

# Weekend Trips or Longer from Fussa

## Nikko

A few hour trip from Yokota Air Base is one of Japan's most famous shrines - National Park Nikko. The park is home to the tomb of Tokogawa Ieyasu, the man who brought all of Japan's famous samurai warriors under one ruler.

But Nikko is much more than just another shrine. National Park Nikko is a collection of temples, pagodas, gates and shrines, full of beautiful gilded statues, altars and painted ceilings. When you enter the park, you should go to the ticket window at the entrance. Your first stop will be Sanbutsu-do, the largest temple in the Nikko mountains. Inside the temple you will see the statues of the Thousandhanded Kwannon, the Amida Buddha and the Horseheaded Kwannon. Enjoy the craftsmanship and sheer beauty of the statues, but don't expect to take a picture...photos inside the temples are not allowed. As you exit the temple, you can buy a book full of pictures. For 500 yen, it's a bargain. There are more than 10 temples at National Park Nikko, so plan to spend a lot of time if you want to see them all.

After seeing a few of the temples, head up the mountain where you will see a giant torii - or gate. As you go through the gate, you will see the gorgeous Five-Storeyed Pagoda. The pagoda was originally built in 1650, but was destroyed by fire in 1815. It was rebuilt four years later. Just past the pagoda, you will see the sacred stables. Inside is a beautiful white stallion, thought to be good luck to the Japanese. Above the stable doors, you'll see a series of wooden carvings. If you look closely, you'll see the famous "See no, Hear no, Speak no Evil" monkeys.

After climbing another couple of flights of stairs, you'll go through the Yomeimon Gate, a giant structure covered in gold awnings and guard dogs. The gate is also known as the "Sunset Gate" because it is said visitors do not grow tired of viewing the gate until dusk. Inside this gate, turn to the right and you'll see the entrance to Tokogawa's tomb. You can't go in without paying a small fee. But once inside, you will get to see the famous "Sleeping Cat," and climb the 100 steps to the famous tomb.

But don't spend all of your time at the National Park, because Nikko has so much more to offer. If you drive, which I recommend, take the car past the park, and head up to what is known as the "ZigZag Highway." Before heading up the series of twists and turns, we saw a couple of wild monkeys standing on the side of the road. Note of caution: tourists are warned not to stop their cars to feed the monkeys, because they have been known to be violent. The climb to the top of the mountain is sheer driving pleasure. The road is a series of 25 or so switchbacks, with some curves being more than 180 degrees. (Before you get to the top, watch for the ropeway where you can get a beautiful view of the lake and falls from above.) After navigating the roadway, you will find Lake Chuzenji, a crystal-clear lake located at the top of the mountain. There are a series of quaint shops and restaurants alongside the lake. There are also a few hotels.

Before heading down the mountain keep an eye out for the signs to Kegon Falls. The falls are on the Ojiri River, which flows from Chuzenji. More than 300 feet high, the falls are breathtaking...and loud. The trip down the mountain means more twists and turns. If you are going to stay the night, a lot of military people prefer to stay at the Turtle Inn Annex/Hotori-An (0288-53-3663), which comes complete with meals and an onsen. If you go during the off-peak season, you may have the hotel to yourself! We chose to stay just outside Nikko at the Woodsman's Village, a collection of log cabins located on the other side of the mountain from the National Park. The cabins are completely made of logs, but contain all the modern conveniences from a full kitchen and full bath. No beds though, they provide futons. The cabins vary in size, meaning it would be perfect for a couple, or an entire group. The cost is 5,000 yen per person a night; cheaper for children under 12. The people who run the cabins speak English, so making reservations is easy.

For Yokota residents, Nikko is a must-see attraction.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the Tohoku Expressway to the Utsunomiya Interchange, then follow the signs to the Nikko Toll Road, which will lead you to Nikko. The tolls will cost about 5,000 yen each way. You can get to the Tohoku either by going into Tokyo, or by turning right out the terminal gate and following Route 16 for about 30 km. Be warned, Route 16 winds through several towns along the way, and the traffic can be heavy at times. It took us about two hours to get to the Tohoku by traveling Route 16, and another hour or so to get to Nikko. You can take a super-express train to Nikko as well. The line runs from Asakusa Station, and seats can be reserved in advance. If you are interested in staying at the Woodsman's Village check out the website at [www2.gol.com/users/jshapiro](http://www2.gol.com/users/jshapiro).

Reprinted from the Yokosan, October 2001/ Sam Amrhein

Please see the Yujo Center for directions & maps.

## Nikko Edo-Mura

Located south of Nikko near Kinugawa spa, this theme park is a re-creation of a village during the Edo era, just as it was long ago. Attractions include the Great Ninja Theatre, the Golden Tea Ceremony, the Black Ninja Mansion, the South City Courthouse, and the Haunted Temple. There are street performances and sword fighting on an outdoor stage scheduled throughout the day (if the weather is nice). Many performances are repeated at 20-30 minute intervals, so you won't have to worry about missing out on any one show.

The price of passes vary according to the number of special attractions included but run about ¥4,200 per adult and ¥2,500 per child. For more information, telephone 0288-77-1777.

