



# Sightseeing In Japan

## Local Sightseeing

### Fussa

If you are interested in exploring but do not want to venture too far from the base, a cultural walking tour of Fussa City is a must. You can break the tour into two shorter walks (about 2 - 3 hours each) or make a day of it.

#### #1 Tamagawa River Course

If you start at the Supply Gate and walk straight across Highway 16 and continue to follow Itsukaichi-

Kaido -Avenue, the first interesting sight will appear on the second block on the left side of the street. On the right you will see a large red brick building with a park on the west side; this is the Civic Center (auditorium). There is an over-the-street walkway to take you from one side to the other.

On the left side of the road is a small wooded area with a stone path winding through it. If you follow the stone path you will see a bamboo fenced area in which is located the City Tea House. (The Tea House is available for rent but you must make reservations 6 months in advance.) If you walk around and up the hill past the tea house, turning right at the top, you will find yourself at the back of the Fussa Library. The entrance is around the building to the right (directly behind the Tea House). The library is open 10am-7pm Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10am-5pm every other day, closed Sundays and Japanese holidays. Follow the stone path back or take a short cut by taking the path left past the Tea House. The next left will be a small bridge and waterfall, and an opening in the wall on the right to the library parking lot. Whether you exit through the parking lot or take the stone path, walk back to the main road.

Continue (left) west on the main road (Itsukaichi Kaido Avenue)- your first chance to stop for a snack is past the library at the Jonathan's Restaurant on the left (the same side you should be on). Stay straight and cross a bridge with artwork tiles of fireflies. Continue straight. Turn left onto Okutama Kaido, move to the right side of the road. You see a sign in Japanese for the bike path to the Firefly Park (Hotaru Park). If you feel adventurous, you can take the tiny dirt path zigzagging down the hill. The entrance to this path is directly across from Gray Shining Hills Apartment House. If you are less adventurous, continue past Okutama Kaido for one more long downhill block

- the next main street is Denen. Turn right, the park is on the corner. This park has a fish pond, fountain, and a greenhouse where firefly larva are grown. There are also bathrooms.

To continue your walk, pass the greenhouse exit onto the street, and turn left. Go under the railroad tracks, cross to the right side of the street. There will be a playground directly after the train overpass on the right. Walk through the playground to the small roadway that runs along the bottom of the tracks with a fence along the right side of the road. Walk along the fence line until you come to the river (dead end). Follow the road as it turns into a raised path (biking/walking) lined with cherry trees. You will be turning left. This is a beautiful walk in the spring, the city is on your left, and the Tama River on your right. About half way down the path on the left side is another playground and Meishin-shita Park.

The path will end at Mutsumi Bashi Bridge. If you go under the bridge you will be at a large picnic area called Minami Park. If you wish to barbecue or play tennis, you will need a permit (obtained in the log cabin park office by the entrance). To continue your walk, exit the park and turn right onto the main street, Mutsumi-bashi Dori; you will be on the right side. The first right will be a diagonal right. There will be a green sign, an old walking tour sign (8 - Park 9 Temple 10 - Haijima Station). Take a sharp right and follow the road as it winds its way past beautiful homes, and the Senjuin Temple. At the intersection with Kumagawa Dori, there will be a stone monument on the corner. Turn right. On the left, there is a black-timbered property; this is the Sake Brewery Tama-Jiman.

Walk straight through the intersection and turn left on Kumagawa Dori; you will reach a "Y" in the road - go left - you will walk down a small street (as wide as an alley). You will pass Denny's Restaurant on your left. Continue straight until you reach Kumagawa Shrine. Continue out the gate, along the same little street you started on. You will come to a "T"; go left onto Shimizuzaka Dori, then right back onto Kumagawa Dori. You will have reached a really unique animal temple. The day we were there, they had raccoons, a goat, cranes, a dog, and a large cage full of parakeets. There are signs that say "Don't Touch the Animals."

If you are tired at this point, you can go directly back to base past the temple following the road (it curves to the right). You will come to a "T". Turn left. After half a block, you will come to a "Y." Take the right fork (Shin Okutama-Kaido Avenue); cross the JR train tracks (Kumagawa Station at the first right). Straight for three more blocks will get you back to the main road (Itsukaichi-Kaido Avenue). Turn right and the road will lead to the Supply Gate.

### #2 Tamagawa-Josui Course

If you are interested in more sight-seeing, you can continue straight along Okutama-Kaido Avenue. You will go straight past the post office. (You can also start here by walking out the Fussa gate, through the station, down a couple blocks and then turning right onto Okutama-Kaido).

Two blocks past the post office, on the right side of the street, you will see an elementary school, then two restaurants (Sky Lark and Bamiyan - see Restaurants section); they are located next to a fire department. Across the street is a cemetery; next to the cemetery is the entrance to Shinmeisha Shrine. Walk through the Torii Gate and you will see smaller shrines spaced on the left side.

If you continue through to the opposite side Torii Gate and down a set of stairs, you will find a small park on the right side of the stairway. Go down the steps to the street, turn right and walk to the corner. Make a left at the corner and walk three small blocks to the end of the street. There will be a blue pedestrian overpass. If you look behind the house on the corner, you will see a very old temple (Kannondou Temple) down a small alleyway. Cross the pedestrian overpass and the small bridge. After the bridge, you can turn left and walk along the side of the river to Kanizaka Park (toilet and water fountain available).

The road follows the stream past a small residential area to a small treed area with paths that go up and down a small embankment. dotted with picnic tables and benches. If you go straight past the bridge, you will see a beautifully rebuilt temple (Choutokuji Temple) and across the street another sake brewery. Continue past the temple; the road will begin to curve to the left (you'll see the Tama River). There is a small park with benches and a small shrine just as the road curves. The next intersection will be Fujiami Street, turn left. If you continue straight, you will come to Fussa Station. About eight blocks from there, it's a straight shot to the Fussa Gate.

If you just can't make it back without seeing one more temple, turn left, walk two blocks to Naka Fussa Street, make a right turn, and go halfway down the block. You will see a small alley to the left, turn here. About 300 yards up this alley is one of the most ornate temples in the area (Seiganin Temple). This temple is the home of Buddhist monks. You can backtrack to Fujimi Street or you can continue past the temple to the next intersection, take a left, follow the curve of the road (left), back to Fujimi Street and then a right back to Fussa Station and Fussa Gate.

Michele Kreuziger 8/97

## Showa Park

Showa Park is a traditional, old-fashioned city park. There are a few small shrines, a five-tiered pagoda, and assorted playground equipment. There are open areas for playing ball or soccer, a jogging track and a small animal zoo. It is tree-shaded and is a pleasant place for a picnic lunch. Vending machines for drinks are available.

This park is free and open seven days a week from 8:40am until 4:50pm. It is easy to reach by car, and free parking is available.

Note: Showa Park is not the same as Showa Memorial Park (Showa Kinen Koen), at Nishi-Tachikawa station. Showa Park is a block south of the tracks and closer to Higashi-Nakagami station.

