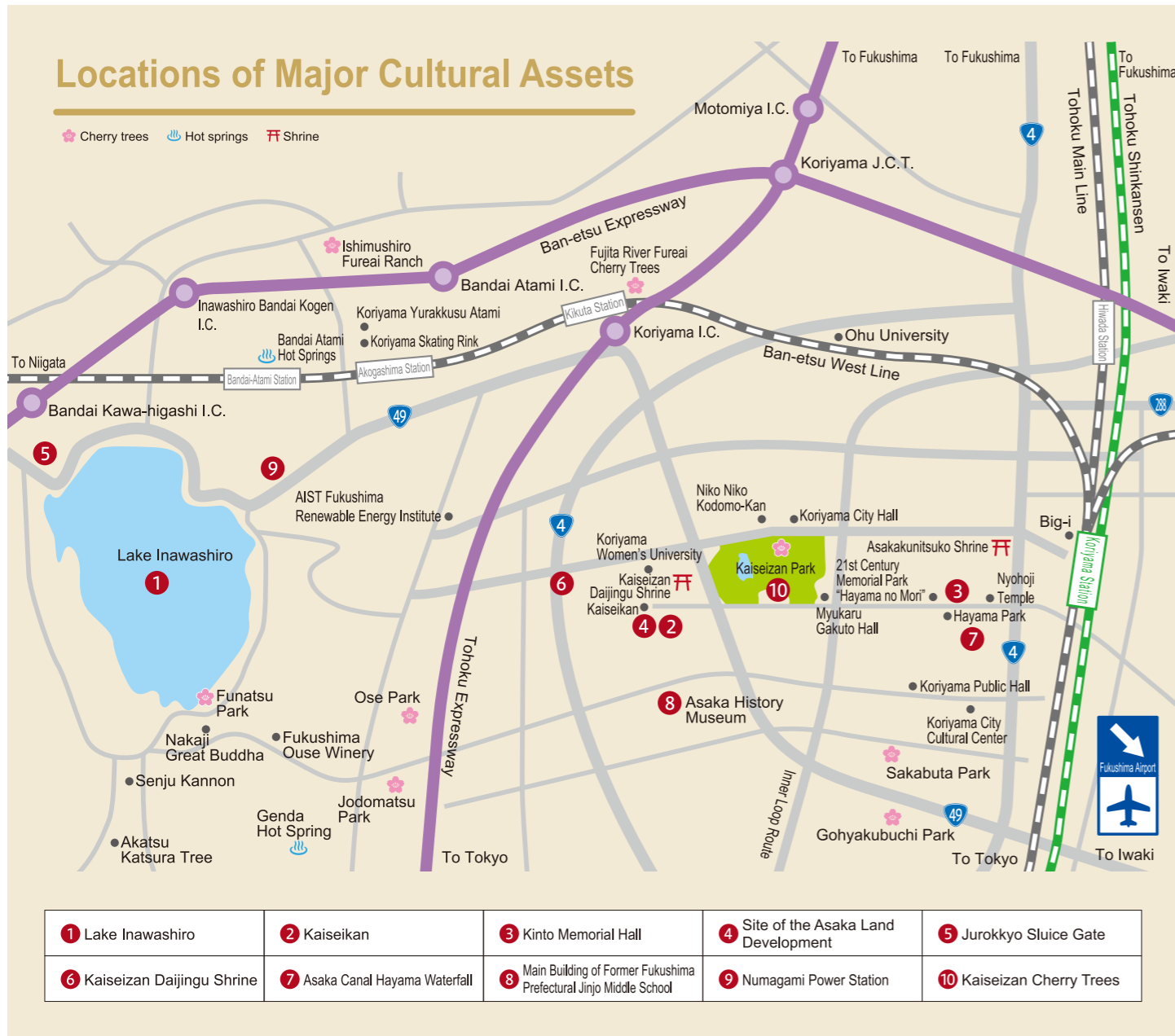


Locations of Major Cultural Assets



The story that connects Lake Inawashiro, the Asaka Canal and the Asaka Land Development



