

# 3. West Shore Area

## 1 Ju-on Bell

The Ju-on Bell was cast over a century ago in Germany, the home of Curt Netto, an engineer with ties to Kosaka when it was one of Japan's largest mining towns. The bell is hung from four pillars 12 meters high, where a gentle melodic rings out over the lake every hour from 8:00–18:00. The music is a three-minute song called *The Lake Looks Like Eyes*, which was written by Tsuchida Keishiro with lyrics by environmental journalist Akio Mishima.



## 2 Wainai-jinja Shrine

Sadayuki Wainai and his wife Katsu are enshrined here at Wainai-jinja Shrine, which was originally named Shoryo-jinja Shrine. Lakeside residents originally built it out of appreciation for Katsu when she died in 1907. Fifteen years later, in 1922 when Sadayuki passed away, he was enshrined alongside his bride. The shrine was renamed Wainai-jinja Shrine in 1933 and is still celebrated by lakeside residents today.

## 3 Mt. Shiroji

On the western outer rim of Lake Towada's caldera, there are fantastic hiking courses that provide views of both Mt. Iwaki and Mt. Iwate. Two courses begin from Okawatai: the Misogage course and the Okawatai course. There is also a hiking course along the Jukai Line. A one-way hike on any of these routes takes about 2.5–3 hours.

## 4 Chapel

This chapel was built in 1920 by American missionary Kenneth Viall. In 1961, the chapel was visited by then-American ambassador to Japan Edwin Oldfather Reischauer. It rarely sees visitors but is used when there are campers and visitors to Lake Towada and Viall Cottage. A Nazarene convent facility is also located nearby.

## 5 Okawatai

A sightseeing base for exploring the west shore of Lake Towada, complete with a large, 50-car parking area and public toilets. It is the largest park on the shores of Lake Towada with an area of 31,700 square meters. From Okawatai Pier, you can catch a glimpse of the lake in all of its glory, together with the Nakayama and Ogura Peninsulas. In mid-May, blooming Sargent's cherry trees dot the hillsides for a beautiful panorama of color.

## 6 Towada Prince Hotel

This hotel on the promenade leading up to Lake Towada has a comfortable lounge that affords sweeping views of Lake Towada just past its sprawling garden lawn. Enjoy the picturesque views and the hotel's popular homemade apple pies. The hotel architecture is built from raw lumber in a log-cabin style that is rare today. Expansive views can also be seen from the large outdoor bath, which is open to the general public.

## 7 Namariyama Pier

One minute into a path on the Towada Hotel side is the Namariyama Pier. The magnificent views of the lake's emerald green surface are the definition of picturesque, reflecting the igneous tuff that forms the lakebed.

## 8 Towada Hotel

Opened in 1939, Towada Hotel's main structure is also known as the "Akita Cedar Palace" and is a registered national tangible cultural property. Traditional carpenters from three prefectures across northern Tohoku built a magnificent atrium in the lobby without using a single nail, which is in itself a stunning architectural feat.

## 9 Haku-untei View Point

It's a 60-minute hike up to this overlook. Be sure to wear proper hiking gear and go together with a local guide up the difficult mountain paths. It's a steep hike suited for experienced walkers, but the vistas from atop this point are second to none, making it a popular spot to take in a view of the lake in its entirety.

## 10 Hakka Pass View Point

With a large parking area, this view point is an easy stop if you're traveling by car. From an elevation of 631 meters, you can enjoy panoramas of Lake Towada and magnificent views of the outer rim of the Lake Towada caldera and the Southern Hakkoda Mountains behind it. Visit the Ministry of the Environment's website to see current conditions via a webcam that provides live streaming video of Lake Towada from Hakka Pass.

## Kosaka Mining Office

The symbol of Kosaka Town, this mine was the most profitable mine in Japan in the early 1900s. The mine's office building has been transformed into an important museum that tells the history of Kosaka. Made entirely of natural Akita cedar, this three-story building is an excellent example of Renaissance Revival architecture. It also incorporates a variety of cultural styles, which makes it quite interesting architecturally. It has been designated a heritage of industrial modernization and is also an important cultural property of Japan. Make a reservation to try on 19th-century fashion from a collection of over 100 dresses, which can be used for photoshoots inside the building.

■ Kosaka Mining Office ☎ 0186-29-5522

## Nanataki Falls

Counted among Japan's top 100 waterfalls, this famous waterfall is one of Japan's best, dropping more than 60 meters over seven steps, flowing down from near the top of Lake Towada's outer rim. At its foot is Nanataki-jinja Shrine, which is dedicated to the Ryujin dragon god, and a small water mill, which both give this spot a rustic charm. Across the way is the Michi-no-Eki (Roadside Station) Kosaka-Nanataki, where visitors can stop for food and souvenirs.

## Korakukan

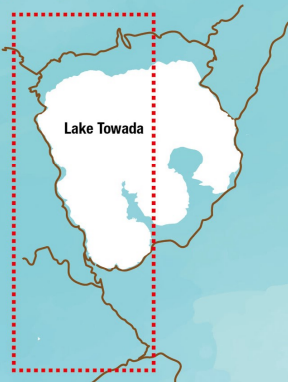
Registered as an important cultural property of Japan, the Korakukan was built as a welfare facility for the Kosaka Mine in 1910 and is still used today as one of Japan's oldest wooden theaters. Not only can visitors see regularly scheduled performances and kabuki plays, but they can also get a behind-the-scenes look at rare stage settings and dressing rooms on the guided tours given by *kuroko*, the black-clad stagehands of the Japanese theater.

■ Korakukan ☎ 0186-29-3732



Closed during winter

Closed during winter



## Sadayuki Wainai

Lake Towada was said to have been completely devoid of fish until the latter part of the 19th century, when local Kosaka miner Sadayuki Wainai decided to try his luck at establishing a fishery at Lake Towada. After quitting the mine, he incurred a huge amount of debt and tried countless times to stock Lake Towada with various kinds of fish but was met with failure at every turn. In 1902, he put his final hopes on the *himemasu*, a type of kokanee salmon native to Hokkaido. He bought eggs, and when they hatched the following spring, he released the young fish into the lake. Three years later, in the autumn of 1905, the *himemasu* returned to their birthplace in droves. This was the moment that Sadayuki knew his efforts had paid off — and these fish would indeed repay the many debts he had incurred over his 21-year endeavor. After this, Sadayuki went on to spend the rest of his life promoting the tourism development of Lake Towada, and today he is enshrined together with his wife Katsu at Wainai-jinja Shrine. Thanks to his efforts, Lake Towada's *himemasu*, too, has become a local specialty that is loved far and wide.

Surrounded by indigenous *katsura* trees and Japanese oak trees on the shores of Lake Towada, Oide Campground is the perfect place for outdoor activities with plenty of tent sites, electric RV sites, and outdoor kitchen facilities.  
■ Oide Campground ☎ 0176-75-2368 (Campground open late April to early November)

See here for the latest information