Diane Cressman, Melody Messer Patricia Caldwell

## Indoor Play Area

This is a free indoor play area for children. Great on a rainy day. There is a climbscape, a basketball court, ping pong, etc. and an area for toddlers to play. Exit the Supply Gate and turn right on Rt. 16. Continue under the underpass and turn left at the first light pass the underpass. Continue to the intersection named "Hamura Zoological Park" there is a JOMO gas station on the left. A few more lights and you will see an Autobacs Store on the left and then power lines. Turn left at the light where you see the power lines. Continue down this street and you will see on your left a baseball field. You will have to find a place to park; there is no designated parking. Once you park, walk towards the baseball field and continue past the small park (another great place to stop if you have a few minutes). As you look ahead you will see a three-story building. You will have to walk about a half a block past the park to the front of the building for the entrance. You will actually round the corner to reach the entrance. Look up and you will see a large climbing tube on the outside of the building. You have to take your shoes off so be sure to bring socks for you kids in the summertime. Everything is in Japanese and little to no English is spoken, but you can muddle through and the kids will love this place.

Dawn Leach

## Roller Slide Park

Go out the Supply Gate. Go straight. Continue past the railroad tracks. Turn right after the blue walkway overhead. Park is on the right.

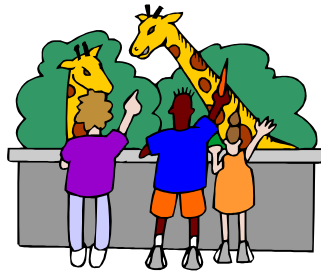
Dawn Leach

## Bell Park

We call this the Bell Park because there is a bell that the kids can ring at the top of the jungle gym. This is a lovely little park close to the base. It makes for a nice outing. Go out the Supply Gate and turn left on Rt. 16. Stay in the left hand lane because most of the traffic will be in the right lane continuing on Rt. 16. When you get to the intersection where 16 curves to the right, GO STRAIGHT! Continue straight until the T intersection (railroad yard in front of you), turn right. It looks like you're going on the sidewalk, but go ahead. There is a small parking area. There is the playground area and also a path along the creek to another play area.

Dawn Leach





## Hamura Zoological Park

Only 15 minutes from Yokota, the Hamura Zoo is free for children 3 yrs. and under, ¥50/4yrs—jr. high, and ¥300/adult. While the park is small compared to U.S. zoos, it has many mammals and birds. Hamura Zoo also has an “Earthquake Prediction Lab” where the quake-sensing skills of animals such as pheasant and catfish have been studied. The principal goal of the zoo is “to nurture affection for nature by introducing children to animals.” Some animals you may see are: lynx, red fox, porcupine, raccoon, wolf, lemur, prairie dog, wallaby, giraffe, zebra, emu, jackal, coati, macaws, penguin, beaver, flamingo, and other fowl. Peacocks, swans, and ducks roam the grounds of this park. In the center of the zoo you will find a pond with flamingos, swans and ducks. There is also a large picnic and playground area where there are a number of interesting toys, including stone zoo animals and dinosaurs, and a full size original steam engine on which children can play. You can bring a lunch into the park or purchase something at the store next to the European garden.

In most cases, signs on the cages provide animal names in English in addition to Japanese. Additional information on the geographical area where the animals are from, whether the animal is a carnivore, a herbivore, or nocturnal can be read with just an elementary knowledge of Kanji.

The zoo is open 9am-4:30pm March-October and 9am-4pm November-February. It is closed Mondays (Tuesday if Monday’s a holiday) and during the New Year’s holiday. Pony rides are available ¥200/child aged 4-12; 10-11:30am and 1-3pm. For information, call the Service Center at 0425-79-4041 (or 0425-55-2581).

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right out the Fussa Gate, and left at the first signal. Then right again at the signal after the tracks. After a while this street will become a divided street. Continue straight until you see the entrance to the zoo on the right. The entrance is a beige and brown Tudor-style building with two signs out front showing a giraffe and/or a pony. Make a U-turn in front of the entrance and go to the first street. Turn left at that street and drive a short distance until you come to a parking lot on your right. This is free zoo parking.

You can also reach Hamura Zoo by bicycle in about 30 minutes, making it a nice way for a family to bike ride together and enjoy a day at the zoo, too.

Viki Cody, Karen Ozment, Suzanne Maresh 7/97

## Hamura Museum

Hamura Museum is a small local museum about 10-15 minutes away, across the Tama River. On the grounds is a restored thatched-roof farmhouse full of household implements that the shrine sale enthusiasts enjoy, as well as an old Red

Gate of a type associated with shrines, etc. Admission is free but unfortunately there are no explanations in English. However, most are self-explanatory. Main features include pieced-together ancient ceramic pots, rice cultivation, and historic methods of silk production (inferred from the photos of silkworms, etc.). There’s also an old fire wagon and lots of benches outside on which to sit and eat a sack lunch.

Open 9-4:30, closed Mondays (and Tuesday if Monday is a national holiday); admission free (unless there is a special exhibit).

**DIRECTIONS:** Turn right out the Fussa gate, and left at the second light. Take this street to the river, crossing two railroad tracks. At the T, make a right (under a blue pedestrian bridge), then at the 4th stoplight, make a left over the bridge (Hamuraohashi East Intersection—there’ll be a five-story gray concrete apartment building on the right with stone walls on both sides). On the far side of the river, make the first right into a small road (parallel to the river); take the right fork downward. At the stop sign, turn left into a residential area and follow this road around to its end (at the river). Park in the left lot just past the large brown museum (the right lot belongs to a very pricey restaurant, ¥5000+ per person).

Julie Irwin 8/96, Directions confirmed 11/01



## Hamura-Shi Planetarium

A real educational treasure exists right out our front door in Hamura. The Hamura-Shi Planetarium is tucked away in a residential neighborhood, sharing space (excuse the pun) within a small city recreational building. There is no charge to sit and be enthralled with a visual guided tour of the skies over Hamura. Your personal guide will treat you to a 40 minute, computer generated (20 minute show for young children) audio-visual presentation, depicting the skies from sunset to sunrise. You will see summer and winter constellations, comets, shooting stars, nighttime cloud formations, a solar eclipse and a glimpse of our solar system amongst the vastness of space. Though the staff members narrate the program in Japanese only, one can still enjoy the universal language of the stars and space. A working knowledge of astronomy is NOT needed to enjoy the program. But beware! Once you see the show you may gravitate (sorry about that) toward the library to learn more about the wonders of space.

There is no charge for your visit. Just ask the attendant, inside the main entrance, to the right, to see the planetarium (remember, no English is spoken so point upstairs and ask slowly). You must slip off your shoes and use the slippers provided.

The planetarium is closed on Mondays. Individuals and families are welcome anytime Tuesday-Sunday at 3:30pm (11am or 3pm during Japanese spring, summer, and winter school breaks);



school groups and group tours/shows are held at other times. If you have a group larger than 20, you must stop by their office prior to your visit and fill out a special group request form and make an appointment.

**DIRECTIONS:** Driving to the planetarium is quick and easy. Go straight out the Fussa Gate and at the 'Y' at the first light, go right. Continue on to two more lights (a total of three lights). Turn right at the third light onto the street running in front of Seiyu (Yanagi Dori). Continue on this street through 13 lights or 3.8km until you come to the Hamura Post Office on your left. Turn left at the light just after the post office and continue through one light. Not far from the light, and on your right you will see the dome of the planetarium. Across the street, on your left, is the parking lot. There are about 10 parking slots and one large bus slot. Keep in mind that this is a neighborhood recreation center and there are LOTS of kids involved in all kinds of activities in and around the building, so don't think you have arrived at the wrong place!