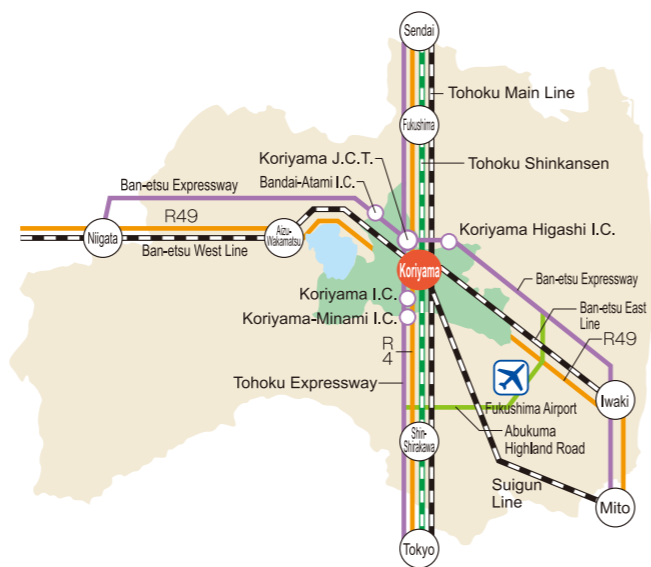
The single canal that opened up the future

—Okubo Toshimichi's 'final dream' and the tracks of the pioneers;
Koriyama and Inawashiro —



ACCESS <Primary Transportation Options>

By Train		By Car	
<p>80 minutes by Tohoku Shinkansen</p> <p>From Tokyo Station to Koriyama Station</p> <p>From Sendai Station to Koriyama Station: About 20 minutes by Tohoku Shinkansen, 15 minutes by Tohoku Shinkansen</p> <p>From Iwaki Station to Koriyama Station: About 100 minutes on the Banestu East Line</p> <p>From Aizu-Wakamatsu Station to Koriyama Station: About 80 minutes on the Banestu West Line</p>	<p>Urawa Exit: About 150 minutes on the Tohoku Expressway</p> <p>Sendai Minami Exit: About 90 minutes on the Tohoku Expressway</p> <p>Iwaki Exit: About 50 minutes on the Ban-etsu Expressway</p> <p>Aizu-Wakamatsu Exit: About 40 minutes on the Ban-etsu Expressway</p>	<p>Sapporo (New Chitose Airport) ↔ Fukushima: One round trip / day (ANA)</p> <p>Number of flights: One round trip / day (ANA)</p> <p>Time required: About 1 hour 20 minutes</p>	<p>Osaka (Itami airport) ↔ Fukushima: Four round-trips / day (IBEX / ANA)</p> <p>Number of flights: Four round-trips / day (IBEX / ANA)</p> <p>Time required: About 1 hour 15 minutes</p>



Japan Heritage 'The Single Canal' Promotion Council
Koriyama City, Culture & Sports Department, International Policy Division
TEL024-924-3711





JAPAN HERITAGE

日本遺産

Japan Heritage

Heritage is a connection to our past: a legacy of our cultural and natural history, and an invaluable source of inspiration to pass on to future generations.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs' Japan Heritage aims to promote our unique cultural traditions, encourage use of our national cultural properties, and to revitalize regional economies.

Japan's tangible and intangible cultural properties have been preserved through narratives based on unique regional histories and traditions.

By recognizing these stories as Japan Heritage, the Agency plans to promote these historical legacies and to provide comprehensive support so that this heritage may be effectively preserved and maintained.

Aims:

- To recognize the narratives that bind Japan's regional cultural properties
- To maintain and use these regional cultural properties in a cohesive manner
- To strategically and effectively promote the narratives pertaining



Okubo Toshimichi

A leader during the Meiji Restoration. In 1876, when he came to the Tohoku area in preparation for Emperor Meiji's trip, Lord of Home Affairs Okubo was amazed at the development work on the Asaka Plains being carried out by Fukushima Prefecture and Kaiseisha. He then decided that he would launch a large-scale national canal development project there. While in March 1878 Okubo submitted a project proposal and the government allocated funds, he was assassinated before the project began.

