Mounting Modernization: Itakura Katsunobu, the Hokkaido University Alpine Club and Mountaineering in Pre-War Hokkaido

David A. Fedman

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近代化を登る――板倉勝宣、北海道大学アルペンクラブ、戦前の北海道における登山

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Writing in 1919, shortly after his first solo winter ascent of Yarigatake (3180 meters), the then 24 year-old alpinist Itakura Katsunobu waxed poetic on the Japan Alps:

> At the seat of heaven
> where peaks and valleys come into view
> I climb in a sea of whiteness
> to see inside myself.[1]

To be sure, Itakura's solo winter ascent marked a significant step in the advancement of alpinism: the popularization and refinement of winter season mountaineering. For decades, Yarigatake had been considered "the mountaineers' mountain," a test piece for any aspiring alpinist. Kojima Usui's successful climb in 1902 marked "the dawn of modern mountaineering," despite evidence that others, including the Buddhist monk Banryū, had beat him to the summit decades earlier. In 1907, alpine luminary Kojima Usui and a team of climbers from the Nihon Sangaku Kai (Alpine Club of Japan) were the first to summit in winter conditions. And then came Itakura: a solo climber on a winter peak, as Japanese alpinists submitted to the unrelenting call to new extremes.[2]

Two climbers approaching the corniced summit of Yarigatake. Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Sapporo, Hokkaido.

Like many adventurous young men in the 1910s, Itakura joined the ranks of a cadre of ambitious mountaineers putting up winter first ascents in the Alps. In contrast to their predecessors, this generation of climbers was singularly focused on Japan's virgin peaks, pulling out all stops to be the first to summit them—in season or out. By the 1920s, alpinism (arupinizumu), and its attendant philosophy, had drastically transformed: the previous generation of alpine enthusiasts and recreational climbers gave way to a younger breed of versatile (katsudōteki), competitive (kyōgiteki), and radicalized (kagekiteki) climbers.

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century the locus of Japanese alpinism was the vertiginous Shinano highlands, a towering spine

of peaks cutting through central Honshu. As Japan's most prominent mountain range and a beacon for foreign climbers, the Japan Alps drew the nation's top climbers to Honshu. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Japan Alps have long had a commanding influence over scholarship on mountaineering in Japan. A cursory survey of Japanese mountaineering literature reveals the centrality of the Alps to the development of the sport throughout the pre-war period. This study, however, contends that beginning in the late 1920s, the nexus of cutting-edge mountaineering shifted to Hokkaido's remote backcountry ridges, as Japanese climbers began to experiment with and refine expeditionary climbing in places like the Daisetsuzan and Hidaka ranges.[3]

This myopic focus on the Japan Alps has undoubtedly obscured Itakura Katsunobu's pioneering legacy in Hokkaido. After enrolling in the geography department of Hokkaido University in 1919, Itakura set off on a little known winter mountaineering campaign to take on, in his own words, "Hokkaido's unconquered snow peaks." By year's end Itakura had mobilized a skilled team of climbers and successfully ascended winter peaks in some of Japan's most extreme conditions. In this way, Hokkaido found a new ambassador for winter season alpinism in Itakura; and Itakura found a new vessel for alpinism in the Academic Alpine Club of Hokkaido (AACH).[4]

Alpinists like Itakura and his contemporaries at the AACH provide critical insight into the cultural milieu of pre-war Hokkaido. Their exposure to what Brett Walker aptly calls "the scientific station" of Hokkaido placed them in the confluence of the prevailing currents of science and technology that set their roots in Hokkaido and, in turn, cast the mold for modern Japan. As Kären Wigen has shown with the Japan Alps, mountaineering in the late nineteenth century became a means to modern "enlightenment"—propagated by the powerful memes of science, literature, imagination, and above all else, modernity.[5] In Meiji era Japan (1868-1912), this march to modernity was fueled by a breakneck campaign of "civilization and enlightenment," and, by the late nineteenth century, mountaineering provided a means to both—at least south of Hokkaido. It was not until decades later that alpine enthusiasts took to Hokkaido's peaks to begin a process of scientific modernization that left an indelible imprint on Japan's mountaineering history and Hokkaido's cultural terrain.

Using the story of the Academic Alpine Club of Hokkaido (AACH), this paper explores the mountains and those who scaled them as a lens into Hokkaido's mountaineering culture and its evolving relationship with the rest of Japan. Notably, the AACH was the first mountaineering club of its kind in Hokkaido, and as such it merits further study as both a pioneering institution and a representative slice of mountaineering culture in this period.[6] Furthermore, as the only official record keeper of mountaineering in this period, the AACH archive—a veritable museum of early mountaineering—provides a rare glimpse into the academic rigor, the scientific experimentation, and the search for adventure that defined Hokkaido's frontier. And yet, despite the AACH's central role in the origination of alpinism in Hokkaido, its vast resources have not been presented in any major treatment on mountaineering history, in English or Japanese.

Long before first ascents were put up across the island, indigenous Ainu populations, Japanese explorers, and government members of the Kaitakushi (Hokkaido Development Agency) trekked through the highlands of Hokkaido—each with different motivations and aims. In the 1920s, however, Hokkaido's alpine landscape began to change: pitons were hammered, ropeways went up, and passes were abandoned for peaks. As Kären Wigen has observed, "turn-of-the century alpine enthusiasts

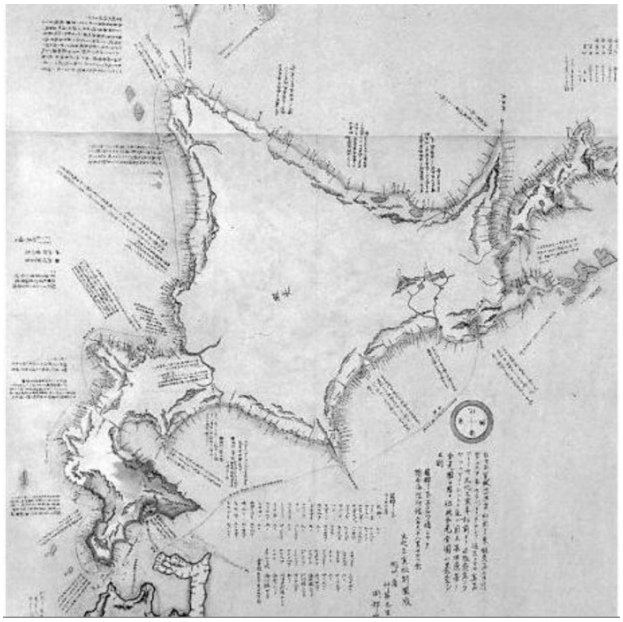
celebrated the fact that climbing mountains was modern…to the point of disowning its indigenous, pre-modern roots."[7] Alpinists in Hokkaido were no different, but their story comes much later. Before we address it, however, we must first understand the role of Hokkaido's mountains before they were climbed for sport—the subject to which we now turn.