Marcia St. John

## Haijima - Ninomiya Shrine

The Ninomiya Shrine, located about a four-minute walk from Higashi-Akiru Station on the Itsukaichi Line out of Haijima is only about a 12-minute ride from Fussa Station. The shrine was established over 800 years ago and was first used by farmers to pray for good weather and to give thanks for a good harvest. Today it is used primarily by resident merchants in the surrounding community. It is also known for its Ginger Festival on September 9 (refer to the section on festivals).

## Haijima - Ninomiya Shrine Museum

Thirteen thousand years ago people settled the area now known as Akigawa City and this area has been inhabited ever since! The fertile triangle created by the confluence of the Hirai and Aki rivers with the Tama river, a ten minute drive from Yokota, has yielded many archaeological finds from the Paleolithic Era to modern times. A sample of these artifacts are available for viewing at the Ninomiya Shrine Museum.

The museum, opened in 1990, is located on the grounds of the Ninomiya Shrine and is open Friday - Sunday from 10am to 4pm. To find the museum, follow the path around the right side of the shrine through an area of smaller monuments including a red torii gate. The museum is divided into three areas. The doors open into a central room where visitors are greeted and literature displayed. Maps on the wall, although annotated in Japanese only, will give you an idea of the areas where artifacts have been excavated. Proceed from this room to the display room on the right. The display room is set up to be viewed from the left where a model of a Jomon period (10,000 BC to 300 BC) hunter-gatherer dwelling is displayed. If you have visited American Indian museums, you may see a similarity to the dwellings and life-styles of prehistoric Eastern American Indians. The third large section of the museum is a working archaeological lab where pot shards and other finds are painstakingly pieced together under the guidance of Masanori Narusako Sensei. This area is not open to visitors.

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While at the museum, don't forget to pick up a copy of Exploring Akigawa City. This map is written in English and shows hiking trails, shrines, archaeological digs and other points of interest in the area.

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** Turn left out the Fussa Gate and then turn right at the first light. You are now on Tamabashi Dori, which changes to Itsukaichi-Kaido after you cross the Tama River Bridge (2km from the Fussa Gate). Just after you cross the river, the road doglegs to the left, then to the right. The second light after the doglegs will be labeled route 168 to "Ninomiya-jinja." Go straight, but slow WAY down, because you will be turning into the first (VERY) small street past the light. (It looks almost like a driveway.) Go up the hill and park at the end of the street in the lot in front of the torii gates. The museum is on the left of the torii gates. The shrine is through the torii gates in front of you. Only about a 15 minute drive.

Marja A. Weaver

## Tachikawa - Showa Memorial Park

Residents of American Village usually know about Showa Memorial Park (Showa Kinen Koen), the fenced-in grounds adjacent to the housing area. It is a large, lovely park with bike and walking paths, a lake, water parks (in winter, an outdoor skating rink) and many areas for children (including forts, trampoline nets and discovery areas). There are always surprises like the clear domes covering small treasures near the cloud bridge or fantastic slides that adults cannot resist trying. The park is especially lovely in spring, as a multitude of colorful flowers and blooming trees are a feast for the eyes. A wonderful water fountain greets you as you enter the park, so don't forget to bring your camera. Also near the main entrance is a bicycle rental area, but feel free to ride into the park with your own bike. Bring your own picnic lunch or feel free to try out the small, but tasty restaurants and snack bars located near the lake and throughout the park.

Closed Mondays, admission ¥400/adult, ¥80/child.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Fussa Station take the train towards Tokyo to Nishi-Tachikawa and enter the park via the north exit of the train station. (160 Yen/person)

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** It's also an easy 30 minutes by car (parking ¥820): Set your Odometer to zero and exit right out the East gate and turn left at the first light. (Inadaira Koen Minami intersection.) At the next light (5 way intersection, 0.7 km.) Make a right hand turn. (Not sharp right, but angled right towards Daiei.) At 1.9 km bear right at the intersection where this road merges with another. (Family Mart on right Corner, Toyota dealer on left corner.) Turn left at the 2nd light onto Itsukaichi-Kaido Rd. (2.0 km Tennobashi Intersection. Just after you go under the tracks.)

Stay on this road until the light with Edo-Ichi Yakiniku all-you-can-eat Restaurant on the far right corner (3.5 km, the turn for American Village), then turn right. Turn left at the second light (convenience store on the left). Turn right at the



next large intersection past Tachikawa Air Base (4.6 km 'Rt 153'). The entrance to the parking lot for Showa Memorial Park will be on the right-hand side, several blocks (1.8 km) down.

NOTE: If you miss the Edoichi restaurant and come to the liquor store with a barrel on the front, neon liquor bottles, and a sake kanji (酒)(3.8 km, no light), turn right there and then turn left when the road ends. Then turn right at the next large intersection past Tachikawa Air Base. Then follow directions as above. If you need more specific instructions, check with the Yujo Community Center.

Rachael Keyser-McClendon Directions updated 6/02

There is a new entrance to Showa Park that is a shorter drive and is closer to the kids play area of Showa (less walking for your little ones). Follow the above directions, but instead of turning left at the second light (at the convenience store), the new entrance is the next right.

Dawn Leach/'02

Showa park is an easy 30 minute bike ride from the East Gate. For directions, see the section on bicycling.

## Tama Hills Outdoor Recreation Area

A 492-acre getaway for people assigned to Yokota Air Base, one half of this beautifully hilly, densely forested terrain is the challenging and very popular Tama Hills Golf Course. The other half is the Tama Outdoor Recreation Area retreat. With several nature trails, this country retreat offers the opportunity for hiking in addition to solitude, nature study and exercise. Other activities available include tennis, basketball, mini-golf, archery, horseback-riding and swimming.

For those who wish to stay overnight, Tama Hills has a variety of accommodations at low nightly rates: lodge rooms, bunk rooms with shared facilities, cabins, the Red Horse Lodge of 4 bedrooms, shared kitchen and living room plus VIP cabins. There is also a conference room that can be reserved. Quiet, private campsites, equipped with barbecue grills and water facilities, are also available. Youth campsites, without water and cooking pits, are ideal for the dedicated outdoorsman. The primitive area with no facilities and campsites can be selected by individuals who enjoy getting away from everything.

Tama has picnic areas of various sizes and locations. Everything from cooking utensils to 20-foot by 30-foot canopies, small barbecue grills to extra large group barbecue grills, as well as sports equipment, is available at the on-site equipment checkout facility. A small convenience store has sundry items.

After a day of invigorating activities, enjoy a meal in the dining room at the lodge and music in the Hincrest Lounge. You can relax in the hot tub and return to your room for a good night's sleep. Call 224-3421/3422 for reservations.

**DIRECTIONS:** Set your odometer to zero and turn right out the East Gate. At the first signal light, turn left. At the next light (0.6 km), a five-corners intersection, make a hard right turn. At 5.2 km turn left at an intersection with a big Suzuki sign on a building to the right and a Toyoda dealer on

the far left. This a large four-lane street (Shin-Okutama Kaido, Rt. 29). At 9.0 km this road this road will join with route 20, continue straight.