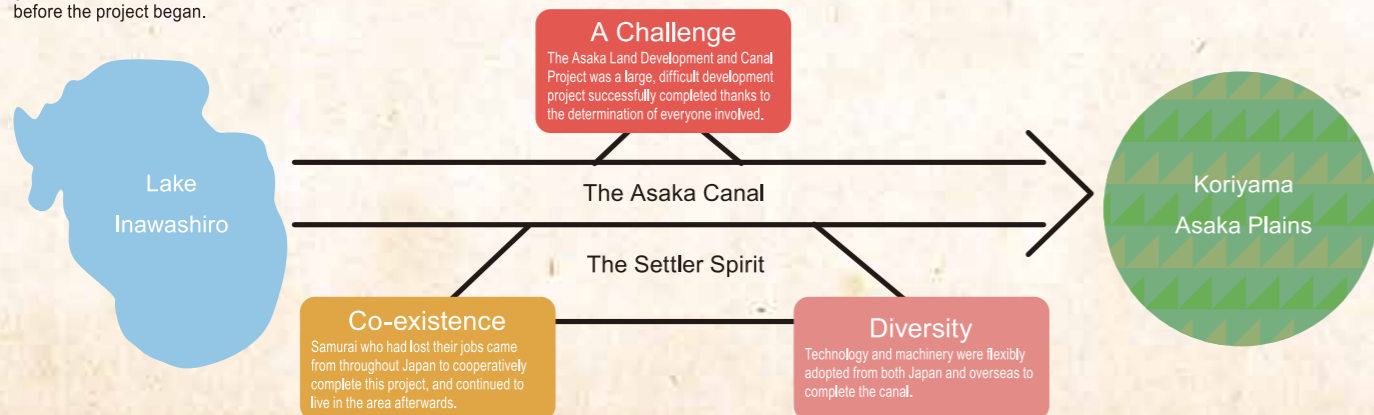
The Asaka Canal

The Asaka Canal brings water for agricultural and other purposes from Lake Inawashiro, located in the center of Fukushima Prefecture, through the Ou Mountain Range, and finally to the city of Koriyama. Its roots can be traced back to the 1868 Meiji Restoration.

After witnessing the development project underway in Fukushima Prefecture, Okubo Toshimichi, at the time a leading Japanese politician, was prompted to launch one on the Asaka region in order to help unemployed former samurai, as well as modernize the area through new industry. While he died before the project began, his dream became a reality with the Asaka Land Development and Canal Project, a canal bringing water to Koriyama from Lake Inawashiro to the west.

The Asaka Canal brought together cutting-edge technology from overseas, as well as people, materials, and skills from the area and throughout Japan. Thanks to this project, lake flooding was brought under control, local cuisine was further enriched with rice and carp, and textile and other new industries developed after the subsequent building of hydroelectric power plants.

Along with Asaka's harmonious diversity, Okubo's vision for the future, and cherry blossom trees, this canal continues to shape the area today.



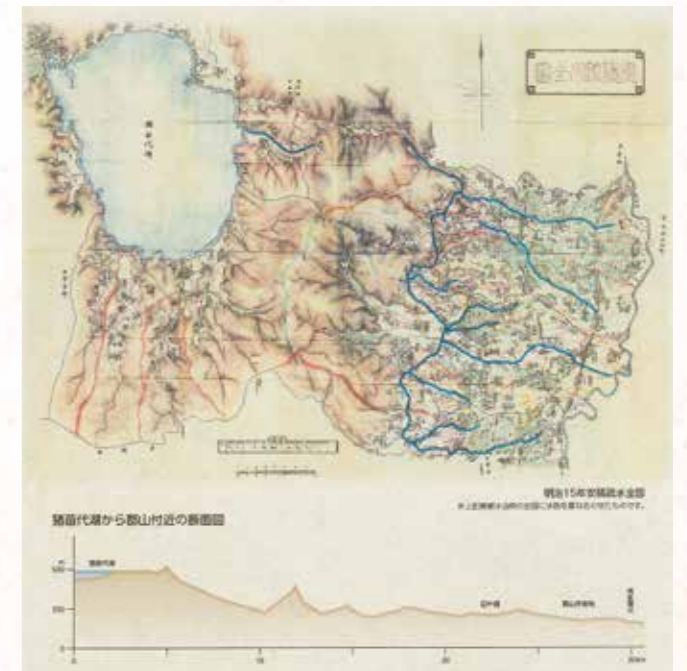
① Lake Inawashiro

Also known as Tenkyoko (literally, "clear lake that reflects the sky like a mirror"), this beautiful lake is located to the west of Koriyama. Its elevation (514 meters above sea level) was used to bring water to the Asaka Plains. It provides water for agriculture and daily use, and has contributed to the development of hydroelectric power.