P. W. Edward

## Tobu World Square

If you get a chance, visit Tobu World Square before leaving Nikko. It is an impressive collection of 1/12 size model buildings from around the world. (See <http://marriottmd.com/photos/> for some pictures.)

Brian Marriott 11/01





## Mount Fuji

Fuji-san, a nearly perfect volcanic cone rising to an altitude of 3,776m (12,388 ft.), is Japan's highest peak and one of the world's most beautiful. Its northern base area is adorned with five lakes making it ideal for year-round recreation. Clear views are virtually guaranteed during the winter.

**TRAIN DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line from Fussa to Tachikawa and switch to the Chuo Line. Ride to Shinjuku Station. From there, Kawaguchi-ko Station can be reached in around two hours by express train or by express bus.

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** First, have a GOOD road map of the area. From Yokota, get on the Chuo Expressway and drive toward Kofu (away from Shinjuku & Tokyo). About 45km after the Hachioji entrance start watching for the Otsuki Junction-interchange where the Chuo splits. Bear left towards Kawaguchi-Ko. Continue on the expressway to Exit 2, about 11 km. You will see a large amusement park (Fujikyu Highlands) to your left. The one-way toll will be about Y2,000. After the tollgate, you'll come to a "T." Go left on Rt. 138 to reach Lake Yamanaka. A right turn will take you towards the town of Kawaguchi-Ko, the other four lakes and the road to Mt. Fuji.

The annual climbing season is from July 1 to Aug. 31. The most popular of the six climbing trails begins at Lake Kawaguchi. Each trail is divided into 10 stages ranging in length from 15 to 25km. You can also begin your ascent at the Fifth Station, which will take about 5-7 hours to reach the summit. To drive to the 5th Station, look for the "Subaru Line" toll road, which begins about 1/2km after you turn right onto Rt. 138 from the Chuo. (See section on climbing Mt. Fuji.)

The Five Lakes of Mt. Fuji

**Yamanaka-Ko** is the largest of the five lakes (2.5 sq mi). It is a year-round resort good for camping and the Aug. 1 Lake Festival and fireworks in the summer. It is known to offer ice fishing and ice-skating in the winter. There are beautiful views of Fuji here.

**Kawaguchi-Ko** is the most developed of the five lakes. Summer traffic around the lake often moves slowly and there's an endless string of shops, restaurants, hotels, and other amusements along the lakeshore highway (Rt. 139). The northern shore affords the best views of Fuji-san.

**Sai-Ko:** From Kawaguchi-Ko, Rt. 139 branches off from the lakeshore road, enters a tunnel, and emerges beside Sai-ko, noted for its quiet, secluded setting. There are no hotels here; only rustic cabins and campgrounds for the canoeing and trout fishing enthusiasts who visit. This is considered by some to be the most beautiful of the five lakes. To the south of Lake Sai-ko is Koyodai (Maple Hill), which offers magnificent views in every direction, highlighted by a close-up view of Mt. Fuji.

**Shoji-Ko:** With a surface area of under half a square mile, Shoji-Ko is by far the smallest of the five lakes. Only the summit of Fuji-san clears the shoreline mountains to be reflected in Shoji-Ko's surface. At the northwestern tip of the lake there are fresh water marshes where the autumn colors are spectacular. The rich have vacation homes hidden among the trees here—away from the crowds. A good place to go for solitude.

**Motosu-Ko:** The deepest of the lakes (413ft), Motosu-Ko never freezes over in winter. Its deep blue water is a perfect mirror for Mt. Fuji as it rises from behind the shoreline slopes. The northern shore is quite steep, but the flat southern shore is open and has been designated a public beach. Summer picnics are popular here, but there are few boats.

Fujikyu Highlands Amusement Park

As you slow to pay your toll at the Kawaguchi-Ko interchange of the Chuo, Fujikyu's Ferris wheel and other rides will be your left. In addition to the standard amusement park fare, there are ice-skating and hockey rinks. You can bring your own equipment, or rent. Fujikyu Highlands is open 11am-5pm, weekdays; noon-6pm weekends and holidays; closed Tuesdays. Ice rinks are open from the first Sunday in Oct until Mar 31. The amusement park is open during summer months, on Sundays, and holidays throughout the year. Tel: (03) 3374-2221.

Cheryl Raggio

**Mt. Fuji is open for climbing in July and August ONLY! If you would like to climb Mt. Fuji while you are here, a good place to find more information, maps and even sign up for a tour of the beautiful mountain, is the Yujo Community Center here on base. See also Hiking section later in this book.**



# Hakone

Hakone is a popular vacation getaway about one and a half hours outside of Tokyo. It is a beautiful little area nestled in the crater of a volcano. Just getting there is part of the fun. You take the Odakyu line from Shinjuku to Odawara, then transfer to a tiny railroad line called the Hakone Yumoto line that winds its way up the lower part of the volcano. As it gets higher, it has to reverse directions several times to switch-back up the steeper areas.

