

1. LANDFORM CLASSIFICATION
2. NAMES OF NATURAL REGIONS

1. Landform Classification

The Japanese Islands have a rugged topography, and the area of mountains, including volcanic lands and hills, account for about 75% of the total national land. The mountains are sharply cut by valleys and the mountainsides have steep slopes. Some of the mountains in the Tyūbu Region are more than 3,000 m in height. Glacial landforms, very small in scale, are sporadically observed only in the Hidaka Sanmyaku (Range) and the Hida Sanmyaku (Range).

Tablelands and terraces are distributed in various areas, and are used for upland fields. Many pyroclastic tablelands are distributed in Hokkaidō and Kyūshū, and those in South Kyūshū are known as Sirasu tablelands.

Many of the plains and basins, small in scale, are scattered between mountains. Most of the plains and basins were formed by the sedimentation of rivers. Where a river flows away from mountains and heads toward a lowland, sand and gravel accumulate forming a cone-shaped alluvial fan. This type of landform is widely distributed in Tōhoku and Tyūbu regions. The sandy sediments that overflow from the lower reaches of a river due to a flood forms land which is slightly higher than its surrounding area, and this land is known as a natural levee. Settlements and roads are established on this land.

Lowlands are very important for developing production activities. In many instances, they are artificially changed, such as for river improvement, housing site development, and land reclamation.

Salient Points of the Legend and Map Compilation

Mountains and Hills

Strong relief mountains: Mountains with portions that exceed 600 m in local relief.

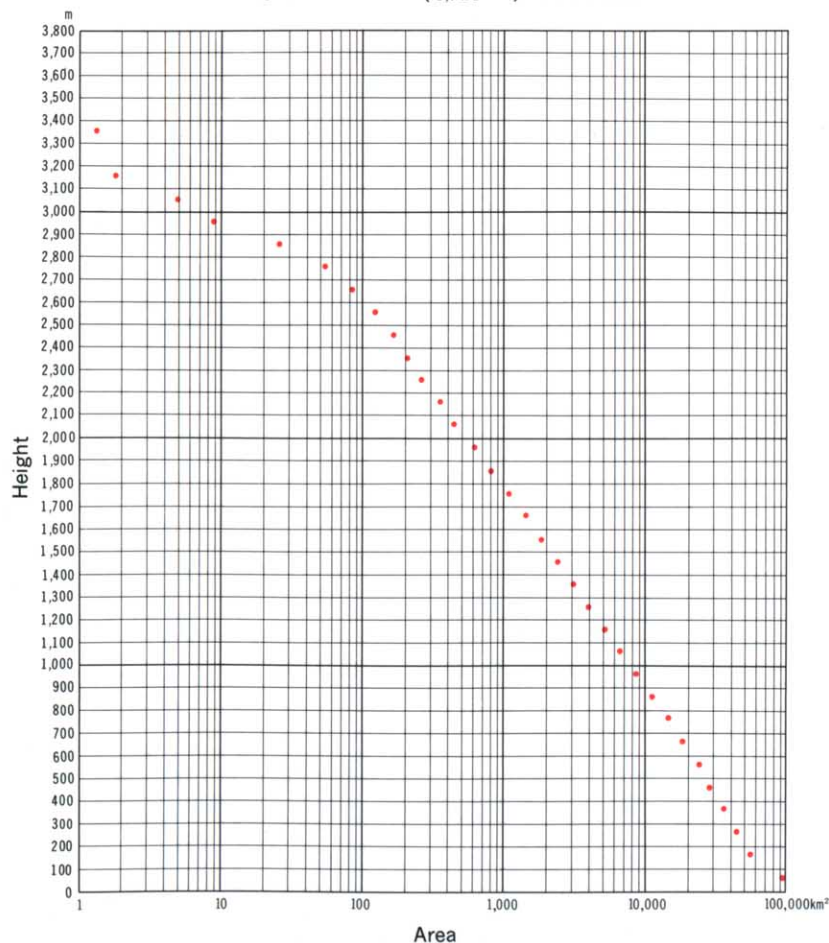
Medial relief mountains: Mountains with portions 200-600 m in local relief.