At one point on Rt. 20, you will see three big arrows as you approach the Tachi-Five corners intersection. Follow the straight arrow. A Shell station is on the right. There is a large 2-story yellow restaurant on the right side. Continue straight past this. Continue straight until you see a sign with Tama Center 18. Get in the right hand lane and turn right onto route 18 (14.0 km) following the sign indication onto Kamakura Kaido. Watch carefully! Some landmarks (like this one) are hard to see. You will be on a six-lane divided street after the turn. Get in the center lane. Go through a tunnel (14.4 km), and keep going straight on this street. You'll see a big bowling pin off to the left. Soon, you cross the Tama River. Get in the left lane, and turn left at the first signal light after crossing the river (16.8 km). After turning, you'll cross another bridge. To reach Tama Recreation Center, continue on this road up a hill, through three lights, down the hill with a Japanese golf course on the left and then a wooded area. Soon after you pass a flashing yellow light, the entrance to Tama Lodge will be on the right. (20.2 km)

See Yujo Center for more details.

Directions updated 7/02



## Tama Hills Golf Course

To go to Tama Hills Golf Course, follow the directions for the Tama Hills Outdoor Recreation Center and then continue up the hill after crossing the second bridge. At the third signal light at the intersection with the gate leading to the Japanese golf course, turn right. After your right turn at the signal light, go up the hill about 200 meters to a blinking red light. Stay on the main road and veer left. You will be starting back down the hill. The Tama Hills Golf Course entrance will soon be on your left. Happy golfing!

**SHORTCUT TO TAMA HILLS:** When you are comfortable with driving the easy route, you may want to try the short cut from the East/South Gates. This route joins up with the previous one at the Esso Station at the Y-intersection. Depending on traffic conditions, you may save up to twenty minutes.

Turn right out of the South Gate. Go straight through the light, cross over railroad tracks next to a Shell station. At the light after the tracks, follow the main road as it bears to the right. Continue on this road until you reach another set of railroad tracks. At this three-way intersection, turn left, driving parallel to the railroad tracks. You will see the Bird Store sign to the right. At the next stop sign, turn right. On your right you will see the entrance to the Bird Store. Go through the first light and continue on this street to the second light.



Turn left. Go straight on this road until you have to turn at the fifth intersection, where you will recognize the “Y” from the easy directions, with the Esso station on the left. Go through. You have now joined up with the previous route.

Sharon Chang

## Tama Zoo

Tama Zoo is a lovely place to take your family. The animals are in natural surroundings and there are well marked trails and paths leading to the attractions. You may buy your lunch at the food stands or you can bring your own. One highlight is the insectarium with its beautiful butterflies; another is the “Lion Bus.” For ¥350/adult, ¥100/ child, you can take a short glass-sided bus ride through the lion field. The price may seem steep, but the experience of seeing several lions jump up on the windows allows great pictures.

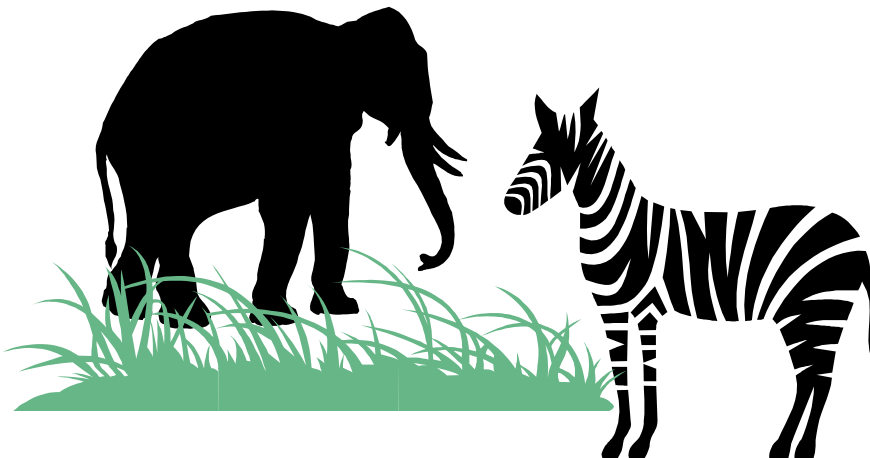
Admission is ¥600/adult, 15 and under free; **closed Wednesdays** (closed Thursday if Wednesday is a holiday) and Dec. 29-Jan. 3. For details, call 0425-91-1611.

Doreen Theriault 7/97

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** (Takes about 1 hour.) Set your odometer to zero and turn right out the east gate, then left at the first light. Take a sharp right at the next light (0.6 km, 5 way intersection, Johnathans on left.) Follow this road to Route 29, Shin-Okutama Kaido, and turn left (odometer = 5.2 km, Miyazawa Higashi Intersection, Toyota on far left, Suzuki on far right.) This intersection isn't marked the greatest, but once you are on 29, there are many signs to let you know you are on the right street. At 9.0 km you will go under the monorail tracks. Turn right onto route 20 at the second light past the monorail tracks (9.6 km). You will cross the Tama river. At 10.9 km turn left at the light immediately before/under the monorail tracks. Follow the road under the monorail until you get to Tama-Dobutsu-Koen intersection & station (14.9 km.) Park in any of the many private lots along the road, and walk back to the station. Expect to pay 500-800 yen on weekdays, 1000yen on weekends. The entrance is next to the station.

Brian Marriott 7/02

**TRAIN DIRECTIONS:** To get there by train, take the Chuo line to Tachikawa Station. Exit the station via either the North or the South Exit. Get on the Monorail. Take the monorail to the Tama dobutsukoen exit, the zoo is near the exit. (one way 480 yen. Takes about 50 minutes.)



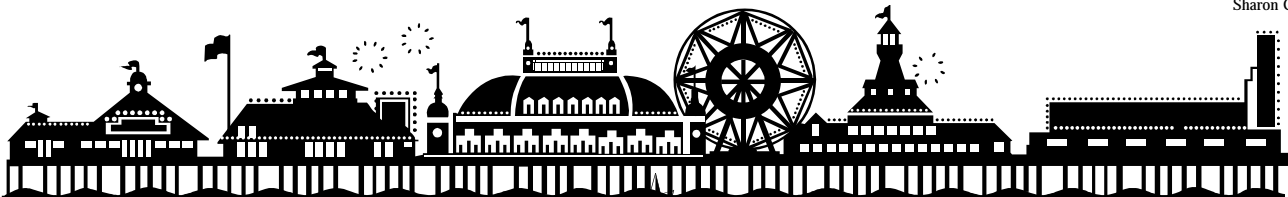
## Tama Tech Amusement Park

Tama Tech Amusement Park is just down the road from Tama Zoo. Built by Honda motorcycle company, there are the standard “thrill” rides, go-carts, and also battery operated vehicle rides that children drive themselves. The park also has nice hills for picnicking and climbing. The park is open 9:30am-5pm year-round.

Admission is 13 and over/¥1,500, children 3-12/¥800, under 2 free. You can buy a ticket for 8 rides for your child age 13 and over for ¥3,200, and the price for children 3-12 years is only ¥2,700. The Super-Passport ticket, good for all rides and attractions is ¥3,500 for children 13 and older and 2,900 yen for children 3 through 12. Parking costs ¥1,000 per car. Near the parking area is a free playground for children, where special events such as clown acts frequently occur.

**DIRECTIONS:** To get to Tama Tech, follow the directions to Tama Zoo. Continue up the hill past the zoo for 1.2 km. Bright flags and a huge sign signal your arrival at Tama Tech. For further details, visit the Yujo Community Center.