Along the way, make sure you stop for a while at the Chokoku-no-mori station to visit the Hakone Open Air Museum. It is a beautiful art museum with most of its display dedicated to large sculptures that dot beautiful lawns. They also have a building dedicated to works by Picasso. After getting back on the Hakone Yumoto line, you go all the way to the end and then take a cable car that pulls you straight up a steep section of the slope. From here there is a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside. At the end of the cable car, you get on a ropeway that takes you over the crest of the mountain into the gigantic crater. Looking out the ropeway, you pass a section where they are drilling into the side of the mountain to prevent the pressure from building up and causing an explosion.

Make sure you get off at the stop in the middle of the ropeway to see the “sulfurous vapor erupting area.” Here you can take a short nature walk and see the sulfur steaming from the ground, and natural hot springs from the volcano. You can eat eggs boiled in the hot water which the Japanese say will help you live longer. Along the nature trail there are signs in Japanese and English that tell you such things as “This area was once covered with tall trees, but now you can find only the species which have been able to survive such things as Volcanic eruption.”

The ropeway will then take you the rest of the way into the crater to Lake Ashi, which you cross on large replicas of pirate ships. Lake Ashi is a crater lake famous for its reflection of Mt. Fuji on clear, calm days. The boat takes you to Hanokemachi which is a historical area from the 1600’s, including the Hakone Checkpoint and a portion of an ancient highway that was lined with cedars to provide shade hundreds of years ago.

By the time we get here we are pretty tired, so we catch a bus to the Fujiya Hotel in Miyanoshita to spend the night. It is a beautiful hotel established in 1878, making it the oldest western-style hotel in Japan. It has been visited by many famous people including Albert Einstein, Dwight Eisenhower, Margaret Thatcher, Hellen Keller, and many emperors of Japan. It is nestled among trees, and has a beautiful garden in back which is home to the only California Redwood tree in Japan. Inside the decor is beautiful, including many wood carvings. You can also bathe in the natural hot spring onsens.

The next day, be sure to see some of the many other attractions in the area including the Hakone Ashinoyu Flower Center (a gigantic greenhouse with many types of flowers and other plants - indoors, so nice even in case of rain) and the Botanical Garden of the Wetlands. There are many museums, not all of which we have had the chance to visit yet. One with

an interesting name is the “Mental Image Museum.” There is also a Teddy Bear Museum, a Glass Art Museum, and others.

On our way home the next day, we stopped at the Odawara Castle. The old castle town of Odawara serves as the main gateway to the Hakone district. About a 10-minute walk from Odawara Station is the reconstructed five-story donjon (central structure of the castle). It houses a museum of historical materials, ancient suits of armor and swords, folk arts & crafts, and special exhibits. The view of Sagami Bay from the fourth floor is excellent. Open 9am-4:30pm, admission is Y200 for adults, Y100 for children. The park surrounding the castle includes a playground and small zoo.

Brian & Kristen Marriott 11/01

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** Driving in these areas, especially on weekends or in the summer, can be very difficult. Traffic is extremely heavy and slow. To maximize your sightseeing time, it is well worth the effort to leave no later than 5am. To enter the Hakone district at Odawara, take Rt. 16 from Yokota south, until it joins Rt. 129. Just north of Atsugi, you will see elevated Rt. 246 and a sign for the Tomei Expressway. Turn right immediately after passing under elevated Rt. 246 - this leads to a ramp that puts you on 246. Go through Atsugi. Look for signs for Odawara/Atsugi toll road (this will be south of Atsugi). When you see the signs, it will be a right turn. You will drive parallel to the toll road for several kilometers before entering. Once you are on the toll road, you will pass through two tollbooths and pay Y350 at each. When the toll road ends, follow the signs to Rt. 1. At Miyanshita (about 7km), the road will divide. The hotel is at the fork on the left. The right fork of the road will lead to Gora. The left fork will lead to Lake Ashi, which you could visit before checking in at the hotel, since check-in is not until 2pm.

**TRAIN DIRECTIONS:** Take the Ome Line to Tachikawa. Change to the Chuo Line and go to Tokyo Station. You can take either the Shinkansen (“Kodama Train”, takes 42 minutes, runs every 20 minutes) or a regular train (Tokaido Line, takes 90 minutes, runs every 15 minutes) to Odawara Station. You can also reach the Hakone area from Shinjuku or Machida stations on the Odakyu Railway. Express trains run regularly to Odawara (takes 90 minutes), while the super-fast “Romance Car” runs only every 30 minutes (seat reservations required).

Two different transportation companies, Hakone Tozan Railway and Izu Hakone Railway, offer discount tickets from which you can choose. These passes are convenient for multiple use of various modes of transportation after you reach the Hakone area and are valid for four days.

The Hakone Free Pass allows you to use the Hakone Tozan Railway, bus, cable car, ropeway, the Odakyu highway bus (between Togendai and the Tomei Gotemba Expressway interchange) and the Hakone excursion boat on Lake Ashi as many times as you wish. These passes are sold at all Odakyu Railway stations and at the Hakone Tozan Information Center at Odawara Station (“Romance Car” ticket not included). Approximate prices from Odawara are Y3,500 for adults and Y1,750 for children (Y4,600 per adult from Shinjuku). Depending on



the attraction, the pass includes 10% discounts for Gora Park, Hakone Museum, Chokoku-no-Mori (Hakone Open Air Museum), Hakone Checkpoint, Narikawa Art Forum, Hakone Arboretum, Owakudani Natural Science Museum, etc.