The Place of Mountains in Meiji Era Hokkaido

Most Japanese treatments of mountaineering history date the advent of modern alpinism to the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and his black ships—that is, as concomitant with the opening of Japan to the western world.[8] In its earliest stages, mountaineering in Japan was advanced greatly by the efforts of "hired foreigners" (yatoi gaikokujin). These early climbers were limited to Mt. Fuji and its surrounding peaks—those easily accessed from Tokyo and its outskirts. It was not until the efforts of the Englishman William Gowland (1842-1922) and the subsequent arrival of missionary-cum-mountaineer Walter Weston (1860-1940) in 1888 that the locus of mountaineering shifted to the Alps.

In the following decades, mountaineering activity on Honshu increased considerably. Regular trail systems, publications, and guidebooks skyrocketed to popularity around the turn of the twentieth century and climbing vocabulary such as alpinist (arupinisuto) and mountaineer (gakujin is one of many variations) made its way into the popular vernacular. In Hokkaido, however, the onset of summit-oriented mountaineering—as opposed to forays into the mountains for practical endeavors such as hunting, foraging, or surveying—did not come until the late 1910s, an indication of both the difficulty of Hokkaido's still inaccessible alpine terrain and, perhaps more importantly, of its place outside of the cultural sphere of Tokyo and the influence of the "small cadre of cosmopolitan climbers" identified as the catalysts of Meiji mountaineering.[9] In other words, prior to the arrival of Itakura, Hokkaido's peaks remained on the periphery of the Japanese alpine imagination, despite the government's comprehensive effort to hem the island into the cultural fabric of modern Japan.[10]

Central to this comprehensive effort was mapmaking. While the Japan Alps were enjoying what historian Shigeo Yasukawa has called "mountaineering fever" (tozan netsu) around the turn of the century, Hokkaido was in the midst of its "age of exploration" (tanken no jidai).[11] Prior to the 1870s, mountains in most parts of Hokkaido were terra incognita—both uncharted and unclimbed. As Brett Walker has shown, throughout the century preceding the Meiji era, Hokkaido saw a major influx in Japanese cartographers, explorers, and frontier communities. "By 1778," writes Walker, "the Bakufu [central government], in an effort to compete with encroaching Russian interests in Hokkaido and throughout the northern territories, arranged for an exploration of the territories."[12] This and other early forays into the northern territories were, however, principally focused on mapping the coastline of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) as a means to stake national claims over sovereignty in the universalizing language of scientific maps. As a result of this vigorous campaign to map Hokkaido's coastline, alpine areas—and indeed much of the interior of the island—were left as blank swatches of land. It was not until the establishment of the Kaitakushi (Hokkaido Development Agency) in 1870 that a concerted effort to map Hokkaido's inland territories was initiated. Spurred on in part by the growing necessity for reliable topographic maps, development agents shifted their sights to Hokkaido's inner regions, looking for viable routes for infrastructure, commerce, and natural resource reserves.[13]



A map of Hokkaido. Note the unmapped interior of the island. Courtesy of Hokkaido University, Northern Studies Collection, Sapporo, Hokkaido

Naturally, the mapping of Hokkaido's alpine terrain was a precursor to and catalyst for mountaineering activity. Indeed, as Kären Wigen has observed "in the late 1800s, mountaineering was part and parcel of modern geography."[14] In Japan, as in many parts of Europe, geography provided an important professional raison d'être for Meiji mountaineers who in turn honed technical climbing skills and disseminated alpine knowledge to the rest of the Japanese population now eyeing the once inaccessible mountaintops.[15] Unsurprisingly, geographer-cum-climber figures, both foreign and Japanese, hold a commanding influence over the earliest stages of Japanese mountaineering history.[16] In 1874, Benjamin Smith Lyman (1835-1920), an American mining engineer and Kaitakushi surveyor, "explored the towering Taisetsuzan range while seeking the source of the Ishikari River."[17] His expedition journal includes notes on geography, topography, natural sciences, and access to the range's towering mountain peaks—information that would later be used by mountaineers, including those at the AACH.[18] Unlike mountaineers on Honshu, however, Kaitakushi agents were looking for mountain passes for roadways and railroad tracks, not the challenge of reaching the summit. This stands in marked contrast to the Alps, where many climbers were beginning to orient their climbing to the summit as part of the race to be the first to bag virgin peaks.

The development of cartographic knowledge and the establishment of an island-wide infrastructure engendered new perceptions of Hokkaido's alpine territories. Traditional reverence for the peaks, long espoused by the diminishing populations of indigenous Ainu, were displaced by a regime of knowledge based in science and development that came as part and parcel of the imperial project. Hokkaido's peaks no longer represented lush ecosystems abounding with animal and plant deities (kamuy, in Ainu) that were to be protected and revered.[19] Rather, by the turn of the century, they had been appropriated into an imperial agenda that championed the strategic importance of resource harvesting and the efficacy of scientific progress. Trails began to honeycomb the major peaks, surveying stations and mountain outposts were constructed deep in Hokkaido's mountain ranges, and scientists and surveyors quickly made their mark on the countryside. While Ainu guides were frequently employed to navigate the remote alpine terrain, their command over the alpine environments of Hokkaido was quickly transferred to the frontier explorers and brought to bear in the strategic effort to modernize the island.

The delayed onset of mountaineering in Hokkaido comes as no surprise when one considers two other realities that set its highlands apart from other Japanese regions at the time: the long approach and the severe winter conditions. Whereas the Alps had been made accessible through a vast network of trains, logging roads, and well-marked mountain trails, in Hokkaido a basic infrastructure, to say nothing of alpine trails, was barely in place well into the twentieth

century.[20] As a result, many of Hokkaido's mountainous regions were left inaccessible to those who wanted to climb them. Moreover, approaches in Hokkaido made its peaks extremely taxing, requiring intense planning, enormous amounts of supplies, and large expedition-style climbing teams. The AACH was the first group that put together an organization that was up to this test, placing its members on the cutting edge of their craft. Expedition-style climbing, a precursor to the siege tactics that would characterize the next step in the evolution of Japanese mountaineering techniques, was born in Hokkaido, nurtured and refined by Itakura and his cohorts at the AACH.