An Amazing Lake

Lake Inawashiro is a large lake 514 meters above sea level known for its abundant, clear water that reflects the sky like a mirror.

Even during the Edo period (1603–1868), people wanted to bring its water to the Asaka Plains to address water shortages. At the time the plains were parched and there were fights over water. In some places, people would launch fireworks to pray for rain and rich harvests. However, the Ou Mountain Range was to the east of Lake Inawashiro, meaning that water only flowed west and not to the eastern plains. Since the water interests of those living to the west were in tension with those of people on the plains, creating a canal was thought to be the stuff of dreams.



1882 Asaka Canal Map

This map shows the completed Asaka Canal. The blue lines are the canal. Topography and the elevation difference makes water flow north to south. The canal splits at seven points so as to provide water throughout the area.



A Pre-Canal Map and Today's Abundant Koriyama

To the left is a map of the Asaka region from approximately 150 years ago. The two characters (不毛, "barren") written all over the map indicate that crops would not grow. The photograph to the right is Koriyama today, which is known for its abundant rice. As you can see, it is completely different.



Kaiseisha Employees

Kaiseisha was a company started by Koriyama merchants to develop the area. They are wearing not Japanese clothing but morning dress, a reflection of their desire to develop the area while incorporating the new.



③ Kinto Memorial Hall

This elementary school was completed in 1876 in the same imitation-Western style as the Kaiseikan. The building standing today is a replica, serving as a facility where people can learn about the history of the time.

■ Entrance fee: Free
 ■ Open: Thursdays (reservations required)
 ■ TEL: +81-24-924-2661



② Kaiseikan

This Western-style building was built in 1874. It housed an office that played a central role in the development of Asaka. Builders at the time created it based on pictures depicting Western architecture, amongst other materials. When the emperor came to this area he used it as a lodging and resting place.

■ Entrance fee: ¥200
 ■ Open: Tuesday to Sunday
 ■ TEL: +81-24-923-2157

Okubo Toshimichi's Dream

In 1868, Japan underwent a major modern restructuring called the Meiji Restoration. In 1871, the Iwakura Mission went to Europe and the United States to understand how Japan could modernize, and its members were overwhelmed at the difference between the power of Japan and that of the countries they visited. They keenly felt the need to develop economic and military might as well as cultivate new industries.

Yasuba Yasukazu, who would subsequently become Fukushima Prefecture's governor, as well as Lord of Home Affairs Okubo Toshimichi, participated in the Iwakura Mission. They became convinced that the source of Japan's advancement would be the development of plains and the promotion of industry. Yasuba would first return to Japan and begin developing Fukushima.

In 1873, wealthy merchants formed "Kaiseisha" in response to the call for development and went to work. They increased crop yields by installing irrigation ponds, growing fruit from overseas such as grapes, and introducing modern Western agricultural methods. The population then increased, as did the number of villages. Kaiseikan, where the development office was located, is a symbol of the Asaka Plains' development. The building was built in a quasi-Western style based on ukiyo-e images and other materials. Its employees wore Western-style clothing, and developed the area while actively incorporating Western culture. Visitors get a

sense of the enterprising spirit of the pioneers that, not being bound by existing practices, incorporated the new.

In 1876, Lord of Home Affairs Okubo Toshimichi visited Fukushima Prefecture in preparation for Emperor Meiji's trip to Tohoku. He was amazed at the success of the development project led by the prefecture and Kaiseisha. He thought to himself, "Here we have a key place for transportation that links north, south, east, and west, Lake Inawashiro with its abundant water, and enterprising developers." Out of multiple candidate sites, he therefore decided to launch on the Asaka Plains a model project for the nation that would link two post-Meiji Restoration measures: the modernization of the state and relief for samurai who lost their jobs as a result of reforms. He submitted his proposal in March of 1878, and the government allocated funds for it. However, days before the project was scheduled to begin, Okubo was assassinated. It is said that right up to his death Okubo met with the Fukushima governor and passionately described his dreams regarding development.

This dream of Okubo was turned into a reality by those who had been developing the area and the people who knew of Okubo's wishes. This Asaka Land Development and Asaka Canal Project became the Meiji government's first national agricultural irrigation project.

