

Lake Biwa Canal and Philosopher's Way

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There was a civil engineer called Sakuro Tanabe. Born in Tokyo in 1861, Tanabe enrolled in the Imperial College of Engineering, majoring in civil engineering, he prepared a plan for building a canal at Lake Biwa as his graduation thesis. His thesis was published in an overseas academic journal, and Tanabe received the Telford Medal, the British Institution of Civil Engineers' highest award for a thesis. After graduating from the Imperial College of Engineering, Tanabe found employment in Kyoto Prefecture, taking charge of

the Lake Biwa Canal construction project at the young age of twenty-one.

The Lake Biwa Canal was meant to deliver water from Lake Biwa to Kyoto City. Water taken from the foot of Mii Temple passes under Mount Hie through a long tunnel, coming out in downtown Kyoto via an incline and then carried to various places in the city after passing along Nanzen Temple's aqueduct. Tanabe not only supervised this project and completed the canal, he also built Japan's first hydroelectric power station, Keage Power Station, to use the canal's water. This electricity powered the streetlights—the first in Japan—and streetcars of Kyoto. In addition, boats were able to enter downtown Kyoto via the incline, opening up water transport between Kyoto and Lake Biwa. The Lake Biwa Canal maintains its capabilities 130 years after its completion, carrying around 200 million tons of water to Kyoto each year for use in the city's water supply.

Chiba Institute of Technology (CIT) celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary on May 15, 2017. Leading Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida was involved in the efforts to establish the Chiba Institute of Technology, and wrote in CIT's founding documents: "We will train personnel who possess the curiosity to broadly seek knowledge around the world to lead not only Japan but all of Asia to contribute to world culture." This aspiration has been ceaselessly kept alive by everyone involved with CIT in the form of our university's motto, "contributing to world culture through technology."

The water that passes along the Nanzen Temple aqueduct becomes a stream that flows in Higashiyama. Professor Nishida loved the path alongside this stream, apparently strolling there daily, absorbed in his thoughts. At a certain point the path came to be called the "Philosopher's Way." It may be that Professor Nishida was thinking about this and that related to CIT's responsibilities for Asia's future as he walked along this path.

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