Itakura Katsunobu and the Gospel of 'Dynamic Mountaineering'

Itakura's upbringing is worth brief mention, in part because it is similar to that of many other alpinists of his day. Born in Toyama Prefecture on December 12, 1897, Itakura spent his childhood near the base of Tsurugidake—one of the Alps' most awe-inspiring peaks. As a teenager, he relished mountain literature, absorbing Shiga Shigetaka's classic Nihon fūkeiron and the many mountaineering publications of the thriving Nihon Sangaku Kai (Alpine Club of Japan). At the age of fifteen, Itakura joined a local mountaineering club, where he first climbed with the Austrian mountaineer Leopold Winkler. After two summers roped up with Winkler in the Alps, Itakura had developed a versatile set of mountaineering skills and had firmly established himself as one of Japan's trailblazing alpinists. To his elation, Itakura was invited to join the Nihon Sangaku Kai in 1917.[21]

Soon after his sensational solo ascent of Yarigatake in the Northern Alps in 1919, Itakura began a radical campaign of solo winter season climbing. This solo campaign—that is, climbing without a rope partner or support team—was the next step in the race for first winter ascents in the Alps. While other climbers where vying for alternative routes and variations to the already "conquered" Alps, Itakura decided to up the ante and go it alone.

By early 1919, Itakura had made a reputation for himself as a fearless, if not reckless, climber, and was featured in numerous mountaineering journals, including Sangaku—the very magazine that had fed his alpine appetite as a young boy. Itakura's 1919 winter campaign in the Alps is credited with the creation of a new mountaineering style: dynamic mountaineering, or what Ikeda Tsunemichi has described as "a powerful mix of rock climbing, snow climbing, and skiing rather than walking up slopes."[22] The advent of dynamic mountaineering marked not only the transition to winter season mountaineering, but also the incorporation of various climbing tools including the multi-loop harness, a crude prototype of the ice screw, and mountaineering boots capable of interchanging between skis and crampons.

In a period of burgeoning consumer culture and a growing literate population in many parts of Japan, mountaineering publications served as an expeditious means for spreading the alpine gospel. While most alpinists of the 1920s helped to popularize mountaineering through the written word, Itakura displayed little literary ambition, though he did maintain personal climbing diaries. Instead, he initiated an ambitious campaign of hands-on instruction: holding workshops and clinics on mountaineering techniques throughout Honshu, and taking young and inexperienced climbers into the highlands, much like he did with the AACH.[23] If twenty years earlier Japan had found "a veritable mountaineering missionary" in Kojima Usui and his writings, by the 1920s Itakura had become the spokesman (or more precisely, stuntman) for the new generation of more radical winter climbers.[24]

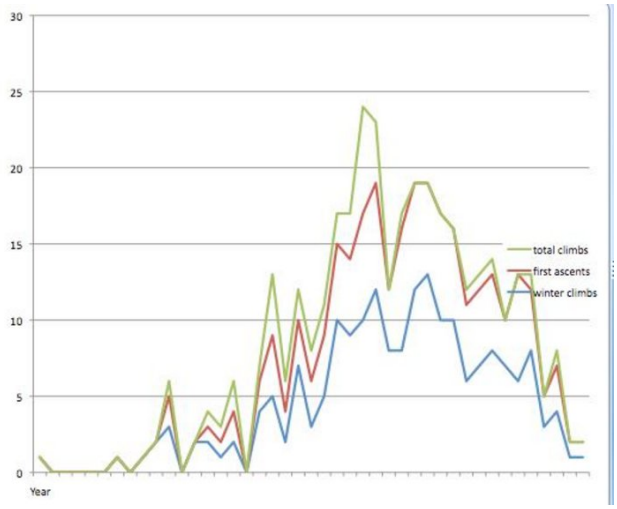
Itakura Katsunobu in 1922. Courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.

In 1919, Itakura moved to Sapporo to begin his studies at Hokkaido University, an institution with a close connection to the Kaitakushi and a long history of alpine studies—including Japan's premier geography department. It did not take long for Itakura to light upon like-minded alpine enthusiasts. In 1920, he joined what was then the Hokkaido University Ski Club, where he met a core group of climbers. Within two years, with the help of his friend Maki "Yūkō" Aritsune (who was supplying mountaineering equipment including sets of crampons, axes, and ropes from Switzerland),[25] Itakura and other more adventurous comrades from the Ski Club had abandoned the ski slopes for winter snow peaks. Before they could climb, however, they needed a crash course in winter mountaineering—something only Itakura could deliver.[26]

Contemporary sources reveal that the club started with the basics. Records from 1921 indicate that the Hokkaido University Ski Club held its very first workshop on basic mountaineering skills, trading in their skis for crampons and poles for axes. Itakura, described in these documents as the club's "senkusha" (pioneer), served as the head instructor, creating a strict training regimen that included summer rock climbing, winter skiing, conditioning, and basic skills training such as map reading and survival skills. This regimen continued throughout the next three years until Itakura's graduation—and likely persisted thereafter.[27]

Itakura and the founding members of the Hokkaido University Alpine Club on Asahidake. Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Sapporo, Hokkaido.

In January 1922, the club attempted the first winter climb of Asahidake (2216 meters), summiting four members from the Yokomanbetsu ridge to the southwest. Later that same winter, a team of six climbers, led by Itakura, summited Kurodake (1984 m) after spending three days pinned down in a whiteout. This slew of audacious yet successful climbs ushered in an era of winter expedition-style alpinism that can only be described as a tour de force: during the two decades to follow the club tallied over 100 first winter season ascents as the premier—and virtually sole—institution mounting winter climbs in Hokkaido.



A graphical representation of the AACH's climbing activites, 1903-1945. Based on data compiled by Nakamura Haruhiko in the "Hokudai sangaku yama no kai, hachijyū shūnen nenpyō," Academic Alpine Club of Hokkaido.

Itakura, of course, was not one to rest on his laurels. During the season when Hokkaido's snow melted off, Itakura returned to the Alps, where he spent his summer vacations pioneering the sport of rock climbing—roping up with the likes of Maki Aritsune to put up alpine classic routes throughout the Northern Alps. Both Itakura and Maki were involved in the establishment of the Rock Climbing Club (RCC) of Japan. The RCC, like the Nihon Sangaku Kai, firmly established itself as the premier training ground for technical rock climbing, and, by 1926, had launched a groundbreaking series of expeditions to Europe.[28]

As is too often the case with ambitious alpinists, Itakura's life was tragically cut short. On January 12, 1924, while on a trip to Tateyama with some of his fellow Hokkaido University climbers, Itakura and two others were separated from their party in a sudden storm. After a two-day struggle to locate Itakura in what one member recounted as "a tempest," the party reluctantly departed from the hut in which they had taken refuge, leaving Itakura and his companions to die of exposure somewhere below the ridgeline.[29] He was 27. He is enshrined in Toyama near the base of Tateyama, where alpinists continue to pay their respects to the lesser-known founding father of the sport.[30]

A picture of AACH "Old Boys" visiting Itakura's monument at Ashikuraji in Toyama Prefecture.
Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Sapporo, Japan.