Sharon Chang



## Sightseeing in the Tokyo area

### Meiji Shrine

The Meiji Shrine is an amazing 175 acres of peace and tranquility completely surrounded by urban Tokyo – one of the most densely populated and frenetic cities on Mother Earth. The Meiji Shrine was built to honor the Emperor Meiji (1858 – 1912), revered by the Japanese for transforming feudal Japan into a modern nation. To bring Japan into the modern world, Emperor Meiji had to defeat Shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu, representing seven centuries of samurai dominance of nominal Imperial rule. Emperor Meiji's defeat of the shoguns allowed him to end the policy of sakoku – closure of Japan to the outside world of "barbarians."

The Emperor moved Japan's capital from ancient Kyoto, traditional seat of national government, to Tokyo. The Shrine was completed in 1920, after the Emperor's death, to honor the Emperor and his Empress Shoken and to commemorate the Emperor's progressive reign of Japan. The original Shrine was destroyed in a 1945 Allied air raid of Tokyo. The current Shrine was rebuilt in 1958.

The Meiji Shrine is the most popular shrine of dozens located throughout Tokyo. During 1992's New Year celebration, 4,827,000 people came to make their hatsumode – the first prayer of the New Year. Worshippers dress in their finest. Many women wear the traditional and beautiful kimono.

Long lines of worshippers pass under the enormous torii (entrance gates or arches) made of 1500 year old Taiwanese cypress. Like a dark silk ribbon undulating in a gently breeze, thousands of the reverent walk quietly down long shaded lanes to the Shrine itself. As they pass under the torii, many stop to shoot a picture of their family posing under a giant ema (wooden prayer plaque).

Inside the torii is the Shrine's main courtyard. The Shrine is built in the Nagare (flowing) architectural style, one of the four main styles of Shinto architecture. Finally, worshippers reach the Shrine's altar which sits behind sliding doors in the Shrine's outer wall. Before the altar, the first few rows

of worshippers launch a shower of silver and gold coins towards altar collection boxes, clap their hands to attract the attention of the gods, and make their prayers for good health and happiness in the coming year.

Worshippers may carry corporeal symbols of their good luck home with them by purchasing a variety of religious mementos from booths flanking the Shrine. On sale are New Year's good luck arrows, smaller emas, talismans of different sorts, and waka poems written by the Emperor and Empress. The Emperor wrote about 100,000 of these 31 syllable poems and the Empress about 30,000. So many of these poems are sold and tied onto bushes inside the Shrine for luck that the bushes appear to be snow-laden.

With their luck and prosperity assured for the coming year, people clutching arrows and other talismans wander happily about the grounds or visit the Treasure Museum on the Shrine's grounds. The Treasure Museum contains the clothes, personal belongings, Imperial documents, paintings and the Imperial horse-drawn carriage. Visitors may even visit the Iris garden planted on the banks of an old river bed. The garden is well known for its profusion of blooms of many subtle shades, spectacular in the late spring. After a full day of worship and homage to the Emperor, visitors head for home, content that they have made a good beginning to the New Year.

The Meiji Shrine garden offers a spectacular view of thousands and thousands of irises of many types.

You can see gorgeous huge irises in blue, pink, white and every shade of purple imaginable. The beds of flowers stretch as far as the eye can see in early to mid-June.

As with the cherry blossoms, exact bloom dates vary with the weather, so it would be wise to check with the Japan travel phone (0120-222-800) or you can call the English language daily events recording (03-3503-2911) before you plan your trip. In the garden, you will also find many other beautiful flowers and shrubs as well as a pond full of carp and turtles. Of course, the irises are the main attraction as there is nowhere in Japan that you can enjoy the glory of them more than at the



*Photo courtesy of Michelle Arostegui, at Meiji Shrine Torri Gate 2001*

*From Left to Right: Michelle Arostegui, Lesa Campbell and Tammy Livingood*



Meiji Shrine. The iris is a favorite flower of the Japanese. You see it depicted in silk screens, woodblock prints, lacquer ware and obis. During the late spring blooming season, you will see irises displayed in flower shops everywhere.

Entry to the Meiji Shrine itself is free and in the compound, there is a stand where you can buy charms and souvenirs or get your "Stampu book" stamped. Entry fee to the garden is Y300 for adults, and for the children there is a lower price. You may prefer to visit Meiji Shrine during the week as it is a popular spot for Japanese on the weekends and can be quite crowded at this time, especially during iris blooming season.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome line to Tachikawa from either Fussa or Akishima Station. At Tachikawa take the Chuo Line for Shinjuku Station (Track 4 & 5). At Shinjuku change to the green Yamanote Line on Track 10, and go two stops to Harajuku Station. When you come out of the station, you will be facing a street. Turn right and walk to the wide, gravel-covered street. Turn right and follow the street. When you can, turn right again and cross the (pedestrian only) bridge over the JR tracks to enter the park surrounding the Meiji Shrine. Once in the park there are maps in English and Japanese pointing you to the Shrine. In brief, follow the gravel road under the tori gate. A short ways up you will turn left and pass under another tori gate. Just outside the entrance there is a fountain with some wooden dippers. If you wish you can use the dippers to cleanse your hands before entering the shrine.

The entrance to the gardens is on the gravel-covered street mentioned above; the entrance sign is in both English and Japanese.

Wiki Lyn Paulson-Cody, Diane Lyell

## National Children's Castle / Kodomo No Shiro

A visit is recommended anytime, but a rainy day is perfect for the inside activities. An English brochure details the numerous and unique activities on the first five floors. A hotel and restaurant are on the upper levels. Highlights include the roof garden (closed on wet days) where riding vehicles, climbing nets, and other equipment are in great supply. There's even a jogging maze.

The entry is on the fifth floor. The fourth floor has an audio/visual library and music studios. There's a computer room, nearly hidden toward the back of the third floor. Reservations are required and children must be of school age to use a computer. If interested, go here first to reserve a time slot. Also on the third floor is an arts and crafts room offering a hands-on activity appropriate for each age-level. Activity themes change often. A huge wall invites young artists to paint. The third floor also has a play hall with educational toys and equipment for a variety of ages.

Children will want to come back, and the admission is so reasonable, parents will agree: Y400 for adults, Y300 for children over six. Weekdays are less crowded and the hours are 1 - 5:50pm, so driving to the New Sanno for lunch begins a

great outing. Weekend and holiday hours are 10 am to 5:30pm; closed Mondays. From mid-April to mid-September the closing hour is extended to 6:30pm. You can bring a sack lunch or there is a McDonald's within 5 minutes walking distance further up the street on the same side. You can leave and re-enter the museum on the same day as long as you get your ticket stamped.

**DIRECTIONS FROM THE NEW SANNO:** To get there from the New Sanno, take the Hibiya Subway from Hiroo Station to Ebisu Station. Change to the JR Yamanote Line and go one stop to Shibuya. From Shibuya Station, exit out towards the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, a huge department store. Proceed up the Miyamasuzaka Street (it slopes upward). This street will turn into Aoyama Dori. The castle will be on the Aoyama Dori on your left after a ten to fifteen minute walk (near the overhead street crossing.)

**DIRECTIONS FROM YOKOTA:** To take the train from Yokota to Children's Castle, take the JR to Shinjuku, then transfer to the Yamanote Line and go 3 stops to Shibuya Station. Then follow the walking directions above.