A similar pass known as the Hakone-Wide Free Pass allows use of the Izu Hakone bus, cable car, ropeway, excursion bus, and includes discounts at various attractions. The pass is sold at travel agencies and the Izu Hakone Information Center at Odawara Station (for a little less than the other pass.)

Cheryl Raggio, Margaret Summers

#### Lodging in Hakone

##### **Fujiya Hotel near the Miyanoshita Station.**

They have a special foreigner's rate of about \$120 per night. All of their employees study English in the United States and making reservations by phone is easy. You can contact them at FUJIYA HOTEL 359 Miyanoshita, Hakone, Kanagawa Pref.

Tel. 0460-2-2211, Telex. 3892-718, Fax 0460-2-2215.

<http://www.fujiyahotel.co.jp/>

E-mail/ [info@fujiyahotel.co.jp](mailto:info@fujiyahotel.co.jp)

##### **Camp Fuji.**

Other people stay at Camp Fuji, a little further away, but less expensive (\$25/day in 2001). They then drive into Hakone. The number for billeting is 265-5502. (Camp Fuji Operator is 265-5011)

Brian and Kristen Marriott

For more information, see:

- <http://www.odakyu-group.co.jp/english/index.htm> For information on Odakyu Railroad, information, including Hakone Free Pass.
- [http://www.kankou.hakone.kanagawa.jp/index\\_e.html](http://www.kankou.hakone.kanagawa.jp/index_e.html) For Hakone's Home Page.
- <http://www.kanagawa-kankou.or.jp/index-e.html> For excellent information about many of the attractions in Hakone.
- <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/> For the Japan National Tourist Organization's "Practical Travel Guide" on Hakone. (Click on "Regional Tourist Guides" then "Practical Travel Guide")
- <http://www.marriottmd.com/photos/> for photos of some of the sites in Hakone.



## Matsumoto-Jo

A long day trip, or nice overnight trip, the city of Matsumoto is located in Nagano Prefecture in the Matsumoto Basin, surrounded by mountains in Central Honshu and is north and west of the Kanto Plain. It is a well-established university town, which also supports a large silkworm industry and as a result is a weaving and textile center as well. However, the town's major claim to fame is its castle (Matsumoto Jo), which was begun in 1504 A.D. Of the approximately thirty-five castles in Japan, only four survived the ravages of World War II without having to be rebuilt. Matsumoto-jo has the distinction of being one of the four castles that survives in its original state. This majestic building rises six stories in height, and typical of its style, is surrounded by a moat as its principal means of fortification. Most of the pictures we have seen have set in our mind the accepted depiction of what a Japanese castle should look like, and this usually follows the norm of such castles as Nagoya and Osaka, which are white. However, what the first time visitor notices immediately and what differentiates Matsumoto-jo from most other castles is its basic black color.

Construction of Matsumoto-jo was begun back in 1504, by the ruling family of the region at that time, the Ogasawaras. Originally, it was referred to as Fukoshi Castle, and it was built out on a plain, instead of a mountaintop, in concurrence with the military thinking of that period. It was part of an area fortification plan that included several other castles; Nagisa and A'rai Castles among them. Throughout the 1500's, power struggles ensued, political turmoil was rampant, ruling families were repeatedly swept from power and military strategies were in flux. By 1550, mountain type castles were not considered to be strategically important, and were destroyed. Matsumoto retained its importance as a "plains type" castle from which forces could be quickly dispatched to surrounding regions. In the late 1500's, further castle improvements were undertaken by surrounding it with a moat and laying the plans for the building of a castle town. Succeeding generations maintained and improved the castle and its town. However, late in the Meiji Era the castle fell subject to time and weather, was sold into private hands, and declined into further disrepair. In the early 1900's great efforts resulted in a major renovation that saved the castle from total collapse. Its designation as a National Treasure in 1936, and major restoration at government expense during the Showa period in the '50s, brought the castle up to its present state.

My family spent a wonderful and breathless afternoon trooping up six stories to the top, viewing displays on each floor of swords, armor, weaponry, and tools of the period. We peeked out of gun and archery portholes, viewed stone drop openings and latticed windows. It's a delight to explore all the nooks and crannies and let one's imagination run on about what it really must have been like to be a samurai during the castle's heyday.

The grounds were lush, beautiful and inviting. A volunteer English-speaking guide was on hand in the rear garden; I suspect to practice his English as much as to answer our questions. A covered display off to one side of the grounds had pictures of the other remaining castles in Japan, both original



and rebuilt. Our guide was very helpful in explaining to us the locations of each castle and the differences among them.