Although Itakura did take extensive notes on his expeditions, his lack of interest in publication suggests that he was climbing principally for the challenge and thrill of the ascent—a trait that sets him apart from previous generations of recreational climbers, or what Wigen brands as "armchair alpinists."[31] A cursory glance at Itakura's writings shows that he was, above all else, attempting to push the limits of human resolve, a point that he expresses time and again in his posthumously published memoirs, Yama to yuki no nikki (A Diary of the Mountains and Snow). Void of scientific analysis, technical details, or Arcadian sentimentality, Itakura's writings can perhaps best be described as those of a bone fide mountain realist. He writes:

> Humans come face to face with their limits in the mountains, and to achieve what was once thought impossible is the true thrill of the hills. Risk and sacrifice is the way of

> life at altitude…We climb not just because it is fun, but to test the limits of the human will.[32]

In retrospect, this passage, written within a year of his death, portends the untimely fate of a man living, quite literally, on the precipice.

Alpinism Starts its Climb

In the fall of 1926, nearly two years after Itakura's death, his climbing partners in Hokkaido formally broke from the Hokkaido Ski Club to form the Hokudai sangakubu (Hokkaido University Alpine Club)—the same institution that exists today. The club that initially began with seven members had by 1928 swelled to sixteen members. By 1935, it had 33 members (all male) within its ranks and by 1937 it reached its zenith at 39.[33] As a result, the club's expeditions grew more frequent and included larger numbers of climbers. These large teams (sometimes of up to 14 climbers) were integral to the refinement of the AACH's innovative expedition-style siege tactics. Naturally, the AACH also grew more ambitious, utilizing its growing ranks to put up impressive first ascents in the Daisetsuzan Range in central Hokkaido.

A panoramic shot of the Daisetsuzan range taken from the summit of Tokachidake.

By the late 1920s, it seems that the popular mountaineering culture emanating from the Alps had at last reached Hokkaido's shores. A few pivotal developments in this period—some confined to Hokkaido and others felt nationwide—help to explain this phenomenon.

The most easily identifiable is advancements in print and broadcast media. Due in large part to the efforts of scores of climbing advocates extolling alpine virtues through the enhanced media of radio and print, alpinism had reached new heights in the realm of popular culture. Mountains and mountaineers were featured in numerous magazines, now distributed nationwide. Major publications including Yama to keikoku (Mountain and Valley, founded 1930) and Gakujin (Alpinist, founded 1935) saw a significant and steady expansion of their readership.[34] These widely circulated publications offered advice on climbing techniques, equipment, guide services, and alpine photography (another burgeoning field).[35] Radio programs included interviews with mountaineers and exhilarating reports on the progress of Japanese mountaineering feats, including the sensational ascent of the Eiger from the Mittellegi Ridge by Maki Aritsune in 1921. Films including a dramatic re-enactment of Maki's ascent as well as more lighthearted shorts like Yama no naka (Inside the Mountains) were available in theaters in Tokyo and other urban areas.

Another critical force driving the popularization of mountaineering in this period was the Nihon Sangaku Kai (Japan Alpine Club, JAC hereafter), founded in the fall of 1905 by Kojima Usui and other alpine enthusiasts.[36] The JAC actively recruited alpine enthusiasts—using a charter that established lax rules for eligibility—and became an efficient fundraising machine. Importantly, the JAC oversaw—and funded—the creation of mountaineering clubs throughout Honshu, concentrating initially on Japan's elite national universities. The JAC sponsored expeditions abroad and hosted climbers from across the globe to experience the Japan Alps, outfitting them with equipment and connecting them with guides.[37] Additionally, the JAC established and expanded Japan's premier mountaineering literature publishing house.[38]

As Andrew Bernstein has shown, another important development was that mountains (and the act of climbing them) had become a powerful symbol of the Japanese nation-state, and of the

modernity that lay at its foundation. Detached from their previous religious significance, mountains—especially Mt. Fuji—became central to the imperial project, both as a laboratory for scientific experimentation and as a playground for recreation.[39] Mountains in this period were thus wedded to a modern regime of knowledge (derived from the newly flourishing disciplines of geology, meteorology, physiology, and others), which brought their resources into the national effort to understand and, in turn, triumph over the natural world.[40] What is more, mountain climbing was appropriated into the discourse on exercise and the body, providing a new means for creating a healthy, hardy citizenry. Importantly, these nationalistic forces, and the practical political considerations at their core, did much to weave Hokkaido's local spaces into the cultural fabric of the rest of Japan.[41] The "northern frontier," a territory that just forty years earlier had lain at the fringes of the Japanese nation-state, was now repositioned within the boundaries of Japan's geographical imagination—scientifically, politically and culturally.

In Hokkaido, growing access to the island's backcountry was another force behind the mountaineering boom of the 1930s. As Kaitakushi officials indefatigably pursued the development of the island, the northern frontier—including its remotest peaks—was opened by a series of roads, tracks, and trails.[42] It was not long before small mountain huts, used and maintained by mining communities, were built far up in the mountains in places near Asahidake and Furanodake. These mining communities served as important links between Hokkaido's highlands and the teams of explorers, surveyors, and eventually mountaineers who were then pursuing distant peaks and passes.[43]

Perhaps the greatest legacy of the frontier development of Hokkaido, however, was the promotion of science and its inextricable link to progress, as was almost religiously espoused by the Kaitakushi. "Drawing on the U.S. experience," writes Brett Walker, "Hokkaido's working lands became nothing less than laboratories—literally, experiment stations—where the Kaitakushi…tested newly imported agriculture technologies."[44] The mountains, too, were experiment stations, for it was in the highlands that Kaitakushi officials deployed new mapping and mining techniques and refined the sciences of geography, mineralogy, and surveying that were a central part of their mission. Revealingly, the Kaitakushi had for years been headquartered at the Sapporo Agricultural College founded in 1876 (which became Hokkaido Imperial University in 1918). As such, it did not take long for the AACH to anchor its mountaineering techniques to this faith in science, as it was quickly applied to the climbing techniques and technologies implemented by the AACH in the years to come.

In any case, by the early 1930s Hokkaido was beginning to be recognized as a new frontier of climbing—a training ground for a form of mountaineering new to Japan. The advent of expedition-style climbing—that is, siege-style climbing based on the laborious installation of multiple base camps and caches (as opposed to a swift approach completed in one fell swoop)—marked a new chapter in Japan's mountaineering history, and an important reorientation of the efforts and energies of Japanese mountaineers towards Hokkaido.

A group shot of the Hokudai Sangakubu. Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.