A New Challenge

In November 1878, former samurai families began settling in the Asaka Plains. Approximately two thousand people came from nine domains around the country, including Kurume in Kyushu. Settlers brought with them the gods enshrined at their hometown shrines and built new ones. They joined forces to work on the area's development with these shrines providing spiritual homes. This was particularly true of Kaiseizan Daijingu Shrine, which enshrines a god from Ise Jingu, one of the most distinguished shrines in Japan.

In 1879, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at this shrine to pray for people's safety in and the success of this construction project, which was larger than ever before seen. First work began on the sluice, which was key for the success of the Asaka Canal project. Named Jurokkyo Sluice Gate, it would adjust the water flow between the Asaka Plains and the Aizu Basin, which is located to the west of the lake. Under the supervision of the Dutch engineer Cornelis Johannes van Doorn, modern civil engineering technologies were used. It adopted an innovative construction method that was a first for Japan: while up until then construction had generally been carried out while drawing from people's experience, this dam used a theory-based design. With cutting-edge instruments measurements were taken, and based on this data aspects of the design were scientifically verified. It was thereby proven that even if

water was sent to the Asaka Plains, the amount of water flowing to the west of the lake would not decrease. It helped solve the long-standing water supply problem.

It was also found that the sluice could control water to prevent Lake Inawashiro from flooding. Coming to know of this, people from far away on the shore who were troubled by floods came to participate in the construction work as volunteers. There were over five hundred of them, and the sluice was completed in about one year.

The most difficult part of the canal project was digging a 585 meter-long tunnel through the Ou Mountains and beginning to send the water through it to the Asaka Plains. Technology from overseas was used for this purpose, such as dynamite to break up hard rock, a steam pump to suck out underground water, and cement for reinforcement. Many engineers from around Japan—e.g. Kagoshima, Oita, Tokyo, Yokohama, Iwate, Niigata—came together, combining their abilities to construct the tunnel.

The canal at last went into operation thanks to the developers who took on this challenge of linking the Asaka Plains and Lake Inawashiro. Their efforts served as a model for similar canal projects carried out in other prefectures such as the Nasu Canal and Lake Biwa Canal.



④ Site of the Asaka Land Development

This was the site of settlers' houses, which still can be found today. Some people came from the prefectures of Tottori and Ehime—over 700 kilometers away as the crow flies—to settle here.

■ Entrance fee: ¥200 ■ Open: Tuesday to Sunday
 ■ TEL: +81-24-923-2157



⑥ Kaiseizan Daijingu Shrine

This shrine was built as a spiritual home for people involved in the development of Asaka. Its god is from Ise Jingu (a shrine with a long and distinguished history in Mie Prefecture that enshrines the sun god and god of food, clothing, and shelter).