Outside the moat and the rear exit of the castle is the **Matsumoto City Museum**, which encompasses the Japan Folklore Museum. It was a wonderful place to spend an hour or so browsing through the exhibits. Most of the displays were in Japanese with some in English, but an English translation brochure was available at the entrance and it gave the gist of what each room held. The museum houses approximately 89,000 items of historical significance including dolls, tools, armor, clocks, stuffed animals of the region and modern works of art by local prominent Japanese artists of the 19th and 20th centuries. Fees for the museum and castle were charged and although I cannot recall the exact amount, they were minimal.

Matsumoto itself was a wonderful, quaint town beautifully mixing old and new. We walked by an old house of feudal architecture sandwiched between two new multiple-story dwellings. The streets wind in and out in typical Japanese fashion, and all along the way interesting shops abound with Curios, antiques, indigo goods, souvenirs, and Japanese omiyage. Be sure to allow at least an hour or more for browsing through the town.

Although it is significant in historical terms, Matsumoto Jo is not a prominent landmark, relatively speaking, so one almost doesn't see it until you are pretty close. Once you leave the expressway there are blue signs which you can follow to the castle. Although we could have done okay without it, I recommend purchasing a bilingual road atlas. There were a couple of instances when one could track the kanji-equivalent of our desired destination on the map along the way, which, if nothing else, brought reassurance that we hadn't strayed far from the beaten path.

One hears how Central Honshu is really a very beautiful part of Japan; a trip out to Matsumoto reinforces that. The scenery alone is worth venturing out for, and when combined with the historical significance of the area, one comes to appreciate life beyond Tokyo and all that Japan has to offer.

We found we could successfully navigate using our Japanese Atlas. Just because you don't read Kanji doesn't mean you can't follow signs. We overcame the fear of being the "functional illiterate" gaijin and really began to feel independent. So pack a lunch, take off to Matsumoto and see what you can discover.

One of the first things we recommend after arriving in Matsumoto is following the blue signs to the Matsumoto Station, where you'll find an information booth to get maps. In addition to the castle and adjoining museum, there is also a beautiful **Ukiyo-e (woodblock) museum** which houses one of the largest collections of woodblock prints in the world. There is also a **100-year old elementary school** that is now a museum. There are also old temples and lots of onsens (hot spring baths). It's also a wonderful place to go on an overnight trip. Many Japanese travel to Matsumoto for weekend onsen retreats.

**DIRECTIONS:** Matsumoto is a 3 to 4 hour drive by car from Yokota on the Chuo Expressway. It's approximately a 200km drive. Rest stops abound along the expressway with ample western-style commodes, lots of goodies and, to my

surprise, free tea. Do be prepared for a hefty toll fee, though, as it's a Y4000 charge from the Hachioji interchange to Matsumoto, one way. Parking was available across the street from the castle for a nominal fee. Should you prefer the trains to driving, travel time and train fare expense are comparable. Go to the Yujo Community Center for detailed driving directions.

Evelyn Brown, Brian Marriott

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## Boso Peninsula

Ready for dancing flamingos, a sea world, beautiful scenery and more? With its easy access, the Boso Peninsula is a popular and ideal vacation land. From Yokota, it's an easy trip by car, going either on the expressways north of Tokyo or taking the ferry across Tokyo Bay. A 30-min drive from Yokosuka Naval Base, Kurihama Pier offers numerous ferries throughout the day to make the 30-minute ride across to Kanaya on Boso Peninsula. Vehicles may also make the ferry trip. Kamogawa City is just across Tokyo Bay in Chiba Prefecture. If you're adventurous, you'll find a wonderful spot for a vacation located on this scenic coast.

**Namekawa Island** is a zoo, but it's landscaped beautifully into a breathtaking setting. You'll not only see a wide variety of animals, but there's enough jungle-gym equipment to exhaust children. Several restaurants serve a variety of foods, and there are maps in English. A huge pool invites you to beat the heat, and there are shows and demonstrations to entertain you.

**Kamogawa Sea World** is within 3.5km of Namekawa Island. It has all the shows and sea life one would expect. A film and exhibition of Japan's white whales is especially fascinating. The opportunity to pet and feed the various creatures, including the white whales, is well worth the trip. In addition, there is an aquarium and, of course, rides.

Young people love **Pinnokio House** where hands-on equipment educates them about sea life. Blindfolded and using only the sounds playing from helmets on their heads, people can



travel through a maze and parallel the killer whale's swim through the ocean.

To do the area justice, you should stay for at least a few days. Youth hostels in the area are reasonably priced. Another alternative is to stay at Yokosuka's lodge and take the ferry back and forth.

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** Check with the Yujo Community Center for detailed directions. To drive to Kurihama Pier, set your odometer to zero as you leave the Yokosuka Navy Lodge. At the Main Gate of Yokosuka, 1.8km from the lodge, turn left onto Rt. 16. Follow Rt. 16 until you see Rt. 134, 5.4km. Get on Rt. 134 and KFC will be on your left. At 8km you should be in the far left lane. You will see a Statue of Liberty and a sign for Kurihama in English and see Denny's on the right. A set of railroad tracks will be on your left. Watch for English signs to Kurihama Harbor at approximately 10.5km. You will see a "T" intersection at 11.8km, and you will be facing the harbor. Turn right and go 0.9km. You will go through one light between the "T" and the next turn. Turn left into the landing/parking lot for the ferry.

