, destroying nearby forests, roads, and infrastructure. The following ash fallout rendered the grass in the valley temporarily inedible, causing concern for the future of the Kamikōchi Ranch. In the aftermath of this destruction, however, Kamikōchi was blessed with an unexpected gift: since the river exit remained clogged, it could only partly drain, which created one of the most picturesque lakescapes in Japan—especially combined with the eerie scenery of white tree skeletons standing in its midst. This newly formed Taishō Pond, as it would become known, stood at the center of a controversy that would decide how Kamikōchi would benefit the Japanese empire.

In this they could look to Europe as well, as in the late nineteenth century, hydroelectric power had become a central part of the modernization of the European Alps. The advent of this new technology transformed the formerly sublime mountainous hinterland into reservoirs of water energy to fuel the ecological modernity of Central Europe.⁴³ Sacrificing high valley alpine ecosystems by flooding them brought the benefit of cheap energy that could be used to attract new industries to peripheral mountain regions. Furthermore, one of the first profiteers of what was sometimes called white coal had been the hotel industry in the Swiss Alps. As early as 1879, the tourist resort of St. Moritz could impress rich foreign guests with electric lighting, central heating, running water in the bedrooms, and electric elevators.⁴⁴ These technological advances were pivotal for allowing hotels to stay open during the winter, thus making the alpine winter landscape accessible for tourists for the first time.

Hydroelectricity was also of great importance for the rapidly modernizing Japanese empire. In 1890, the Keage power station, which drew water from the newly constructed Lake Biwa Canal outside of Kyoto, was completed. Only a few years later, it also became possible to transport electricity over long distances using high-voltage lines. The Japanese Alps soon became a central focal point for potential dam construction to feed the hungry Japanese metropolises with energy. Initially dismissed due to its difficult access and steepness of its terrain, following

the formation of Taishō Pond, the Azusa River was suddenly catapulted as a prime candidate for dam construction. Farther downstream, first projects to dam the Azusa River were realized, and by 1924 the upper valley came under the control of Keihin Electric, which had obtained the river's water rights and delivered energy to Tokyo. Initial plans called for the construction of a 150-foot-high and 2,000-foot-wide dam near the famous Kappa bridge, effectively drowning two-thirds of the valley's flatland, including most of its natural and cultural spots enjoyed by urban mountaineers.⁴⁵

As can be imagined, these plans were almost universally opposed by locals and hikers alike. The Garden Society of Japan (*Nihon teien kyōkai*), founded in Tokyo in 1918, was at the forefront in the battle against the construction of a hydroelectric dam. Comprised of leading figures in the bureaucracy as well as landscape architects and academics, the society was very well connected and submitted a letter to Prime Minister Katō Takaaki (1860–1926) as well as the governor of Nagano Prefecture. The society argued that Kamikōchi was not only one of the top two candidates for a national park but world-renowned as a great national landscape. The construction plan would effectively destroy the landscape despite its utmost importance for the health and enjoyment of the Japanese people, as well as for scientific research. The new prefectural governor of Nagano agreed with the society, stating that “all destructive projects that violate this sacred land should be prohibited forever.”⁴⁶ With this, the plans for dam construction were laid to rest.

Landscape as an Economic Resource

With the victory of the Garden Society of Japan over Keihin Electric, the fate of Kamikōchi Valley became a national political issue, and it was no longer possible for the valley to sink into insignificance. Once it was acknowledged as a national landscape, the question of how to make the best use of its economic and ecological potential had to be answered. As the dam construction would have increased the economic value of the valley significantly, the valley's self-proclaimed protectors were now hard-pressed to find a suitable economic alternative—the more so given that the traditional modes of economic exploitation had proven inadequate: crop introductions in the valley had all ended in failure, while large-scale forestry and cattle raising entailed conflict with urban hikers.