The Battle for Petegaridake

By the late 1930s, the AACH had completed winter first ascents of nearly every major peak in Hokkaido. Thus, beginning in 1937, the AACH initiated what Ikeda Tsunemichi has described as the "race to traverse plural peak ridges…in winter."[45] In the winter of 1937, a team of ten climbers successfully traversed the Daisetsuzan range over a period of three weeks.[46] The club next shifted its focus to the Hidaka range to the southeast, where it would spend the next four years engaged in a spectacular "struggle" (chōsen) to open the unclimbed winter range; and its greatest battle to "conquer" (seifuku) the merciless Petegaridake.[47]

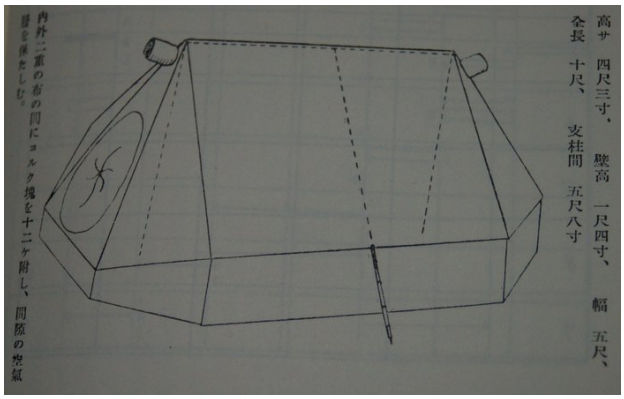
When one considers its remote location, its erratic climate, and the intricate web of knife's-edge ridges that runs through its spine, it comes as no surprise that the Hidaka range was the last to be traversed in Hokkaido.[48] In order to surmount this formidable topography, the AACH transitioned its climbing technique from that of alpine-style climbing to expedition-style climbing. In dealing with these grueling traverses, the AACH devoted a great deal of time to strategic planning and innovation. The AACH archives overflow with documents from this period outlining the preparation of equipment outlays, food caches, and contingency routes that were an essential part of the AACH's highly successful expeditionary climbing.

Two AACH climbers negotiating the Hidaka range's winter ridges. Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Sapporo, Japan.

It did not take long for the club to successfully traverse most of the range—completing climbs from Pirikanopuri (1631 m) to Nakanodake (1519 m) in the south and Kamuiekuchikaushiyama (1979 m) to Idonmappudake (1752 m) in the north. In 1937, the club attempted a traverse from Koikashūsapporodake to Petegaridake, but was forced to turn back near the summit due to bad weather and gale force winds. This failure only steeled the AACH for another attempt to conquer what one member described as the "crown jewel" of the Hidaka range. The club continued its expeditions to the range throughout the decade, and by 1940 only Petegaridake stood in its way.[49]

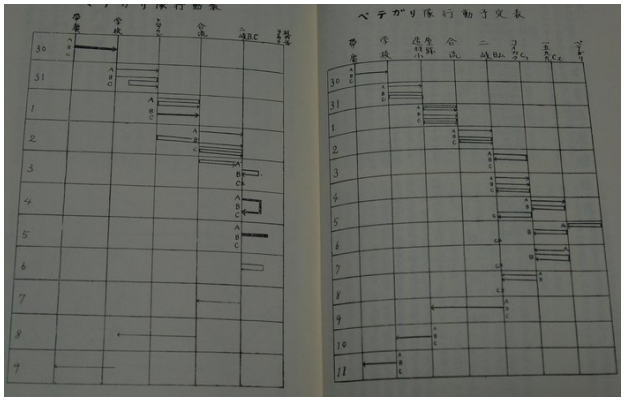
Naturally, in its effort to conquer Petegaridake, the AACH turned to modern alpine technology.[50] In 1937, the AACH began a strategic map-making project and employed the various skills of its members to, among other things, draw pictures, take photographs, record detailed scientific calculations of snow conditions, and build scale models of the range in

order to gather the intelligence it needed to triumph over Petegaridake. Records indicate that the AACH was even involved in developing new mountaineering hardware: numerous documents contain prototype drawings of winter climbing equipment—including tents, skis, and cooking stoves.[51] One team, led by club president Oikawa Sei, was put in charge of designing a new tent. What they produced was an impressive four-season tent, supported by strengthened metal poles, and a pulley system to securely cinch closed the dual doors and air vents. The tent was tailor-made for long treks and high altitude camping, and was the first of its kind.



A prototype drawing of the tent designed for the harsh conditions of the Hidakasanmyaku range. Courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.

Yet another team drew up an expedition itinerary, dividing the ten-man team into three summit groups, each assigned a different rotation in the climbing schedule and maintenance of the four different camps along the route.



An expedition schedule of the AACH attempt of Petegaridake in 1940. Courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.

One might think that these men were taking a crack at Everest. But all of this effort was for a mountain standing at a humble 1736 meters. After nearly six months of planning and preparation, the AACH was ready for another attempt at the siege of Petegaridake.

On December 29, 1940 a team of climbers departed Sapporo bound for Petegaridake. On January 2, 1940, the ten-man team set up their advanced base camp near the banks of the Satsunai River and settled in to wait for a stretch of good weather. On January 5 it came, and the team set off for camp II, determined to dig in just above the ridge of Koikashūsatsunaidake (1721 m). One member of the team, Hashimoto Ryō, stayed behind, stricken with "a nasty cold." After a long approach leading to the gulley that would take them up to the ridge, the team sat down for lunch before the exhausting push up to the ridge. At around noon the team shouldered their packs and readied their axes for the steep climb ahead. Slowly but steadily they advanced towards the ridgeline. Then, suddenly, a large slab of corniced snow and ice broke loose, triggering an avalanche that instantly entombed the party. Only Uchida Takehiko, the climber at the tail end of the team, survived the avalanche (due in large part to the heroic search-and-rescue effort by Hashimoto).

The last photograph taken of the AACH party lost in the 1940 accident. On the far right, facing the camera, is Uchida Takehiko, the only survivor of the accident. Image courtesy of the AACH, Sangakukan, Hokkaido University, Sapporo.

After carrying out a thorough search for the remaining eight members, and determining that they were beyond recovery, Hashimoto retreated to the nearby town of Sapporosatsunai (a taxing two-day hike away), where he dispatched the following terse telegram, whose original is still preserved in the archives of the AACH:

> Showa 15, January, 9
>
> To: Oikawa Seia [Club Leader]
>
> Petegari, on the 5th; Koiboku [name of gulley], just under the ridge; Wrapped in avalanche; Kasai, Arima, Katayama, Tokura, Shimizu, Haneta, Kondō, Watanabe lost; No hope (nozomi nashi); Uchida and Hashimoto spared.[52]

The telegram was received early in the afternoon of January 9th, and a rescue party was deployed within hours, despite the fact that the party had been trapped under the avalanche for nearly four days.

News of the accident sent shockwaves throughout the country, with stories of the accident running on January 10 in every major newspaper—including the widely read Tokyo Asahi Shimbun, Yomiuri Shimbun, and Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun. Most of these articles, bearing headlines like Yomiuri Shimbun's "Eight Perish in Avalanche Accident," simply laid out the facts of the incident: the names of the deceased, the time, the place, and so forth. However, a series of more detailed articles in the Hokkai Times (Hokkai Taimuzu) conveyed the grizzly details of the search to dig up the bodies and return them for burial.