Sondra Halweg, Christine Thomas

## Tokyo-To Jido Kaikan

Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Hall has a variety of activities for children of any age. Many are designed for pre-schoolers. In the basement is a wood craft center and rides such as cars and airplanes. Pick up an English brochure on the 1st floor. The second floor has a family corner and athletic space for little ones. On the third floor are scientific displays ranging from a human body to a moon station; a meteorological room, which actually gathers weather information. There's a small food and drink stand or you can bring your own lunch. There is also a counter for getting materials for creative activities. The fourth floor has a fine arts corner, crafts corner, and a music room where children can bang drums, cymbals, triangles, pianos, organs, kotos, etc. The art room is well supplied for budding artists with crayons, charcoal, origami, pottery and fingerpainting. The fifth floor is a library with some pre-school books in English.

Admission is free! Children's Hall is open daily 9 am - 5pm. It is closed December 29 - January 3. Tel (03-3409-6361)

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line to Tachikawa and transfer to Shinjuku Station at the Yamanote Line toward Yoyogi. Get off at Shibuya, the third stop. Exit towards the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan. From the intersection of Miyamasuzaka Street and Meiji Dori (Ave.), follow Meiji Dori North towards the Nomura and Pola signs. (There is also a small blue and white sign on the far corner directing you towards the Children's Hall.) In two blocks there will be a sign on the right hand side of the road directing you to the right. The Children's hall is about 100 meters up the road on the left.

Barbara Kirkwood, Christine Thomas

## Tokyo Tower

For that "high in the sky" look at Tokyo, climb to the observatory levels of Tokyo Tower. The main observatory plat-



form is 150 meters high, and the special observatory gives you a panoramic view, including the harbor and bay, from a height of 250 meters. Either level offers a stupendous look at the greater Tokyo area, and on a clear day you will even see Mt. Fuji rising majestically into the sky. At 333 meters, Tokyo Tower is the city's tallest structure.

All eight television stations and all three FM radio stations in the Tokyo area broadcast their programs to homes in Tokyo and surrounding prefectures from antennas installed at the top of Tokyo Tower. Two AM radio waves are also sent from the tower, and the government uses the tower for radio communications. Instruments mounted in the tower monitor atmospheric conditions, and the police department has also mounted cameras to provide information needed for traffic control on surrounding expressways and other main arteries.

Construction of Tokyo Tower began in June 1957 and was completed in December 1958. Although it is higher than the Eiffel Tower, it is much lighter with 4,000 tons of steel as compared with 7,000 tons needed to build the older structure. Even so, Tokyo Tower is solid enough to withstand both the strongest earthquake and 90-meter-per-second winds.

Under the tower, Tokyo Tower Building houses exhibits and offers a variety of entertaining as well as educational features. An aquarium on the first floor is Japan's largest, with 8,000 fish representing 700 species from all over the world. Included are examples of Japan's renowned carp and goldfish. The 3,500 square-meter, two-story tourist area includes souvenir shops, restaurants, coffee shops and a game corner.

On the third floor, see the first wax museum built in the Orient. One hundred lifelike figures of famous persons are presented and dramatic scenes enhanced by special lighting and sound effects.

If you are interested in learning about "Japan today," don't miss the fourth floor. Numerous showrooms feature exhibits by the government as well as Japan's leading companies. Advances in technology are displayed in the form of up-to-date examples of cars, computers and kitchens. The showroom of Japan Automobile Federation offers exhibits useful to drivers interested in improving their driving skills.

The tower is open March 16-Nov. 15, 9am-8pm and Nov. 16-March 15, 9am-6pm. August hours are 9am-9pm. Fees to the main observatory are: Adults, ¥600, middle/primary school age, ¥350; kindergarten, ¥200. Fees to the special observatory cost an additional ¥400 for adults, ¥300 for middle/primary children and ¥250 for kindergarten children. Fees to see the wax museum are: Adults; ¥750; children, ¥400. Fees for the aquarium are: Adults, ¥600; children, ¥400.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line to Tachikawa. Change to the Chuo Line and travel to Yotsuya Station. Change to Marunouchi Subway Line bound for Kasumigaseki (3 stops). Change to the Hibiya Line for Kamiyacho Station (1 stop). Get off the subway and exit the station either way. Turn left and walk one block. Turn left again, and Tokyo tower is right there!

Barbara Smith

## The Imperial Palace

The Imperial Palace, home of the Imperial Family, stands on the former site of Edo Castle. Located in the heart of Tokyo, the Palace grounds are vast, replete with gardens, moat, and high stone walls. The gardens, Kokyo Gaien and Higashi Gyoen, provide the primary sights since the remaining grounds are usually closed to the public. A walk alongside the moat, particularly during the cherry blossom season, is an attraction as well. The Nijubashi double bridge is a copy of Kyoto's Fushimi Castle bridge. It spans the moat at the entrance to the Palace and provides the only good view into the grounds.

Built where Edo Castle stood during the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Imperial Palace was completed in the late 1890's. Destroyed by air-raids during World War II, the Palace was rebuilt in 1968. Ordinarily it is impossible to enter the grounds without an invitation. However, on the Emperor's birthday (December 23) and on January 2 each year, the gates are opened. Tens of thousands of visitors take advantage of this opportunity to see the royal family.

Tours are available for groups of ten or more people over 20 years old. The following information will be required: 1) Full name 2) Age 3) Occupation 4) Home address 5) Address in Japan. Call the Imperial Palace Tour Office at 03-3213-1111 a minimum of one month prior to the desired date. Before telephoning, have ready the name of your organization, the representative's name and the number of people in your tour group.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line to Tachikawa and change to the Chuo Line, taking it to its end at Tokyo Station. Head out the north or west exit toward the Palace and moat.

Phillury Platte

## Ueno Park, Zoo, and Museums

Ueno Park is one of the most popular attractions in the city of Tokyo and one of the liveliest sites during the annual Cherry Blossom season in early April. Ueno has many things to offer and should be visited at least once during a stay in Japan.

It has one of the largest zoos in the world and attracts "kids" of all ages. The animals names are written in English. As a special attraction, the zoo houses pandas from China. The monorail connects the main zoo area with the Africa section on the west side. You can also cross a bridge over historic Shinobazu Lake where thousands of ducks and cormorants swim.

The Shinto shrine on an island in the lake makes a striking picture. Rowboats are available for rent. Also, next to the lake is the Ueno Zoo Aquarium with more than 500 species of fish exhibited on four levels.

In the park there are numerous museums that are nice during the winter months when it is too cold to be outside. Tokyo's **National Museum** is an imposing structure built in 1936 in modern oriental style. It displays many of the important national treasures and cultural properties of Japan, including ancient tapestries, screens, samurai armor, swords, scrolls, kimonos, ceramics, and more than 100,000 works of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian art.



Ueno has a very good **National Science Museum** with special sections on zoology, botany, geology, science & engineering, and astronomy. Children will be awed by dinosaur and whale skeletons, and by the collection of clocks and stuffed animals. Even Mexican mummies and shrunken heads can be found here. (Although very little is in English and adults may not be impressed, the museum can be a good learning tool for children.)

The **National Museum of Western Art** is also located in Ueno Park. It was built in 1959 and exhibits works of French artists. Many are from a collection assembled by Kojiro Matsukata during his visit to Europe early in this century. This exhibit features masterpieces by such famous artists as Monet, Renoir, Picasso, Van Gogh, as well as several sculptures by Rodin.

All of these attractions are open daily 9am-4pm, and closed Mondays and from December 29 - January 3 during the Japanese New Year. Entrance fees for each of the attractions range from ¥200 to ¥400 for adults; ¥100 for 13 and up; ¥50 for 3-12; those under 3 and over 65 are free.