With other forms of economic utilization seemingly incompatible, the best way forward seemed to be to transform Kamikōchi into a modern alpine landscape after the model of European alpine resorts in order to attract tourists. However, the prospect of economic tourist development for a mass audience clashed with the ideal of an untouched wilderness that needed to be preserved. According to the hermit Okuhara Hiroshi (1901–33), who lived in a small hut near Mt. Yarigatake, the “populists” who supported the large-scale development of Kamikōchi into a destination for mass tourism stood against the “aristocracy”—a group of elite urban mountaineers who called for nondevelopment and protection.⁴⁷

Okuhara himself believed that it would be selfish of the elite to discourage development for mass tourism, so that only they could enjoy the natural beauty of Kamikōchi while other social groups, such as the “old, sick, women and children,” would be unable to see the “snow river and flower gardens.”⁴⁸ His solution was partial development, namely the relocation of all existing hotels, mountain huts, and other infrastructure to a small spot on the west bank of the Azusa River. This place should be further developed in a large hot spring resort that attracted not only local tourists but also sightseers from the United States, following the example of Switzerland. His plan, he believed, would make it easier to control the touristic development so that the rest of the valley was not defiled and could be preserved in its natural state. In order to achieve this goal, Okuhara recommended that the whole area should be converted into a national park: “Some people may think what I have said is a fantasy, but I believe something similar to my ideas will be realized in the future, probably within thirty years. In another ten years, there might even be air transport and an airplane depot in Kamikōchi.”⁴⁹

Minus the airport, Okuhara’s predictions proved largely accurate. In 1934, only one year after Okuhara’s untimely death, Kamikōchi was designated as part of the newly founded Chūbu-Sangaku National Park. The idea of constructing national parks had been around in Japan since the 1870s with the Nikkō, Hakone, and Fuji regions being discussed early on as possible candidates. In 1919, the Law for the Preservation of Historic, Scenic, and Natural Monuments was enacted. This law aimed at protecting historic sites and natural monuments against deterioration caused by Western-style modernization.⁵⁰ Kamikōchi was discussed as a possible candidate for this law, but the law

had been designed to protect scenic or natural monuments in isolation rather than entire landscapes, so Kamikōchi fell outside of its intended purview. Instead, stakeholders pushed for designating the Kamikōchi region a national park, which would allow for a more all-encompassing protection.⁵¹

Public perception was another important factor in making a national park. Kojima Usui used the *Shin Nihon Hakkei*, an opinion poll conducted by two newspapers in 1927 about the potential designation of eight new Japanese landscapes of national significance, to promote Kamikōchi. Despite landing at eleventh in the “valley” category in a public poll, Kojima pushed for the inclusion of Kamikōchi as one of the final eight landscapes by arguing for its importance for Japanese alpinism and its allegedly “untouched wilderness.” As Thomas Jones has shown, Kamikōchi’s last-minute inclusion into the poll propelled the area from a relatively unknown hinterland into the national consciousness and positioned it as a prime candidate for designation as a national park.⁵² In 1931, the national park law was finally passed, and shortly after, Kamikōchi was included as a candidate.

From its inception, the aim of establishing national parks was not only to protect nature but to attract foreign tourists to increase Japan’s foreign exchange. In 1921, Tamura Tsuyoshi (1890–1979), the director of the Garden Society of Japan, argued in *The Asahi Shimbun* newspaper that the establishment of national parks would allow the country to advance its level of civilization. So far, Tamura argued, countries like Switzerland and Italy had been world-famous destinations for Western tourists, but Japan had the chance to join these classic tourist destinations. Thirty thousand foreign visitors would come every year to Japan, spending more than forty million yen—a number that would certainly increase if national parks were established.⁵³ A few years later, Tamura further elaborated on the economic role of national parks. “Landscapes are an economic resource in the modern world,” he contended. “In short,” he concluded, “the national park project is an economic enterprise to develop a kind of scenic resource. As it is not inferior to any other industrial use, it is appropriate to exclude hydropower, forestry, and cattle breeding in the area to preserve the landscape in the park.”⁵⁴ Thus, to justify the exclusion of industrial exploitation, the landscape itself became an industrial commodity. In an ironic twist, in order to protect Kamikōchi, the “aristocracy” had to give up their nondevelopmental position and join the “populists” in

transforming the valley into an alpine landscape for foreign visitors and the urban middle class.