日高山脈札内嶽で
北大生九名遭難
無殘・雪崩に一ト呑み

The Hokkai Taimuzu**, January 10, 1940, detailed the accident and the climbers lost.**

Public shock and outrage persisted for weeks, but it was not until the publication of a seething editorial in the Hōchi Shimbun on January 21 that the AACH was publicly condemned for its actions. Bearing the title "To Those Who Tempt the White Devil," the author, writing under a pseudonym, excoriated the "pervasive hysteria" of the sport, urging young climbers to eschew "their foolhardy faith" and not to forget the legacy of the lost climbers. In one revealing passage, the author opines as follows:

> That nine [sic. eight] bright young men were lost for no other reason than to climb for notoriety reveals the irrationality at the heart of the

> sport. What was once a leisurely and safe pastime is now a reckless competition, squandering the potential of many of our nation's youth…Climbers must reconsidered their priorities…How many more lives will it take?[53]

Passages such as this one further stoked the flames of public outrage, prompting the AACH to defend itself in an editorial published in the Hokkaido University newspaper, and picked up by papers like Hokkai Taimuzu and Yomiuri Shimbun. The club wrote:

> We had planned all contingencies and had no way of predicting the freak accident. We cannot bring back our lost colleagues, but we can remember them by taking every opportunity to scale back risk in the future…We cannot, however, give up on the mountains…that would be to betray the friends that we lost.[54]

On February 18, the AACH members held a town hall meeting where it gave an account of the accident and presented a defense of its own actions, asserting, provocatively, that they would not stop climbing: "to conquer Petegaridake is the only way to honor the lost; to abandon the challenge is to render their deaths in vain." As promised, a team of AACH climbers returned to the Hidaka range in 1942, and after two taxing attempts finally completed the first successful "siege" of Petegaridake—traversing from the Koikashū ridge on January 5, 1942.

The story of Petegaridake is illuminating not only because it provides insight into the motivations that drove these men into the heart of Hokkaido's most dangerous peaks, but also because it elucidates an important division between Japan's elite climbers and the general public. Not unlike the public outcry that followed in the wake of the legendary Whymper Party accident on the Matterhorn in 1865, media outlets around the country began to question the value of the sport and the escalating levels of risk involved. This, in turn, forced climbers to defend mountaineering for the first time and articulate a rational justification for why they should continue to climb.[55]

Those justifications are revealing. Central to their defense is a deep faith in science and progress as a means to triumph over existing natural forces. Indeed, what is striking about the story of Petegaridake is how its ascent was conceived in military terms: as a "battle" (sentō), planned by a "council of war," against a mountain to be defeated.[56] Confident in the virtues of technology, science, and the art of war, these men lost their lives in the pursuit of a mountain they had climbed in-season countless times before. The competitive drive spurred on by the eternal race to be the first was no doubt also at the core of their ambition. In order to sustain the legacy of their predecessors—including the likes of such pioneers as Itakura—the AACH had been forced to search for new extremes and to take new risks.

Conclusion

By 1940, the effects of total war had begun to take a toll on the AACH, limiting the club's enrollment to fewer than 10 members. Although the club managed to complete climbs throughout the war, its ambition and resources were markedly curbed, as they averaged a mere three climbs per year from 1941-45. Most of the club's members were sent off to the front. Indeed, mountaineering clubs throughout the country were forced to cut back (or, in some cases, halt entirely) their alpine activities through the war years. The development and evolution of Japanese mountaineering was thus suspended until the Himalayan big peak explosion that came nearly a decade after surrender.[57]

Alpinism in the pre-war period, as the story of the AACH has shown, was deeply rooted in modern science and its subjugation of the natural world. Indeed, as Peter Hansen described with reference to the transformation of Swiss Alpine mountaineering decades earlier, "mountain conquest transferred prestige from the mountain to the climber."[58] In Hokkaido the philosophical and ideological mores of climbing culture were similarly and immutably altered. Previous notions of reverence and awe that once tempered humankind's relationship with the mountains were forever changed by a new emphasis on the ability to subjugate or conquer the landscape, and the advent and advancement of winter mountaineering only further supported this notion. The writings of the AACH ring with language expressing confident dominance over the mountains through which they tread.[59] This outlook no doubt sprang from the decades-long legacy of modernization that had already transformed Hokkaido's alpine frontier.

The subtle undercurrent of the story of the AACH is the gradual shift in perceptions of Hokkaido that brought its mountains to the fore of the Japanese alpine imagination. By 1940, Hokkaido's peaks featured prominently in alpine journals and magazines and heralded, by the climbing monthly Gakujin, for example, as "the training ground for modern mountaineering expeditions."[60] This stands in marked contrast to the turn-of-the century alpine literature that expressed but a tincture of interest in scaling the mountains of Hokkaido. That alpinists in the 1930s came from all over the country to experience the unique conditions of Hokkaido's peaks demonstrates not only the heightened interest in winter season mountaineering, but also Hokkaido's legitimated status as a part of the Japanese empire. Indeed, as Japanese began to look outward toward empire in Asia, they quickly forgot that Hokkaido was once a liminal space on the fringes of the nation. In the process, Hokkaido's mountains were thrust to prominence as modern symbols of an otherwise provincial frontier: as the givers of vital resources and scientific truths that lay at the core of modern Japan's political and intellectual identity.

If any single individual could embody the culture that colored Japan's alpine consciousness in this period, it was Itakura Katsunobu. His exposure to the radical developments in technology and science that were at the core of alpinism propelled him to the cutting-edge of the sport. Furthermore, his willingness to embrace these developments and fashion them into his own style of climbing set him apart from many of the more seasoned alpinists of his day. More compelling than a hunger for extremes, however, was Itakura's curiosity: he wanted nothing more than to shatter the limitations he had set for himself. This type of natural curiosity will forever drive mountaineering and its trailblazers to new extremes. Indeed, the alpinists who followed in Itakura's wake knew this all too well, for he and many of his fellow AACH climbers lost their lives with "their heads in the sky and their sights to the summit."[61]

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Asia-Pacific Journal, 42-1-09, October 19, 2009.