Buying a round-trip ticket is more economical. Reservations for the ferry are recommended for the warmer months, April-August, and may be made through the rec center travel agency for a small fee. The driver's fare is included in the cost of a vehicle. And the vehicle's cost is dependent on size. Vehicle registration papers are needed to purchase a ticket. The ferry offers ample exploring space, plus an enclosed lounge with a small snack bar.

Leaving the ferry, drive to the right. You will see a sign for Sea World that reads 34km, and you will be on Rt. 127 with the coast to your right. At 4.5km, you will come to an off-centered intersection. Turn right; then immediately left. Look for a sign for Rt. 34. You will cross a set of railroad tracks and continue on a refreshing drive through the countryside. Drive straight through some signal lights that seem in the middle of nowhere. Eventually you will come to an intersection for Rt. 128. Turn left for Katsuura. At 2.6km from that turn, you will be at the main gate for Sea World on the right. Parking is available for a fee. Admission: ¥1,900 for adults and ¥900 for children, 4-12 years old.

Sondra Halweg, Thel Lemons

## Shimoda

Shimoda, located on the Izu Peninsula, is historically important because it is where Perry's "black ships" first landed to "Force" Japan open to the world after its self-enforced isolation for a few hundred years.

We started our journey at 5am. Traffic was slow; eventually we were out of the crowded cities and following a lovely scenic route along the coast. According to the atlas, it's about 250km to Shimoda from Yokota and we followed national roads for the 5 hours it took to get there.

Finally, we arrived via a long and winding road up to a beautifully landscaped hotel perched on the edge of a small mountain. We stayed at the Tokyu Hotel, a western-style hotel, near the beach with a nice view. The hotel staff was friendly and spoke English. We were taken to our room on the fifth floor and shown a spectacular view from our balcony: a

sparkling blue inlet with a yacht and solitary swimmer. We were able to see the fish enjoying their swim and we were even treated to an occasional flash of shining silver by a jumping fish. Our room with two twin beds plus a roll-away for our son was ¥26,900 per night. We took ¥70,000 with us and came back with a good portion not spent.

Shimoda is loaded with restaurants, so we had a difficult time choosing, but we settled on a quaint little Japanese restaurant three blocks from the hotel. Our stay in Shimoda at the Tokyu Hotel was so wonderful that we are planning a follow-up trip. Although there are many sights on the way an in Shimoda, we opted to relax on the beach instead.

Connie Lukens 9/96

## Nagoya

Nagoya is often called the "gateway to central Japan." By Shinkansen, Japan's "bullet train," Tokyo to Nagoya takes almost two hours; a round trip ticket costs about ¥20,000. By car, you can easily drive via the Chuo or the Tomei Expressways. It will take about five hours and expressway tolls come to approximately ¥7,000.

Once you arrive, there are many things to see and do in the city itself and in towns nearby. Two offices to check for brochures are the Nagoya International Center, (052) 581-5678, and Nagoya City Tourist Information Office, (052) 541-4301. There are many hotels. Finding accommodations should not be difficult, but it is best to have reservations. Several days are needed to thoroughly explore this area, but by being selective and planning carefully, a shorter trip could also be enjoyable.

Nagoya Castle, built in the 17th century by Ieyasu Tokugawa, is one of the best attractions of Nagoya City. Originally the castle was designed to withstand threatening attacks by the Toyotomi of Osaka, and the structure itself was an engineering marvel for that time period. Some of the castle walls have stood for centuries. Over two million stones were used to construct the castle. Each family or local lord who contributed a stone, engraved their crest or symbol as a pledge of faith. The castle was completed in 1612, and the Tokugawa family resided there for 250 years. In 1930, the castle premises became the property of Nagoya City. For a while Nagoya Castle was used for a military garrison and munitions were stored there. An air raid in May 1945 destroyed all but a few turrets and buildings. The castle has undergone extensive restoration. Some of the art and artifacts saved from the 1945 destruction are on display. The two golden dolphins (sachi) that once decorated the roof have been replaced with replicas. The sachi are plated in 84 percent gold and stand today as a symbol of Nagoya City. Plan to spend one half to one full day on the castle grounds. Telephone the Nagoya Castle Administration Office (052) 2311770 for more information.

Also located in Nagoya City is the Tokugawa Museum. Displays from this private collection of over 10,000 items belonging to the Tokugawa family are rotated to coincide with the seasons. Tokugawa was a powerful daimyo, and his full dress and equipment are kept in the museum. There are few complete sets existing in Japan today, and these items are considered to be of great national and historical value. In addition, there are pictures, swords, tea ceremony sets, textiles and



folkcraft. It should take about an hour to see the museum. Admission fees to the Tokugawa Museum are ¥800 for adults, ¥500 for students, and ¥400 for children, aged 7 to 14. Special exhibitions may require additional payment. The museum is closed every Monday unless it is a national holiday, and then it is closed that Tuesday. It is closed at the end of the year and for New Year. The hours are 10am-5pm with admittance until 4:30pm. English brochures are available. Tel. (052) 935-6262.