In order to market the new national park to prospective visitors, a careful balance between indigenous and foreign concepts had to be found. On the one hand, foreigners had certain expectations of mountain landscapes that were mainly shaped by the Swiss Alps, so Kamikōchi was branded as an “Alpine” landscape. Furthermore, possessing a Swiss-like landscape in the heart of Japan emphasized for the elite that Japanese nature—and thus the Japanese race—was not inferior to Europe. Similarly, while many Japanese tourists had only a vague idea of the European Alps, many were eager to experience a place that sounded exotic without having to actually visit a foreign country. It did not take long until one of the most popular hiking routes in Kamikōchi was called “Alps Ginza,” after the upscale and trendy shopping area in Tokyo.⁵⁵

On the other hand, Japanese elites were reluctant to embrace the European comparison fully, as the region was seen as one of the last remaining “pristine” landscapes of an original, now lost Japan. Moreover, the national park was designed to promote not only Japanese public health through mountaineering and other recreational activities, but also eco-nationalism and patriotic pride.⁵⁶ Consequently, using a foreign name undermined these efforts to some degree. Consequently, the name of the national park, which in the conception phase had always been called “Japan Alps National Park,” was changed at the last minute to “Chūbu-Sangaku National Park,” or Central Mountain National Park.⁵⁷

Moreover, in commercializing the landscape, the architects of the Chūbu-Sangaku National Park chose not to follow the Swiss example but rather oriented themselves toward US national parks such as Yosemite. While Swiss national parks had at their core the preservation of nature by allegedly restoring the lost “wilderness” of the park for scientific purposes, US parks were much more concerned with providing enjoyment and convenience for urban visitors in a scenic landscape.⁵⁸ Similarly, there were no attempts to restore Kamikōchi to its pre-Edo “natural state,” but rather the various landscape alterations that had occurred in the past two hundred years were understood as being part of the valley’s natural appeal. Tourists ate apple pies inspired by the crab apple trees that had survived the failed land reclamation project, enjoyed a picnic on former pastures created by the

Kamikōchi Ranch, and strolled through the scenic forests that were direct results of selective logging.

A Swiss Hotel in the Japanese Alps

A major point in favor of Kamikōchi as a tourist attraction was its convenient location between the two metropolitan centers of Osaka and Tokyo. Even so, reaching the valley itself proved challenging. Prior to the creation of the park, visitors had to make an eight-hour hike over Tokugo Pass to reach the valley—a major hurdle for most casual tourists. Ironically, it was the Keihin Electric Company that inadvertently provided a solution. After the failure of its dam project, the company settled for a small-scale electric power station at the end of the Taishō Pond. This new station generated electricity by dropping water from the Azusa River through a tunnel farther downstream. In order to build this power station, the Kama tunnel was constructed for motorized vehicles through the formerly impassable ravine. This new road allowed the establishment of a bus service to Kamikōchi in 1934, opening up the valley to mass tourism.⁵⁹

Over the span of only a few years, Kamikōchi was transformed from an exclusive and secluded hiker's paradise into a nature amusement park with recreational facilities for fishing, horseback riding, and tennis. While Okuhara's idea of a single concentrated resort area was not implemented by the government, by sheer convenience, most new hotels, lodges, and other facilities were built close to the Kappa Bridge, a bit northeast of the Taishō Pond, while the hinterland of the valley remained largely undeveloped.

The largest new project was the construction of the Kamikōchi Imperial Hotel, which opened in 1933. Conceived by the Japan Tourist Bureau as the second hotel in a new chain aimed at international tourists, the hotel was operated by Nagano Prefecture and cost over 300,000 yen, much of which was financed with low-interest loans provided by the Ministry of Finance. In order to attract foreign tourists, the planners decided that the hotel had to be on par with the world's best mountain resorts and thus invited a number of mountaineering experts with international experience to obtain a specific architectural plan.

To highlight the similarities with the European Alps, it was decided that the design of the hotel should mimic a Swiss cottage, with a cobblestone base on the first floor, white plaster and timber walls, stone

chimneys, and a Swiss-style dining hall. The three-story building had room for two hundred guests and provided conveniences that catered to foreign visitors, including Western-style food and rooms, a library, and a tennis court. Drawing from his experience in US national parks, Kojima Usui, who was one of the experts invited, recommended that the hotel provide rooms with bathrooms as well as rooms with shared bathrooms since some international guests preferred cheaper overnight rates.⁶⁰ Although it initially planned to operate only during the summer season, the hotel was built with the amenities necessary to open during the winter, such as central heating, should demand arise.⁶¹