You may also want to explore the **Okachimachi shopping district** across from the Ueno train station at the foot of the hill. Famous for hundreds of tiny discount shops, second-hand motorcycle dealers, and open air markets, it offers countless small inexpensive restaurants where you can make a good lunch of noodles, tempura, yakitori, or other specialties. A picnic is a nice alternative because there are numerous places in the Ueno Park area where you can sit, relax and watch all the people go by. So enjoy your visit!

**DIRECTIONS:** To reach Ueno, take the Ome Line to Tachikawa and change to the Chuo Line toward Tokyo. Get off at Kanda, 3 stops after Shinjuku. Change to the Yamanote Line toward Ikebukuro, and get off at the third stop, Ueno.

Chris Underwood, Mugs Wedemeyer

## Tokyo Cruises

The fast-paced, rushed and crowded life of Tokyo can often saturate the senses of the foreign visitor. A sight-seeing option often overlooked by the tourist is a view of Tokyo from the water. There is something to be said for taking a romantic view of this magnificent city, and there are several tours to accommodate these wishes.

The first is a river cruise called the "Sumida River Line," offered by the Tokyo Cruise Ship Company. The boats leave the Azuma Bridge in Asakusa every 40 minutes from 9:50am to sunset and arrive at the Hinode Pier about 40 minutes later. Along the way you will pass under 12 bridges. There is an optional stop at the Hamarikyu Detached Palace Garden. One way fare is ¥660 for adults and ¥380 for children. Admission to the gardens is ¥300. This cruise may also be reversed, beginning at Hinode Pier. On Sundays and holidays the departures are even more frequent.

To see underwater life, take a boat from Hinode Pier to **Kasai Sealife Park** on the other side of the bay near Disneyland and take the train back or vice versa. Running once an hour, the cruisers stop at Tokyo Big Sight (Ariake) on the way. One-way tickets are ¥800. Admission to the Tokyo Sea Life Park is ¥800 per adult, ¥300 per child. If going by



train, get off at the Kasai Rinkai Koen Station on the Keiyo Line and head toward the large glass dome.

The Tokyo Cruise Ship Company offers another cruise from Hinode Pier, called the "Museum of Maritime Science Line." The boat leaves once every hour and takes you on a cruise across Tokyo Bay to the Museum of Maritime Science. This cruise is only 20 minutes long, but offers a glimpse of wind surfers near Odaiba Seaside Park and other more historical landmarks. The cost is ¥520 for adults and ¥280 for children. Admission to the museum is ¥500.

There's also a "Harbor Cruise Line", a 50-minute ride passing underneath the Rainbow Bridge, both starting and ending at Hinode Pier; tickets are ¥800. The "Canal Cruise Line" runs between Hinode Pier and the Shinagawa Aquarium via the Ohi Seaside Park. A one way ticket costs ¥800. The Shinagawa Aquarium, noted for its dolphin shows, is closed Tuesdays.

For those looking for an evening cruise, the Tokyo Cruise Ship Company also offers a "Restaurant Boat" on certain nights during the summer. As dates and menu vary, it is wise to call and make reservations according to your desires. The cruise leaves Hinode Pier at 6:30pm and lasts about 90 minutes; just long enough to see Tokyo Bay at night! The cost is about ¥7,200 for adults (¥4,700 for children under 12).

Try a different look at Tokyo by choosing one of these wonderful cruises. Sometimes the best view is the one when you take the time to step back and get the big picture. For details on the cruises, contact the Tokyo Cruise Ship Co. at 033841-9178/Asakusa Sales Office, or 03-3457-7830/Hinode Sales Office.

**DIRECTIONS:** To reach the Azuma Bridge, take the Ome Line to Tachikawa and transfer to the orange Chuo Line for Tokyo. Take this train all the way to Tokyo Station. Change to the Marunouchi Subway Line and go one stop to Ginza. There, change to the Ginza Line and go 10 stops, getting off at Asakusa. The Azuma Bridge is a one-minute walk from the Asakusa subway station.

To start at Hinode Pier, board the green Yamanote Line heading for Shimbashi and Shinagawa from Tokyo station. Travel three stops to Hamamatsu-cho Station, then walk 7 minutes to the pier. Access is also possible via a one-minute walk from Hinode Station of the Yurikamome Line out of Shimbashi.

Diane Cressman, Ann Bowers 8/97



## Asakusa

The Asakusa area is a popular spot and it is most famous for the Asakusa Kannon. A large compound contains one of Tokyo's oldest temples, the Sensoji Temple, the Asakusa Jinja, an important Shinto shrine, a five story pagoda; the Kaminarimon or "Gate of the Thunder God;" and numerous other gates and buildings including those dedicated to the seven gods of luck. The surrounding area is filled with numerous shops and restaurants.

One can easily spend a whole day wandering about the Asakusa area and never see the same thing twice. Just remember, as with the rest of Japan, to bring lots of yen to buy all the great things you'll see there. For people who don't mind crowds, there's something special going on every month.

New Year's Day is a major event with everybody making their first visit of the year to the temple. On March 18 and October 18 is the Golden Lion Dance. The third Sunday in May is the Sanja Festival, with shrines (mikoshi) being hauled about. On the first Sunday in October, the Edo Mikoshi Festival, similar to the Sanja festival, is celebrated. On November 3, is the White Crane Dance and to round out the year, is the Battledore Fair December 17-19.

**DIRECTIONS:** To get there, take the Ome line to Tachikawa and change to the Chuo Line. Take any orange train bound for Tokyo and get off at Kanda which is three stops after Shinjuku (Haijima to Kanda about ¥680). At Kanda, head for the north exit, turn in your ticket and follow signs for the Ginza Line subway (it's a bit of a walk). Get on the subway (¥140) and ride it to the end of the line at Asakusa. Look for signs directing you to the Kaminarimon and follow them (Exit #1). Head straight out and in a few seconds you will find yourself in front of the Kaminarimon gate. Directly across the street is the Tourist Center for the Asakusa area. It has great information in English, western toilets, and a reception area with chairs in which you can rest. (On the hour, an animated clock above the entrance outside puts on a show.) After you get your map, go straight down the street and through the gate onto the approach to the main temple compound. This street (Nakamise), is lined with souvenir shops selling everything from rice crackers to geisha wigs. Throughout Asakusa, you will find small temples dedicated to the seven good-luck gods.

Jill Jones, Christine Thomas

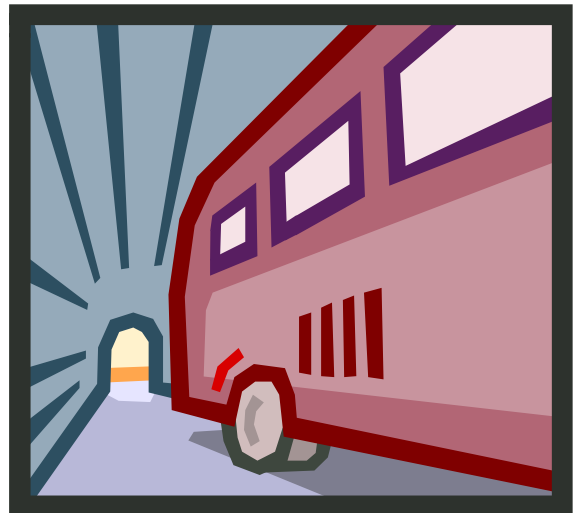
## Tokyo Nightlife Bus Tour

While at the New Sanno, a friend and I took a Tokyo nightlife tour run by Hato Tours, booked at the tour desk in the lobby. A bus picked us up at the hotel at about 5:20pm. We made one stop to pick up another participant, then on to the bus terminal. (We were a bit leery at this point, having to spend about 45 minutes in a bus terminal, but it was simply the meeting point for all the tours.) We boarded a bus at 6:10pm and started on our tour of Tokyo.