For shoppers, Nagoya has underground malls, and most major Japanese department stores can be found. Nagoya also has a few traditional crafts such as tie-dyeing and Japanese cloisonne (shippo). Kishimen are wide flat noodles famous in the Nagoya area. There are large parks and numerous temples to explore and enjoy if you have time.

To the south of Nagoya, in the district known as Chubu, is the Ise Shrine and Toba, the capital of pearl production in Japan. Mikimoto Pearls has a visitor center with explanations of the pearl culture process. A trip to the area requires one full day.

Cindy Drossner

## Inuyama

Inuyama is a small, quiet city about an hour's drive (20 miles) north of Nagoya. By train from Nagoya, the Meitetsu Line takes about 30 minutes to Inuyama Yuen. From there it is a fifteen minute walk or three-minute taxi ride to Inuyama Castle. You can easily spend a hour or more at the castle. This smaller castle, built in 1537 by Lord Oda Nobuyasu, sits on a hill overlooking a river. A view of the area can be had by climbing steep stairs to the top level and walking outside.

**Inuyama Castle** was designated as a National Treasure in 1935 and was under restoration from 1961-1965. The castle is owned by the Naruse family, the only privately owned castle in Japan. Admission is ¥300 for adults and ¥100 for junior high and under. The only days it is closed are Dec. 29, 30 and 31. The hours are 9am-5pm daily. Down the street about a ten minute walk from Inuyama Castle is **Jo-an**. This lovely garden contains several tea rooms, one of which is a National Treasure of Japan. A famous tea master and younger brother of Oda Nobunaga spent his retirement here. Look for the *suikinkutsu*, translated literally "water koto or harp hole." This is a specially constructed underground pot or barrel that "sings" like the strings on a koto or harp as water drips into it. As water drips from a bamboo spigot onto what appears to be only a pile of rocks, you hear different "notes." An hour is enough to see Jo-an, but more time could be spent in the tranquil beauty of these gardens. Admission is ¥500 and tea and snacks, if desired, will be an additional ¥300. Jo-an is open year-round, Tel. (0568) 61-4608.

The **Japan Monkey Center** is also in Inuyama. This is called a museum, but it is more like a primate zoo. It is reputed to be the largest and richest center of its kind in the world. There are over 100 species (some rare) and 1,000 animals. Fifteen species can only be seen in Japan, including Proboscis monkeys. Operating hours are: Feb. 16 - Nov. 30, 9:30am-5pm, Dec. 1- Feb. 15, 9:30am-4pm. Admission is:

adults, ¥1,000; high school students, ¥600; and elementary/junior high students, ¥400. Tel. (0568) 61-2327.

You and the family can "shoot the rapids" on the Kiso River, often referred to as the **Nippon Rhine**. The eight-mile trip is offered year round. For more information, call the Nippon Rhine Kanko Co., Ltd., (0574) 26-2231. Fees are: adults, ¥2,700; children, ¥1,350. Nippon Rhine is 10 minutes by bus from the Nippon Rhine Imawatari Station on the Nagoya railroad.

Traditional **cormorant fishing** can be seen in the Inuyama area from June 1- Sept. 30. For more information, call (0568) 61-0057.

Perhaps a day at **Meiji Mura Museum** would interest you. Inuyama is best known for this open-air museum where valuable buildings from the Meiji Era (1868-1912) have been relocated. Meiji Mura is an effort to preserve and display Japan's first western-style buildings. Japan opened her doors to the West during the Meiji Period. There are 57 buildings including residences, a theater, a lighthouse and more. Street-cars and steam locomotives provide transportation within the village. Meiji Mura Museum is about 20 minutes by bus from Inuyama Station and the number is (0568) 67-0314. From March 1-Oct. 31, the hours are 10am-5pm, and from Nov. 1-Feb. 28, 10am-4pm. Admission is about ¥1,200 for adults, ¥1,000 for high school students, and ¥600 for elementary/junior high students. Not less than half a day is suggested for Meiji Mura.

For more information on the area, contact the City of Inuyama Tourist Council (0568) 61-2825.

Cindy Drossner

## Seto

Seto is famous for pottery, dishes and ceramic novelties. It is an easy 45-60 minute drive from Nagoya to Seto. By subway and train from Nagoya Station to Seto, take the Higashiyama (subway) Line and transfer to Meitetsu (train) on the Seto Line at Sakae. Get off at Owari-Seto.

For more than 1000 years this area has been producing pottery. Many of the Christmas pieces, canisters, flowers and birds sold by China Pete's or Tommy China are produced in Seto. There are different display rooms in which to see examples of pottery done in the area. Displays are marked with names such as Setomono Plaza, the Service Center, and Seto Chamber of Commerce. It is also possible just to wander up and down the street and go into little side streets and alleys. It is dusty and definitely "dirty dish" shopping, but the prices are better than in Tokyo.

