

# Walking Down the Tree-lined Roads

Nicely styled tree-lined roads often reflect the deep history of the region. On the other hand, these roads unlock the potential for an area to become a tourist destination by creating a beautiful atmosphere that complements the surrounding environment.

Within Hokkaido, there are many places with magnificent trees, such as the ginkgo trees on the Hokkaido University campus in Sapporo, the cherry trees along the Nijukken Douro in Shin Hidaka, and the cedar and poplar trees in the Trappist Monastery in Hokuto city.

There are several of these recommended spots in Biratori as well.

## The Thoughts of the Local Residents Regarding these Tree-lined Roads

The Former Munro Residence



**Photo 1:** The tree-lined road of the former Munro residence (photo taken from the Northwest: Fig 1). Several decades have passed since the trees were first planted and the trees have grown enough to cover the road. The management has pruned the site to maintain the look and feel of it.

was a home and clinic where N.G. Munro (1863-1942), a surgeon and anthropologist, spent the final years of his life.

The road from the street to the house is lined with conifers including European

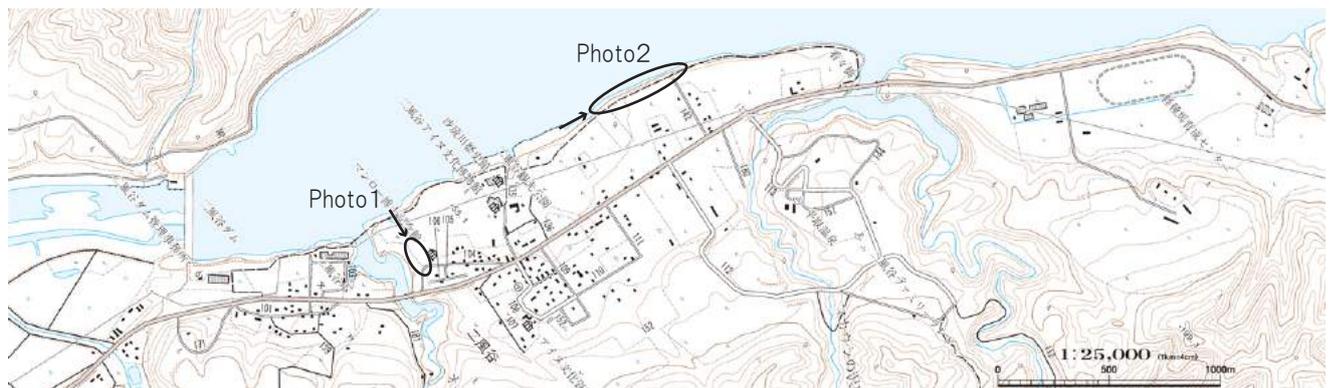
spruces and *Abies sachalinensis*, which are trees that originate in his home country of Scotland. These trees evoke the atmosphere of exoticness, unfamiliar in the region (photo 1).

The Munro House was built in 1933, and the trees, the road, and the garden were made at the same time. The trees were most likely planted to provide privacy, as western houses were rare in Nibutani when it was built. Thus, the tree-lined road became an important boundary between the ordinary village with clusters of *chise* and the western-style home.

The Munro House still maintains its integrity, and both local residents and visitors pay a visit to honor Dr. Munro.



**Photo 2:** This is the manicured Japanese birch tree-lined road, "Path Through History" by the Nibutani Lake (Photo taken from Southwest: Fig 1). These Japanese birch trees are popular for symbolizing Hokkaido as a whole.



**Fig 1:** The location of the tree-lined roads (the arrow indicates the direction the photo was taken). As both 1 and 2 are located within walking distance, people can easily visit these spots in exploring Nibutani.

## Presenting Iconic Trees of Hokkaido on Tree-lined Paths

There is a Japanese white birch tree-lined path, which is a part of the manicured a “Path Through History” on the left bank of Nibutani Lake (photo 2).

Many people see the white trunks of the Japanese white birch tree as a sight goes perfectly with the landscape of Hokkaido. The tree is also heavily used in Ainu culture. For example, the sap is used in making beverages (*tatniwakka*: birch tree, water), and the birch bark is also used to make containers (*yaraitanki*: birch bowl).