As the hotel was marketed for international visitors, Kamikōchi was heavily promoted in Japan's largest English-language newspaper, *The Japan Times & Mail* in both advertisements and articles. One article, for instance, claimed that the valley was not only "remarkable for its splendid scenery, but that it is also rich in what the mountaineer hails as heaven after strenuous climbing—hot springs. This is a point in favour of the Japanese Alps as compared with their European prototype."⁶² The hotel itself was heavily featured in such promotional pieces. The journalist Rose McKee, for example, wrote that the hotel "offered such an ample and artistic setting for being lazy that I failed to see how any guest could get herself into a mountain climbing mood."⁶³ She further remarked on the pleasant, chilly temperatures of the valley at a time when Tokyo was sweltering in the summer heat, the excellent Western food, and that even the boys who operated the elevators spoke English.⁶⁴

Originally, the Japan Tourist Bureau focused its marketing campaign primarily on visitors from the United States, publishing articles, for example, that argued that Kamikōchi was "strikingly similar" to Yosemite National Park, comparing the geographical features of the two places.⁶⁵ Soon, however, they also realized the potential of foreigners elsewhere in Asia, such as Shanghai and Hong Kong.⁶⁶ Despite this targeted marketing, the number of foreign visitors remained minuscule. In the 1935 summer season, 27,799 mountaineers, of which 5,028 were women, came to the Northern Japanese Alps, but only 180 of them were foreigners.⁶⁷ This was largely due to the difficult situation of the global economy in the 1930s as well as Japan's rising negative image in Western countries following the annexation of Manchuria. Furthermore, after 1938, money allocated for the national parks was redirected for the war efforts in China. Domestic tourism also stagnated and eventually slumped during the war.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Entering Kamikōchi today through the Kama tunnel built by Keihin Electric, visitors find themselves transported to a different world. The high peaks of the Yari-Hotaka Range reflected in the Taishō Pond, the light forests, the meadows at the lake's banks, and the European-style hotel resorts make the valley appear as if it were somewhere in the Swiss Alps, while still feeling distinctly Japanese. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, over a million visitors entered Kamikōchi each year to experience this last remnant of an alleged Japanese alpine wilderness.⁶⁹ However, like the meadows of the Swiss Alps, much of Kamikōchi's appealing aesthetics originated from anthropogenic alterations, from the selected logging of the forests to the ecological remnants of the failed land reclamation projects and the altered riverside landscape caused by horse and cattle grazing.

These various environmental intrusions still define much of the valley's ecology today. For example, to cope with this continued stream of temporary human visitors, an extensive network of roads and recreational facilities has to be maintained. In addition, costly and ecologically intrusive alterations are needed to the Azusa River to prevent flooding, which has led to a significant loss of biodiversity.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, the now-protected forested slopes of the valleys are overgrowing with underbrush, which, according to some locals, are diminishing the traditional aesthetic beauty of the valley.⁷¹ Nevertheless, recent studies conducted by natural historians have identified many of these problems, and awareness of the necessity for more sustainable management of the valley is spreading.⁷²

The "discovery" of Kamikōchi as an Alpine landscape in the late nineteenth century was almost accidental. However, once recognized, Japanese stakeholders embraced the new naming convention and repeatedly referenced recent developments in the Swiss Alps—especially in Zermatt—when promoting ways to commodify the mountain landscape for the Japanese empire. Ironically, the more humans intervened in the ecology of the valley, the more they began to perceive it as an untouched, traditional Japanese landscape that needed to be protected against Western modernization. In that regard, the development was quite similar to the Swiss Alps, where the aesthetically pleasing "untouched" nature could only be experienced by so many tourists precisely because of comparatively recent modernization efforts, such as the

building of railway, hotel resorts, and cable cars. The Japanese Alps were not only “Alpine” in the sense that they looked like the Swiss Alps, or that they were marketed as Alps, but that they were also an anthropogenic, altered landscape that was imagined to represent an idealized past of the nation. In this way, “Alpine” was not only a foreign concept but also an integral part of the Japanese national identity.

Seen like this, the Japanese Alps are best understood not as a Western imperial project in which Europeans imposed their naming convention and scientific apparatus on an unsuspecting colonial subject but rather as a deliberate part of the Japanese empire-building process. While many ideas on how to make use of mountain environments in a modern state context were first developed in the European Alps, these methods were neither forced onto the Japanese nor simply imitated by them. Finding the most beneficial use of this “Alpine” landscape for the Japanese empire was a contested process in which different stakeholders and their respective aims stood in direct competition with each other. Every failed attempt to make use of the landscape had long-term ecological ramifications for the fragile mountain environment, creating in the end a landscape that was both “uniquely Japan” and “uniquely Alpine.”