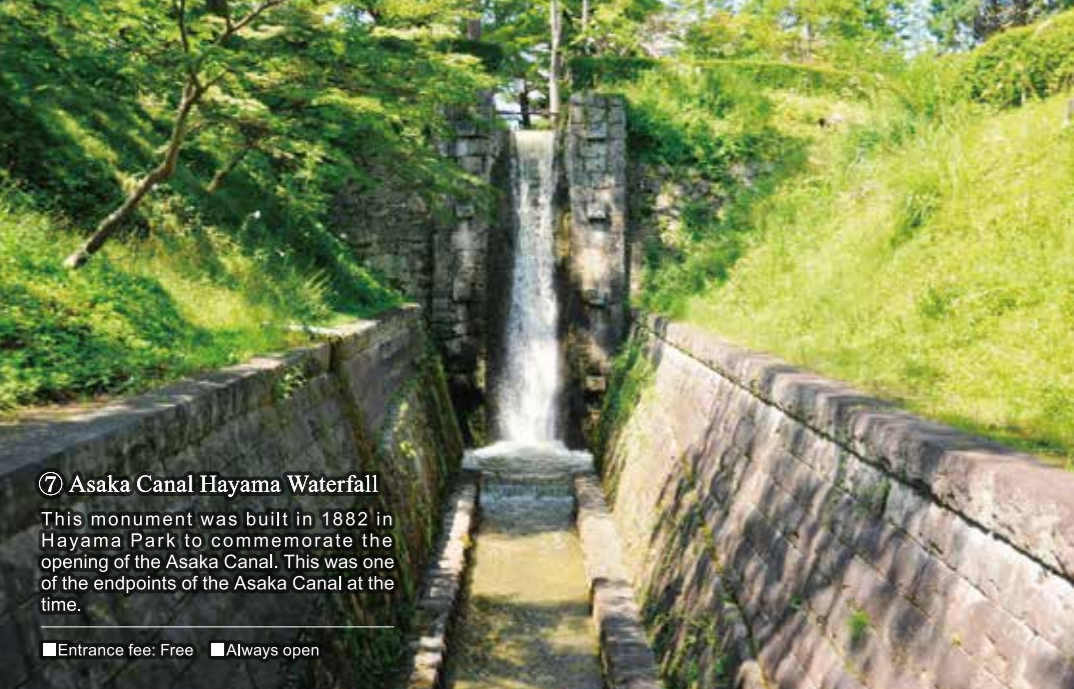
■ Entrance fee: Free ■ Always open



⑤ Jurokkyo Sluice Gate

This sluice adjusts the level of Lake Inawashiro's water so that it can be sent to the Asaka Plains. Its construction was the first step in building the Asaka Canal. At the time it had sixteen stone arches and therefore was named the "Sixteen Bridge" (Jurokkyo) Sluice Gate.

■ Entrance fee: None ■ Always open



⑦ Asaka Canal Hayama Waterfall

This monument was built in 1882 in Hayama Park to commemorate the opening of the Asaka Canal. This was one of the endpoints of the Asaka Canal at the time.

■ Entrance fee: Free ■ Always open



Asaka Canal's Hayama Waterfall soon after it was built.



⑩ Kaiseizan Cherry Trees

Kaiseizan Park is one of the prefecture's most famous spots to see cherry trees in bloom. The trees were planted by Kaiseisha when engaging in development work. Even today around thirteen hundred trees bloom every spring.

■ Entrance fee: Free ■ Always open

The Foundation of Dreams

In 1882 the Asaka Canal—52.1 km long with 78 km of branches—was completed. It took approximately three years to do so with the effort of 850,000 people and a third of the national civil engineering budget.* Tens of thousands of people came to the canal opening ceremony to celebrate the success of this project.

With the canal providing irrigation water, rice acreage grew from four thousand hectares to, at one point, over ten thousand. Furthermore, yields increased tenfold from four thousand five hundred tons, making the area incredibly abundant. With pure water flowing year round, local food culture was greatly enriched as well. Now the area is the nation's top breeder of carp.

In 1898, the Numagami Power Station was built to take advantage of the canal's elevation difference. For the first time in Japan, there was a power station that could send high-voltage power over a long distance (eleven thousand volts over twenty-three kilometers). The nation was amazed. This supply allowed silk, cotton, and other industries to develop in Koriyama. The Jurokkyo Sluice Gate was also used to help send power from a new power station far away to the Kanto region, supporting Japan's modern development. Furthermore, with the Asaka Plains now developed, people began to move there. Schools were built to educate younger generations, and banks were opened and railroads constructed.

The Asaka Land Development and Canal Project succeeded thanks to the area being in a key location for transit, and the incorporation of diverse peoples, materials, technologies, and cultures from Japan and the world. Thanks to the rapid development of agriculture, industry, and commerce, these characteristics remain with us today. Okubo Toshimichi spoke passionately of this project, seeing it as important for Japan's modernization. The area's characteristics served as the foundation that fulfilled his final dream.



⑧ Main Building of Former Fukushima Prefectural Jinjo Middle School

Completed in 1889 as Fukushima Prefectural Jinjo Middle School. At the time it was the most advanced Western-style building in the prefecture. Currently it serves as a history museum, so people can also study the interior of the building.

■ Entrance fee: ¥300 ■ Open: Tuesday to Sunday
■ TEL: +81-24-938-0778



⑨ Numagami Power Station

This hydroelectric power station makes use of the elevation difference between Lake Inawashiro and the Asaka Canal. It used cutting-edge technology of its time and was the first station in Japan that could send high-voltage power over long distances. Its electricity greatly contributed to the development of the textile industry in Japan.

■ Entrance fee: Free ■ Always open

Developers' Hopes Became a Reality

The Asaka Canal was completed by settlers and engineers from throughout Japan, the government, and Asaka residents. When Fukushima Prefecture and Kaiseisha were engaging in development work, Kaiseisha planted thirty-nine hundred Yoshino Cherry Trees around an irrigation pond. Having witnessed over one hundred forty years of history, every spring they still envelope Kaiseizan Park, where the pond was located, in

a sea of pink and white. A Kaiseisha company document notes, "What were small seedlings in our time will eventually become large trees, and their beautiful blossoms will soothe people's hearts and minds." This spirit of caring for the future opened up a new era, and still can be found here today.