## Tree-lined Roads Reflect the Good Old Days of Forest Grazing

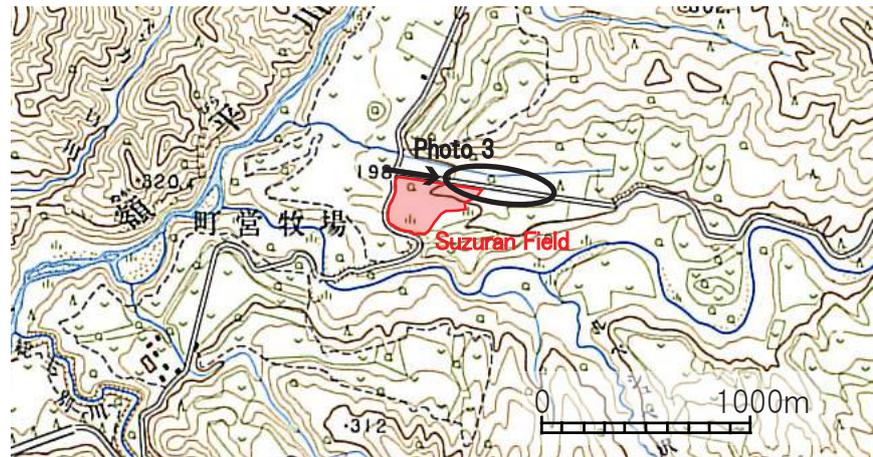
The “Memu Suzuran-sen (Lily of the Valley Line) Town Road”, which runs by the colonies of Lily of the Valley in the Shukushubetsu district creates a corridor-like space made by the native broadleaved trees.

This colony of Lily of the Valley is designated as the town’s natural monument. The original structure of the plants is preserved inside the protected area. The areas in the vicinity have been made into a vast town-owned pasture where Black-haired Wagyu cows graze. The dark-colored cows strikingly stand out against the backdrop of the Lily of the Valleys.

Before the war, this region was used for large-scale war horse production. Instead of creating a man-made barn, the producers allowed the horses to



**Photo 3:** The town-owned Memu Lily of the Valley Line (photo taken from the West: Fig 2). We can still feel the lingering image of the forest grazing that the residents used to do on this road (refer to table).



**Fig 2:** The location of the tree-lined roads (the arrow indicates the direction the photo was taken). There are many spots in the vicinity where visitors can enjoy the sight of plants such as pasture forests, shade trees, and colonies of Lily of the Valley.

**Table: Trees Used in Tree-lined Roads (Ainu names in parenthesis)**

(1) Historical House of Dr. Munro

European spruce (Foreign variety: no Ainu name), *Abies sachalinensis (fup)*

(2) Path Through History

Japanese white birch (*retartatni*)

(3) Colonies of Lily of the Valley

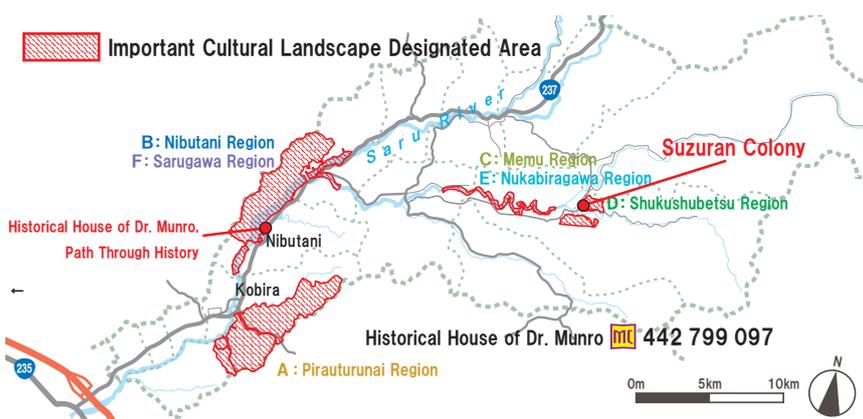
water oak (*pero*), pin oak (*chikappoperoni*), painted maple (*topeni*), Japanese

Judas (*ranko*), Japanese elm (*chikisani*), linden (*nipesni*), swamp ash (*pinni*),

Manchurian walnut (*nesko*), *Alnus hirsuta (kene)*, willow (*susu*)

graze freely in the forest, using the natural resources of the area.

Of course, these horses are long gone and the landscape of the horses grazing on the grass cannot be seen anymore, but we can still feel the elegant atmosphere from the area.



“Cultural landscapes of the Saru Valley formed by Ainu tradition and modern development”  
Designated as Important Cultural Landscape as of July 26th, 2007

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