Fynn Holm (fynn.holm@unibe.ch) is a postdoctoral researcher at the History Department at the University of Bern. His first book, *The Gods of the Sea: Whales and Coastal Communities in Northeast Japan, c. 1600–2019*, is under contract with Cambridge University Press.

Notes

I would like to thank the following people for giving valuable feedback to earlier drafts of this essay: John Hayashi, Helena Jaskov, Ian J. Miller, Jonas M. Rüegg, the members of the Center for History and Economics Graduate Workshop at Harvard University, as well as the editors and two anonymous reviewers of the journal. This research was made possible with the financial support of an Early Post-Doc Mobility fellowship from the Swiss National Science Foundation.

1. Kagami took this quote and the structure of his first paragraph from Walter Weston, *The Playground of the Far East* (London: John Murray, 1918), v.
2. Yoshiyuki Kagami, “Roaming the Ranges: The Charm of the Japan Alps,” *The Japan Times & Mail*, September 14, 1930.
3. Japan Alps Kamikochi Official Website: <https://www.kamikochi.org> (accessed December 6, 2021).

4. The title of this article draws on this original meaning. Thus, throughout, when “Alpine” is used with a capital “A,” it denotes Alps-like, when it is used with a lowercase “a,” it refers to the more general meaning of mountainous.
5. Sadao Tadaoka, “Kamikōchidani no shokusei,” in *Kamikōchi no shizenshi*, ed. Kamikōchi shizenshi kenkyūkai (Matsumoto: Tōkai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2016), 38–40.
6. Kenneth R. Ireland, “Westonization in Japan: The Topos of the Mountain in Yasushi Inoue’s ‘Hyoheki,’” *Comparative Literature Studies* 30 (1993): 16–31.
7. Walter Weston, *Mountaineering and Exploration on the Japanese Alps* (London: John Murray, 1896), 293. For a discussion of Weston’s use of “picturesque,” see Sonia Favi, “Negotiating the Nation: Public Diplomacy and the Publication of English-Language Tourist Guidebooks of Japan in the Meiji Period (1868–1912),” *Japan Forum* (Online First) (February 2022): 1–23.
8. Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31 (2005): 1–26.
9. For a full discussion on the *Nihon fukeiron*, see Masako Gavin, “Nihon Fukeiron (Japanese Landscape): Nationalistic or Imperialistic?,” *Japan Forum* 12 (January 2000): 219–31; Andrew Kane, “Landscape Discourse and Images of Nature in Japanese Visual Culture of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” (Thesis, University of Hawaii, 2013), 34–51; Nobuko Toyosawa, “An Imperial Vision: Nihon Fukeiron (On the Landscape of Japan, 1894) and Naturalized Nature,” *Studies on Asia (East Lansing, Mich.)*, ser. IV, 3, no. 1 (2013): 25–64.
10. The first climber to reach the top of Mt. Yurigatake (elevation 3,180 meters) was the monk Banryū (1786–1840) in 1828; see Shūichirō Nakamura, *Kitaarupusu Kaitakushi* (Matsumoto: Kyōdo Shuppansha, 1995), 145–60.
11. For a history of the Japan Alpine Club, see Wolfram Manzenreiter, *Die soziale Konstruktion des japanischen Alpinismus: Kultur, Ideologie und Sport im modernen Bergsteigen*, Beiträge zur Japanologie (Wien: Universität Wien, 2000).
12. Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” 22.
13. Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz, *The Mountain: A Political History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).
14. Jim Ring, *How the English Made the Alps*, Kindle Edition (London: Faber & Faber, 2011).
15. Patrick Kupper, *Creating Wilderness: A Transnational History of the Swiss National Park* (New York: Berghahn, 2014). On the question of wilderness, see also William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Environmental History* 1 (January 1996): 7; Justin Reich, “Re-creating the Wilderness: Shaping Narratives and Landscapes in Shenandoah National Park,” *Environmental History* 6 (2001): 95–117; Libby Robin, “Wilderness in a Global Age, Fifty Years On,” *Environmental History* 19 (October 2014): 721–27. For more on the formation of national parks around the world, see, for example, Raf De Bont, “A World Laboratory: Framing the Albert National Park,” *Environmental History* 22 (July 2017): 404–32; Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*