Low relief mountains and hills: Mountains and hills with portions less than 200 m in local relief.

The local relief, as referred to here, is the difference in altitude between the highest and lowest points within section 1' in the south-to-north direction and 1.5' in the east-to-west direction. Reference was made to the Relief Map of the Economic Planning Agency.

AREA OF JAPAN BY ALTITUDE

The altitude of intersection with intervals of 15' in the south-to-north direction and 22.5' in the east-to-west direction was read mainly on the 1:25,000 scale Topographic Maps. After the area was adjusted according to latitude the reading was converted into area and a tabulation was made for the height every 100 m. The points of intersection of the meshes were about 590,000. Lands (164km²), each measuring under 0m in height, and also lakes (5,721 km²) were excluded.



Volcanoes

Volcano steep slope: The steep original surface and dissected valley of a Quaternary volcano.

Volcano gentle slope: The gentle slope of a volcano representing what is commonly known as the base of a volcano, including mud-flow landform, lava-flow landform and alluvial fan at the foot of a volcano.

Tablelands and Terraces

Lava plateau: The plateau-shaped landform made up of lava, including the lava plateau before the Quaternary Period.

Pyroclastic tableland: Tableland made up of pyroclastic flow deposits.

Karstic tableland: The landform made by corrosion, in the limestone region.

Fluvial and coastal terraces or tablelands (higher): Includes dissected fans, elevated coastal plains, river terraces and coastal terraces in higher altitudes.

Fluvial and coastal terraces or tablelands (lower): Includes dissected fans, elevated coastal plains, river terraces and coastal terraces in lower altitudes.

Lowlands

Alluvial fan: Alluvial fan, including gently sloped fan.

Flood plain: Of the alluvial plain, this expression, as used here, represents somewhat high and dry portions.

Delta and backmarsh: Of the alluvial plain, this expression represents low and humid portions.

Sand dune and sand bar: A sand or gravel sedimented landform in a littoral area.

Sources

1. Economic Planning Agency, 1:500,000 scale Land Classification Maps (Landform Classification Maps), 1967.
2. Geographical Survey Institute, 1:800,000 scale Landform Classification Maps, 1958.
3. Economic Planning Agency, 1:1,160,000 scale Relief Map, 1969.

2. Names of Natural Regions

Salient Points of the Legend and Map Compilation

Regarding places, such as mountains, flatlands, peninsulas and islands, which feature certain expanses and are usable as regional units, only the names of the principal places were used on this map. The names, as used here, are the geographical names which have widely been used for many years. These names were determined when the Geographical Survey Institute published the 1:200,000 scale Regional Maps and maps smaller in scale. However, names different from these are sometimes used.

The types and definitions of these natural regions are as follows:

Santi (mountains): An aggregate of tectonic prominences.

Sanmyaku (mountain range): A particularly prominent array of mountains.

Kōti (highland): A flat-surface mountain without prominent relief but with well-developed valleys.

Kōgen (plateau): Flat-surface mountains without prominent relief. Valleys are not well developed.

Kyūryō (hills): Mountains whose ridgeline is generally constant with well-developed valleys and with a round top. The relative height is less than 300 meters.

Heiya (plain): The land which features an expanse of flat lowland with practically no relief.

Bontō (basin): A flat land hemmed in by mountains or hills on all sides.

Daitō (tableland or terrace): Of the plains and tablelands, this term represents a further higher terrace-shaped land.

Hantō (peninsula): A land contained by a sea on three sides and linked to the land on one side.

Syōtō (archipelago): An aggregate of more than two islands. Islands that are formed in a row are called Rettō.

The names which end with the suffixes implying the types of natural regions, such as No (plain), Dai (tableland or terrace) and Hara (plain) are not followed by such name as Daitō (tableland or terrace).

Source

1. Geographical Survey Institute, Map of Names of Major Natural Regions, 1954.

TOPOGRAPHICAL PROFILES