Our first destination was the Ginza, and what a sight it is at night! Daylight hours are no comparison, the neon lights are breathtaking and there was a great deal of activity even though it was a Sunday night. We traveled the entire twelve blocks of

the Ginza and learned a great deal about its history from our tour guide. We were lucky enough to be a small group of five ladies and got to know each other. Usually there are at least twenty people on the tour.

After the Ginza, we headed toward Asakusa and the Asakusa Kannon Temple. Again, I'd been there in the daylight, but it was beautiful at night. It was also the end of the New Year celebrations so there were still several vendors set up along the path to the temple. We were given 15 minutes to walk through the grounds. When we regrouped, we walked about two blocks to a tempura restaurant where we were served a tempura meal of assorted vegetables, shrimp, fish and some other kind of seafood. We also had salad, soup and a dessert of strawberries with a yummy yogurt sauce.



After our meal, we boarded the bus for a short trip to a Geisha House. The guide gave a quick history lesson of the area, telling us of the geisha girls. The Geisha show lasted about 25 minutes, and the costumes were beautiful; picture taking is allowed!

After the Geisha show, we proceeded to the New Otani Hotel and a short walking tour of the beautiful gardens there. On the 17th floor of the hotel, there is a rotating restaurant and bar. We each selected a drink from a pre-set menu (both alcoholic and non are available). We spent about 30 minutes enjoying the view and talking with our guide about Tokyo. Then we went back to the bus and drove back the New Sanno.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable tour. The cost for this tour is about Y9000. Reservations can be made at the New Sanno, or by calling the Hato Bus Company directly at (03)3435-6081.

Susan Clark 2/96

## Ebisu Garden Place

Originally a Sapporo Brewery, this shopping and restaurant area includes a Westin Hotel, and a movie theatre, the Beer Museum (complete with a virtual reality tour), and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography. While a bright sunny day would be the best time to enjoy the surroundings, most everything is under cover so rainy days should not stop



you from visiting. The completely covered “people mover” skywalk takes you from the Ebisu train station to the complex. The central square is also partially under cover so you can enjoy the waterfall even in bad weather. Over 60% of the area is devoted to open spaces with nature and walkways dominating. The central square would be a great place to “park” the significant other if he complains about shopping! And if he really gets on your nerves, direct him to the Great Beer Hall, Inside, he can choose from an array of beer and foods. After that, maybe the Beer Museum would appeal to him.

At this point, you may want to get back with him to get another credit card for all the rest of the shopping you will want to do at the Ebisu Mitsukoshi! Four floors of exquisite shopping await! This kind of shopping is for those of us who get “scared” in Ginza. For me, shopping in smaller department stores broken up into boutiques, is much more pleasurable. The basement has plenty of beautifully prepared foods as well as exotic treasures from around the world. We had some freshly made gyoza and a fruit drink from one of the booths.

**DIRECTIONS:** Go to Fussa Station. Buy a ticket to Ebisu station for the hour-long train ride. Take Ome Line to Tachikawa. At Tachikawa transfer to the Chuo Line (Track 4 or 5). Go to Shinjuku station. Transfer to Yamanote Line (Track 12). At Ebisu you will exit at East Gate, and follow the signs on the skyway to Ebisu Garden Place.

Note: The area is also accessible from the New Sanno. Parking is Y300 for 30 minutes.

Margaret Summers 1/95

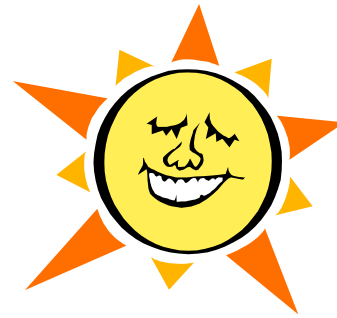


## Machida Petting Zoo

Have you ever fed a squirrel? I don't mean throwing a handful of seeds on the ground while wary animals stuff their cheeks. I mean actually hand-feeding squirrels. I know what you're thinking...Japan doesn't have any squirrels. Well, I'm here to tell you that Japan does indeed have squirrels and they are located at the Machida Petting Zoo. The Machida Petting Zoo is a little park that allows kids to get up close and personal with squirrels, rabbits, guinea pigs, and turtles. The animals are in open-air cages that allow easy access for the kids. The squirrels are in a large indoor facility. The only thing I will caution you on is the squirrels have sharp nails. You might want to wear pants when you go...they will climb on you in search of food. The park sells food for the animals for 100 yen. The cost for an adult is 400 yen and children are 200 yen.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Hachioji Bypass to the Aihara Interchange. Take a left onto Machida Kaido. In approximately 7 km you will see the Kisa Interchange - take a left and follow the road for 2 km. You will see a 7-11 on the left and an Esso Station on the right. The park is on your right in 1 km.

Reprinted from the Yokosan - August '01/Susan Czelusta



## Ikebukuro's Sunshine City

Sixty stories tall, Sunshine City, open every day from 10am to 8pm is filled with something for everyone.

When you enter the building on the B1 level, you traverse a long hall with a “people mover” escalator to the main entrance. There is an information desk with computers where you can get directions printed for places in the complex. Or, you can just wander through and follow the color-coded lines on the floors. The red lines lead to the World Import Mart, the aquarium and planetarium. The blue lines lead to the Ancient Orient Museum and Sunshine Theater. The orange lines lead you to Shopping Center Alpa.

You can make a circle tour of the B1 level as there are two main corridors the length of this level. When you are facing the information desk, if you take the entrance to the left, you will come to a beautiful fountain which has a show of dancing water accompanied by organ music at 1pm, 2:30 and 4pm. The first three levels are mostly department stores. In taking the escalators up, you will find some interesting shops and restaurants on the other floors.

There is an observatory on the 60th floor with a fantastic view on a nice day. It is open from 10am to 8pm. The elevator costs ¥600 for adults and ¥300 for children 4-12. An enjoyable part is the aquarium on the 10th Floor. There is also a planetarium on the 10th floor you can see in combination with the aquarium. The aquarium is open 10am to 6pm, ¥1,400 per adult (children 4-12 years ¥700). The planetarium is open 10am to 6pm with shows on the hour for ¥700 per adult (children ¥400). There is a seal show, and exhibits of seals, flamingos, penguins, etc. There are many fish not seen in the States as they are only found in this part of the world. Allow at least one hour for the aquarium.

The crafty-minded shopper will enjoy the seven-story Tokyu Hands at the B1 entrance to the Sunshine Building. There is something different on every floor from toys to sewing supplies and leather craft to home fix-up supplies.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome line to Tachikawa, and change to the Chuo Line. At Shinjuku, transfer to the green Yamanote Line in the direction of Shin-Okubo and get off at the fourth stop, Ikebukuro. Head for the east exit towards Seibu Department Store. You will see signs for Tokyu Hands also.

Coming out of the station, look for the tallest building (sometimes the top is hidden in the mist) and walk towards it. This will be Sunshine City. It will be in front of you as you come out of the station. You will have to go right a little bit to pick up the tree-lined street to the building.

Judy Harvey, Teri Hansen, Christine Thomas