- (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert B. Keiter, *To Conserve Unimpaired: The Evolution of the National Park Idea* (Washington, DC: Island, 2013).
16. See Frei Philippe, *Transferprozesse der Moderne: die Nachbenennungen 'Alpen' und 'Schweiz' im 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2017).
 17. Jon Mathieu, *The Third Dimension: A Comparative History of Mountains in the Modern Era*, trans. Katherine Brun (Cambridge: White Horse Press, 2011).
 18. For more on Japanese perception of "nature," see Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Ian Jared Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts: Empire and Exhibition at the Tokyo Imperial Zoo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
 19. See, e.g., Koji Kanda, "Landscapes of National Parks in Taiwan during the Japanese Colonial Period," in *Representing Local Places and Raising Voices from Below*, ed. Toshio Mizuuchi (Osaka: Department of Geography, Osaka City University, 2013), 112–19; Kuang-Chi Hung, "When the Green Archipelago Encountered Formosa," in *Environment and Society in the Japanese Islands: From Prehistory to the Present*, ed. Bruce L. Batten and Philip C. Brown (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 174–93; David Fedman, *Seeds of Control: Japan's Empire of Forestry in Colonial Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020).
 20. Cited after Thomas Jones, "The Role of the Shin Nihon Hakkei in Redrawing Japanese Attitudes to Landscape," in *Environment, Modernization and Development in East Asia: Perspectives from Environmental History*, ed. Ts'ui-jung Liu and James Beattie (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 142–43.
 21. Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity*, 25. A similar discourse can also be found among Western mountaineers; see Peter L. Bayers, *Imperial Ascent: Mountaineering, Masculinity, and Empire* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2003), 2–8; Patricia Purtschert, "White Masculinity in the Death Zone: Transformations of Colonial Identities in the Himalayas," *Culture and Religion* 21 (January 2020): 31–42.
 22. Arne Kalland, "Culture in Japanese Nature," in *Asian Perception of Nature: A Critical Approach*, ed. Ole Bruun and Arne Kalland (London: Routledge Curzon, 1995), 243–57.
 23. Conrad D. Totman, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in Pre-industrial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
 24. Niseburō Murakushi, *Kokuritsu kōen seiritsu shi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hōsei Daigaku Shuppankyoku, 2005), 266; Jones, "The Role of the Shin Nihon Hakkei," 143.
 25. Atsumi Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi kaihatsushi* (Azumi-mura: Yama to Keikokusha, 1971), 32–33.
 26. Murakushi, *Kokuritsu kōen seiritsu shi no kenkyū*, 266.
 27. Atsumi Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari* (Matsumoto: Shinshū no Ryosha, 1981), 66–69.
 28. Murakushi, *Kokuritsu kōen seiritsu shi no kenkyū*, 267.

29. First published in the *Shinano Mainichi Shinbun* on August 13, 1913, and reprinted in the 1914 September issue of Kojima's mountain magazine *Sangaku*. Here cited after Usui Kojima, "Kamikōchi fūkei hogoron," in *Nihon Arupusu: Sangaku kikō bunshō*, ed. Nobuyuki Kondō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 373.
30. Kojima, "Kamikōchi fūkei hogoron," 379.
31. Kojima, "Kamikōchi fūkei hogoron," 379–80.
32. See also Jon Mathieu, *The Alps: An Environmental History*, trans. Rose Hadshar (Medford, MA: Polity, 2019); Robert McC. Netting, *Balancing on an Alp: Ecological Change and Continuity in a Swiss Mountain Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
33. Pieter S. De Ganan, "The Animal Economy" (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), ch. 3.
34. De Ganan, "The Animal Economy," 131–39.
35. Brett L. Walker, "Meiji Modernization, Scientific Agriculture, and the Destruction of Japan's Hokkaido Wolf," *Environmental History* 9 (2004): 248–74.
36. There had already been some earlier attempts in the late Edo period to cultivate the valley; see Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 71–82.
37. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 84–85.
38. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 90.
39. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 91.
40. Weston, *The Playground of the Far East*, 175–77.
41. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 93–94.
42. Wakamatsu Nobuhiko and Iwata Shūji, "Kamikōchi bokujō," in *Kamikōchi no shizenshi*, ed. Kamikōchi shizenshi kenkyūkai (Matsumoto: Tōkai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2016), 125–26.
43. Marc Landry, "Environmental Consequences of the Peace: The Great War, Dammed Lakes, and Hydraulic History in the Eastern Alps," *Environmental History* 20 (July 2015): 422–48. The term *ecological modernity* describes the intensified exploitation of the natural world through industrial processes and markets while also implying that a "pristine nature" existed elsewhere. See Miller, *The Nature of the Beasts*, 2.
44. Mathieu, *The Alps*, 117–19.
45. Murayama Kenichi, "Shōwa shoki no kamikōchi: suiryoku kaihatsu, shizen hogo, kokuritsu kōen," *Chiki brand kenkyū* 4 (2008): 4–8.
46. Murakushi, *Kokuritsu kōen seiritsu shi no kenkyū*, 276–78.
47. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 183.
48. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 184.
49. Yokoyama, *Kamikōchi Monogatari*, 186.
50. Emiko Kakiuchi, "Cultural Heritage Protection System in Japan: Current Issues and Prospects for the Future," *Gdańskie Studia Azji Wschodniej* 10 (January 2017): 2–3.
51. Thomas R. H. Havens, *Parkscapes: Green Spaces in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 54–64; Murayama, "Shōwa shoki no kamikōchi," 11–12.