Sightseeing, Dining, and Gift Information Website



FUKUNAKA15
<https://fukunaka15.jp/>



This website provides readers with information in eight languages on dining, shopping, lodging, sightseeing, service, and other facilities in fifteen areas, including Koriyama City and Lake Inawashiro.

○ Available languages: English, Korean, Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Thai, Vietnamese, Spanish, Dutch
○ Areas covered: Koriyama City, Sukagawa City, Tamura City, Motomiya City, Otama Village, Kagamiishi Town, Tenei Village, Ishikawa Town, Tamakawa Village, Hirata Village, Asakawa Town, Furudono Town, Miharu Town, Ono Town, Inawashiro Town



Japan Heritage
'Asaka Canal'
Certified Brands
https://www.city.koriyama.lg.jp/bunka_sports_kanko/bunka/12136.html



Products and organizations with a deep connection to the elements found in the Japan Heritage 'Asaka Canal' story (challenges, diversity, co-existence) are certified as "Asaka Canal" brands. Be sure to look for them when shopping.

* The total cost of the project was a third of the year's civil engineering budget.

Locations of Major Cultural Assets

🌸 Cherry trees 🌊 Hot springs 🏯 Shrine



1 Lake Inawashiro	2 Kaiseikan	3 Kinto Memorial Hall	4 Site of the Asaka Land Development	5 Jurokkyo Sluice Gate
6 Kaiseizan Daijingu Shrine	7 Asaka Canal Hayama Waterfall	8 Main Building of Former Fukushima Prefectural Jinjo Middle School	9 Numagami Power Station	10 Kaiseizan Cherry Trees

ACCESS <Primary Transportation Options>

By Train

Tokyo Station	80 minutes by Tohoku Shinkansen	Koriyama Station
Sendai Station	About 20 minutes by Tohoku Shinkansen to Fukushima Station, then 15 minutes to Koriyama Station	
Iwaki Station	About 100 minutes on the Banestu East Line	
Aizu-Wakamatsu Station	About 80 minutes on the Banestu West Line	

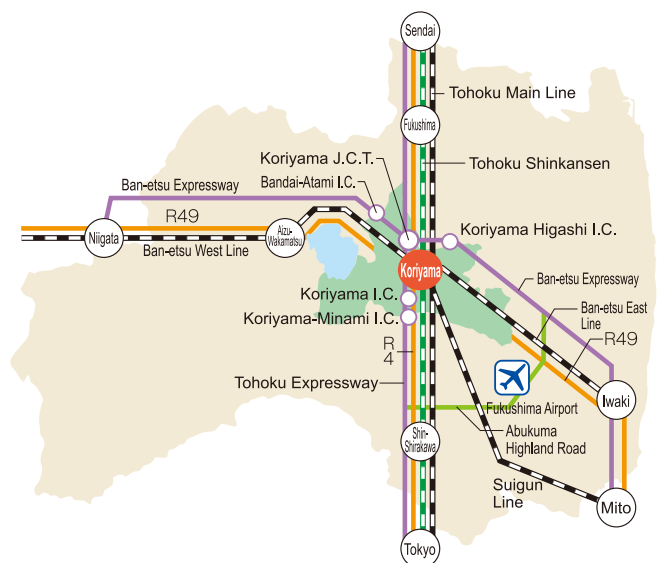
By Car

Urawa Exit	About 150 minutes on the Tohoku Expressway	Koriyama Exit
Sendai Minami Exit	About 90 minutes on the Tohoku Expressway	
Iwaki Exit	About 50 minutes on the Ban-estu Expressway	
Aizu-Wakamatsu Exit	About 40 minutes on the Ban-estu Expressway	

By Airplane

Sapporo (New Chitose Airport) ↔ Fukushima	
Number of flights	One round trip / day (ANA)
Time required	About 1 hour 20 minutes

Osaka (Itami airport) ↔ Fukushima	
Number of flights	Four round-trips / day (IBEX / ANA)
Time required	About 1 hour 15 minutes



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Japan Heritage Portal Site (English)



Koriyama City Promotion Instagram Account