

Lake Shojiko

Lake Shojiko is the last remnant of the western edge of the Senoumi, a vast lake that was all but filled in by the lava flow from the Jogan Eruption of 864. It has a rocky, convoluted southern shore where the lava flow came to a halt. To the west runs the old Nakamichi Okan trade route, which connected the Kofu Basin in the north and Suruga Province (modern-day Shizuoka Prefecture) in the south.

The lake's name is written using the characters for the word "shojin," meaning "diligence" or "devotion" in the religious sense. A local belief attributes this to En no Gyoja, founder of Shugen asceticism, performing his ritual ablutions here before climbing Mt. Fuji. (This is unlikely, since the area then was still part of the larger Senoumi body of water.) Fuji-ko pilgrims performed their *suigyō* purifying rites on the northern shore by the village of Shoji, at a location with an excellent view of Mt. Fuji across the lake.

Though small and remote, Lake Shojiko was the first lake on Mt. Fuji's northern side to be developed for modern tourism, ahead of even well-known sightseeing spots like Lake Yamanakako and Lake Kawaguchiko. In 1895, British-born Harry Stewart Whitworth opened the Shoji Hotel, welcoming visitors from around the globe to what he called "the Switzerland of the East."