52. Jones, "The Role of the Shin Nihon Hakkei"; Tom Jones, "The Most Beautiful Valley in Japan": Kamikōchi, the Japan Alps, and National Parks in Japan," *Environment & Society Portal, Arcadia* (Summer 2016), no. 8.
53. Tsuyoshi Tamura, "Kokuritsu kōen ron (3)," *Asahi Shinbun*, September 9, 1921.
54. Cited after Murayama, "Shōwa shoki no kamikōchi," 14–15.
55. Keizō Miyashita, *Nihon Arupusu: Mitate no bunkashi* (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1997), 193–94.
56. Havens, *Parkscapes*, 66–72; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 203.
57. Havens, *Parkscapes*, 76–77.
58. Kupper, *Creating Wilderness*; Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*.
59. Murayama, "Shōwa shoki no kamikōchi," 280–81.
60. Fumihiko Sunamoto, "Sangaku hoteru toshite no kamikōchi hoteru no keikaku," *Nihon kenchikugakukai gijutsu hōkokushū* 70 (2005): 177–82.
61. *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Hotel to Be Built for Foreign Visitors at Kamikochi, Famed Resort in Nippon Alps," January 13, 1933; *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Kamikochi Hotel near Completion," September 12, 1933; *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Kamikochi Hotel to Open Thursday," October 5, 1933.
62. *The Japan Times & Mail*, "The Japan Alps," June 12, 1933. This was, of course, not entirely correct, as some places in the European Alps had for centuries been famed for its natural hot springs. For the example of St. Moritz, see, Dylan Jim Esson, "Selling the Alpine Frontier: The Development of Winter Resorts, Sports, and Tourism in Europe and America, 1865–1941" (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
63. Rose McKee, "Kamikochi Turns a Wintry Breath upon Mid-summer," *The Japan Times & Mail*, August 17, 1936.
64. McKee, "Kamikochi Turns a Wintry Breath."
65. *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Two National Parks of Japan and America," August 7, 1935.
66. *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Extensive Publicity Campaign Planned to Attract Foreigners in Orient to Nippon," June 28, 1934.
67. *The Japan Times & Mail*, "Comments on Passing Topics," September 2, 1935.
68. Havens, *Parkscapes*, 78.
69. In 2014, 1.27 million visitors were registered, but this number includes possible multiple users of the same facilities where the data were collected; see Abhik Chakraborty, "Emerging Patterns of Mountain Tourism in a Dynamic Landscape: Insights from Kamikochi Valley in Japan," *Land* 9 (April 2020): 3.
70. Mokudai Kuniyasu, "Kamikōchi no mirai wo kangaeru," in *Kamikōchi no shizenshi*, ed. Kamikōchi shizenshi kenkyūkai (Matsumoto: Tōkai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2016), 174–81.
71. Chakraborty, "Emerging Patterns," 7.
72. Kamikōchi shizenshi kenkyūkai, ed., *Kamikōchi no shizenshi* (Matsumoto: Tōkai Daigaku Shuppanbu, 2016).