Notes

[1] Itakura Katsunobu, Yama to yuki no nikki, (Sapporo: Nihon sangaku meitai zenshū, 1962), 195.
[2] For a detailed account of Kojima's ascent see Kondō Nobuyuki, Kojima Usui: Yama no fūryū shisha den (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1978); For more on Banryū's alpine exploration see Matsuura Takashirō, "Banryū shōnin ni yarigatake kaizan" (Sokayama no kai: 2004).
[3] For more on Itakura's mountaineering feats in the Alps see Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi (Tokyo: Kisetsu shokan, 1976), 339-359; and Tsunemichi Ikeda, "From the Japanese Alps to the Greatest Ranges of the World," in Japanese Alpine Centenary, (Tokyo: Alpine Club of Japan, 2005), 31-36.
[4] Itakura, Yama to yuki no nikki, 211.
[5] See Kären Wigen, "Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment," Journal of Japanese Studies, Vol. 31, No. 1, (2005).
[6] Due in great part to the relative youth of settlements in Hokkaido, Hokkaido University was the only national university (kokuritsu) on the island, which made the AACH the only sponsored mountaineering club until the end of the Second World War. While a few tankenbu (exploration club) and wandabogeru (wandervogel, in German) existed at Hokkaido University, no other club actively pursued technical mountaineering until the late 1950s. After the postwar education reforms numerous universities were founded, and with them came an influx in university mountaineering clubs.
[7] Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 5.
[8] See, for example, Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi, 1-11. Yasukawa periodizes the advent of modern mountaineering history as concurrent with the arrival of Perry's blackships in 1853, and devotes a great deal of attention to the influence of foreign climbers on pioneering Japan's first major ascents; see also Alpine Club of Japan, Nihon sangaku kai hyakunen shi (Tokyo: Nihon sangaku kai, 2007), 5-14.
[9] Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 1.
[10] For an exhaustive analysis of this effort to rein in Hokkaido see Vivian Blaxell (http://japanfocus.org/-Vivian-Blaxell/3211), "Designs of Power: The "Japanization" of Urban and Rural Space in Colonial Hokkaidō," The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol. 35-2-09, August 31, 2009.
[11] See "Tanken no jidai," in Me de miru nihon tozan shi (Tokyo: Yama to keikokusha, 2005), 28.
[12] Brett Walker, "Mamiya Rinzō and the Japanese Exploration of Sakhalin Island: cartography and empire," Journal of Historical Geography, Vol. 33, (2007), 288.
[13] The two most prominent industries pursued by the Kaitakushi in Hokkaido at the time were coal mining and timber harvesting. See Kaitakushi jidai, (Sapporo-shi Kyōiku iinkai: 1989), 33-60.
[14] Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 6.
[15] Literature on mountaineering is prodigious. See, for example, Colin Wells, A Brief History of British Mountaineering, (London: British Mountaineering Council, 2002); Peter H. Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," Journal of British Studies, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1995); Fergus Flemming, Killing Dragons: The Conquest of the Alps, (London: Granta Books, 2000); and Trevor Braham, When the Alps Cast Their Spell: Mountaineers of the Golden Age of Alpinism, (New York: In Pinn, 2004).
[16] Shiga Shigetaka, for example, studied geography at Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaido and went on to play a central role in the popularization of mountaineering in the late nineteenth century. See Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 6-10. Other geographer-cum-climbers include Benjamin Lyman and Itakura Katsunobu.
[17] "Hito wa naze yama ni noboru no ka," in Taiyo Bessatsu: Nihon no kokoro, Vol. 103, (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1998), 60. Special thanks to Martin Hood for bringing this passage to my

attention.

[18] Lyman's journals are available in the Northern Studies Collection, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan. Taisetsuzan is a less common transliteration of Daisetsuzan, a towering mountain range in central Hokkaido.

[19] Ainu contributions to the pioneering of the sport are a highly understudied topic. Scant records indicate that Ainu guides played a critical role in the earliest in-season ascents of Hokkaido's peak. Kaitakushi agents regularly hired Ainu guides and used their knowledge of hunting trails and mountain passes to scout routes and plan climbs. Due to the nature of the documentation, which was written by the foreign mountaineers themselves, the importance of these Ainu guides in understated, if not absent altogether. Indeed, this was the case for the earliest ascents of Japanese peaks throughout the archipelago. The earliest climbs of Britain's Walter Weston, for example, would not have happened without the aid of local hunter guides. In fact, it is likely that many claims at first ascents are likely false: local hunters and Buddhist practitioners of shugendō (an ascetic, mountain-dwelling faith), such as Banryū, likely beat sport climbers by decades. This debate has elicited much comment and some criticism by modern scholars interested in Japan's alpine landscapes. For a critical assessment of Weston and a convincing description of the role played by the lesser-known Japanese guides see Scott Schnell, "Reverence or Recreation," Working Paper, Asian Studies Conference Japan, (June 2009). For more on Ainu perceptions of mountains and nature see, for example, Yamada Takako, The Worldview of the Ainu: Nature and the Cosmos From Language, (Tokyo: Kegan Paul International, 2002).

[20] For a more detailed profile of the trail blazers in Hokkaido see "Ezo sangaku kai kaihō," No. 39, 22-44; and Koizumi, T., Tozan no tanjyō: Hito ha naze yama ni noboru you ni natta no ka, (Tokyo: Chūkō shinsho, 2001).

[21] See Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi, 325-375.

[22] Tsunemichi Ikeda, "From the Japanese Alps to the Greatest Ranges of the World," in Japanese Alpine Centenary, (Tokyo: Alpine Club of Japan, 2005), 31.

[23] For further information on the emergence of the mountaineering literature genre in Japan see Fujioka Nobuko, "Vision or Creation? Kojima Usui and the Literary Landscape of the Japanese Alps," Comparative Literature Studies, Vol. 39, No. 4, (2002), 3,4, 8, 11; Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 8, 10-16; and Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi, 73-121.

[24] Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 23.

[25] Although he is best known for his mountaineering feats in the Japan and Swiss Alps, Maki "Yūkō" Aritsune's greatest contribution to mountaineering in Japan lies in the role he played as a conduit and distributor of modern climbing technology, a responsibility he took on as an ambassador for the Nihon Sangaku kai to Europe. Maki's distribution of equipment gave countless aspiring alpinists the hardware they needed to innovate their craft.

[26] The history of Hokkaido's peaks would be incomplete without a brief mention of the thriving ski culture that well predates mountaineering. Beginning in the early 1880s, ski slopes and resorts were established in the southern half of the island, with the first recorded recreational slope opened at Mt. Teine just outside of Sapporo in 1882. In 1903, Hokkaido University created its own ski club, which held regular trips to the slopes near Sapporo and soon ventured further into the wilderness to places like Niseko and Daisetsuzan where they engaged in backcountry skiing—a natural precursor to alpine mountaineering. For more on its history see Hokkaido daigaku sukii bu nanajyūnen shi (Sapporo: Hokudai yama no kai, 1982); for a broader discussion of the history of skiing in Japan see Nakamura Kenji, Nihon sukii no hasshōsen shi ni tsuite no kenkyū, Hokkaido University Collection of Academic Papers, (2001) Vol. 84, 85-106.

[27] The club's activities from 1926-2005 have been expertly documented by the AACH's

archivist, Nakamura Haruhiko. See Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Sangakubu nenpyō, (Sapporo: 2007). For further information on the activities examined in this paper see Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Hokkaido sangakubu yama no kai shashin shū, (Sapporo: 2007), 1-9.

[28] For more on the foundation of the RCC and Itakura's contributions to it see Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi, 377-383.

[29] Nihon sangaku meishu zenshū, (Tokyo: Akanu shuppansha, 1962), 154.

[30] The shrine, Ashikuraji (芦峅寺), was erected near Itakura's birthplace in Toyama. It is still visited regularly by mountaineers climbing in the nearby Chubu Sangaku National Park.

[31] Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 15.

[32] Itakura, Yama to yuki no nikki, 175.

[33] Aspiring female alpinists did not join the AACH until the postwar era. This is not as much a reflection of the limited role played by females in the pioneering of the sport as it is a product of the overwhelmingly male demographics of Hokkaido University. Only 29 female students were enrolled at Hokkaido University from 1918 to 1947. See Hokkaido Daigaku hyakunijyūnen shi, henshūshitsu (ed), "Hokudai no hyakunijyūnen shi", (Sapporo: Hokkaido Daigaku Tosho Kankōkai, 2001), 37. For a comprehensive treatment of the history of women and mountaineering in Japanese see Sakakura Toshiko, Nihon jyosei tozan shi, (Tokyo: Daitsuki shoten,1992).

[34] For more on the history of mountaineering publications in the pre-war period see Matsūra Takashi, Sangaku zasshi no rekishi ni tsuite, (Tokyo: Sokayama no kai shuppan, 2003).

[35] An excellent collection of documents that reveal the burgeoning consumer culture underlying mountaineering, including nearly 1000 pages of advertisements, profiles, and photographs, is Nihon sangaku kai, Sōhō, Vol. 8, (Tokyo: Nihon sangaku kai, 1989).

[36] The Japanese Alpine Society was founded nearly half a century after the British Alpine club (1857). It came at the tail end of a long lineage of premier national mountaineering institutions: the Osterreichische Alpenverein in 1862, the Schweizer Alpenclub and the Club Alpino Italiano in 1863, and the Club Alpin Francais and the Osterreichischer Alpenclub in 1878. In North America, the Appalachia Mountain Club was established in 1878, then the American Alpine Club in 1902. Both the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Mountain Club of South Africa were founded in 1891.

[37] See, for example, Hattori Hideo, Tōge no rekishigaku, (Tokyo: Asahi shimbunsha, 2007).

[38] For more on the creation of the JAC see Me de miru nihon tozan shi, 130-152; Yasukawa Shigeo, Kindai nihon tozan shi, 210-224; and Wigen, "Meiji Mountaineering," 4, 7-10.

[39] See Andrew Bernstein, "Whose Fuji? Religion, Region, and State in the Fight for a National Symbol," Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. 63, No 1, (2008).

[40] For more on the social and political forces brewing at this time see Kevin Doak. A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People. (Boston: Brill Publishers, 2007).

[41] For more on the creation of Hokkaido and the history of local spaces see Vivian Blaxell, "Designs of Power: The "Japanization" of Urban and Rural Space in Colonial Hokkaidō."

[42] For an in-depth narrative of the development of Hokkaido's railway industry see Dan Free, Early Japanese Railways 1853-1914: Engineering Triumphs That Transformed Meiji-era Japan (New York: Tuttle, 2009); for general information on the Kaitakushi and scientific programs in Hokkaido see Brett Walker, "Sanemori's Revenge"; and John Maki, William Smith Clark: a Yankee in Sapporo, (Boston: Lexington Books, 2002).

[43] Interestingly, these coal seams were discovered by Benjamin Lyman in 1873 during his exploration of the island as a Kaitakushi official and professor of Geology at Sapporo Agricultural College.

[44] Brett Walker, "Sanemori's Revenge: Insects, Eco-System Accidents, and Policy Decisions in Japan's Environmental History" Journal of Policy History, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2007), 17.

[45] Tsunemichi Ikeda, "From the Japanese Alps to the Greatest Ranges of the World," 32.
[46] By the 1930s it became club protocol to write pre- and post-expedition reports on each climb. These reports are available in the club's archives. See Hokudai sangakubu jyōhō, Vol. 7, (Sapporo: Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai zenshū, 1940), 5-65.
[47] Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Hachijyū shūnen shi, (Sapporo: Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, 2007), 22.
[48] The Hidaka range is the only range in Hokkaido, and one of only three ranges in all of Japan, that shows evidence of glaciation. For more see Umezawa S., Sugawara Y., and Nakagawa J., Hokkaido hidaka sanmyaku no yama (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shimbunsha, 1991).
[49] Hokudai sangaku yama no kai kaihō, Vol. 7, (Sapporo: Academic Alpine Club of Hokkaido, 1942), 22-32. For additional accounts of these traverses see Hokudai sangaku yama no kai, Kaihō, Vol. 7, 7-35; and Kaihō, Vol. 8, 1-84.
[50] In a revealing document dated 1939 the author describes the effort to conquer Petegaridake: "this tent, born from a lengthy development process, will give us the advantage to conquer the mountain…we have considered every contingency and feel more confident." See Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Kaihō, Vol. 7, 89.
[51] See Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Kaihō, Vol. 7, 22.
[52] The original telegram is available in the AACH archives. See Hokudai sangaku bu yama no kai, "Uchida Takehiko shū," Sangakukan, Sapporo, Hokkaido.
[53] Hōchi Shimbun, "To Those Who Tempt the White Devil", January 21, 1940.
[54] Hokkaido Daigaku Shimbun, February 8, 1940, page 3.
[55] On July 14, 1865 a group of seven climbers successfully summited the Matterhorn in the Swiss Alps. On the descent a member of the team lost his footing and took three of his rope partners over a cliff to their deaths. Whymper and the remaining two guides were spared only because the rope snapped. In the days to follow, sensational accounts of the accident captivated European media outlets and prompted a public condemnation of the mountaineering community in general and the Whymper party in particular. For more on the Whymper party incident see Peter Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," 318.
[56] Hokudai sangakubu yama no kai, Kaihō, Vol. 7, 24, 26, 33.
[57] In the decades following the conclusion of the Second World War, Japanese climbers shifted their sights to Himalayan big peak climbing, undertaking impressive expeditions to Tibet and Nepal to put up a slew of first ascents and variations.
[58] Peter Hansen, "Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain," 317.
[59] For examples of this type of language in AACH documents see Hokudai sangaku bu yama no kai, Kaihō, Vol. 7, 90, 92, 96, 106, 108.
[60] "Hokkaido no yukiyama e ikō," in Gakujin, January 1943, 25.
[61] Itakura, Yama to yuki no nikki, 88. "Teppen made" was a common rallying cry for alpinists and is a term regularly used by the AACH.