On the third Saturday and Sunday in September, the Ceramics Festival is held in Seto. About 200 open stalls, selling ceramics at discount prices, are set up along the Seto River.

Seto is a small city with a river dividing the main street in half. There are about 12 different bridges crossing the river. Each of the bridges is uniquely decorated with various kinds of pottery or porcelain. The water in the river is cloudy and full of sediment from all the different pottery makers. There are several small restaurants including a noodle shop on the main street that serves homemade noodles. Finding a place to eat is not a problem. Even though Seto is small, it takes a while to get oriented, and some people enjoy a full day poking in and out



of shops. Several hours would be enough if you are not that interested in “dirty dish” shopping.

From Seto, you can get on the Chuo at the Tabimi interchange. The green expressway signs are clear and easy to follow and it takes about four hours to get from Seto back to Yokota.

Cindy Drossner

## Takayama City

If you look on a map, the city is identified as Takayama; however, when I mentioned to many of my Japanese friends that I had been to Takayama they were unsure of the place until I said “Hida Takayama”. Whatever the difference, it was an enjoyable trip. According to the tourist books, this city is described as a little Kyoto. It is designed in a grid-like fashion similar to Kyoto, which makes navigating easy, and it is an old city; that’s where the similarity ends. This city does not deluge you with shrines and temples, (though there are some very nice ones to visit), but instead, gives you a friendly, relaxed feeling.

The city is small and many of the attractions are within walking distance. There are two daily early morning markets which abound with fresh vegetables, fruits and crafts that are brought in and vended by farmers. There are many sake factories and miso makers which are open for tours and tastes. There are many craft areas where locals produce their specialties made from wood, ceramics, pottery, and cloth. Although this city is known as an original old city with beautiful, authentic architecture, it is not without some modern conveniences. One thing, however, that you’ll not find is a modern American-style restaurant. In fact, we weren’t even able to find a 7-11, although there is an equivalent. The eating facilities available are abundant and serve delicious natural cuisine.

Takayama has a couple of Western-style hotels and some Japanese ryokans; however, we found these to be quite costly. A good alternative is a “pension.” There are many in the area and the price is under Y10,000/person per night. This price includes a good, filling European-style supper and breakfast. Pension rooms usually accommodate two or three people in beds. Some have private bathrooms, but most have house facilities separate for men and women. If you are not familiar with a pension, it is similar to an American bed and breakfast. Two words of warning: towels and noises. Pensions do not provide towels or any of the other small toiletries that hotels provide. You must take your own. If you want a good night’s sleep, check the area for noise such as trains, etc. Upon arriving at our pension, the host ushered us up to our room and immediately pointed out the beautiful mountain view. It wasn’t until later in the night we discovered that in the valley below our window with the beautiful view was a farm with a bunch of cows. Much to our sleepless dismay, we discovered the interesting fact that Japanese cows don’t sleep at night. At least these didn’t!

Another enjoyable fact about Takayama is the scenery. It’s in a mountain farm area and everything about it is clean

and fresh. During our visit in September the rice was being harvested, so there were many photo opportunities.

**DIRECTIONS:** There is a train that will take you right to the center of town, but driving there is very easy. There are two routes which you can take. The first one takes about 5 hours from Yokota to the center of Takayama.

From Yokota, go to the Hachioji entrance to the Chuo Expressway and take the entrance for Kofu. After going about 155km on the expressway, stay in the left lane and watch for the sign for the Nagano Expressway. Exit the Chuo onto the Nagano Expressway. Follow the signs for Okaya and Matsumoto. Get off at Exit 4, the Matsumoto exit. The toll is Y4000. At the “Y,” veer right. At the first light after exiting, turn right, and continue on this road until you see a sign for Route 158 to Takayama. Turn right at this sign. Follow Rt. 158 to Takayama all the way into the city. The signs are all in English. The last hour of driving is through the mountains, so if you’re nervous about driving on narrow bad mountain roads, I would suggest you take the other route. Also, this route is closed during some winter months due to snow.

The second route is about 2 hours longer and does not go through the mountains. Begin the same as for the above route, but do not exit the Chuo Expressway at the Nagano Expressway. Continue on the Chuo Expressway toward Nagoya until Exit 27, Nakatsugawa. Exit here. Get onto Rt. 257 toward Gero. After about 50km look for a sign for Rt. 41. Route 257 will merge with Rt. 41 at an intersection. Take Route 41 north (right) to Takayama. Takayama is off to the right from Route 41. The toll for this route is ¥5800.

Charlene Elmore

## Kanazawa

If you can’t get to Kyoto, try visiting Kanazawa, Matsumoto, and Takayama to get a representative idea of feudal Japanese culture. Kanazawa has been compared to Renaissance Italy and the Medicis in that it developed into a wealthy castle town held for a long time by one family, the Maedas. The resulting security allowed the local artisans and craftsmen to develop their own styles, eventually enticing master artists from Kyoto to work under Maeda patronage. Although there isn’t much left of the Maeda castle but a gate, the outer castle garden, called the Kenrokuen, has the reputation of being one of the three most beautiful in Japan. It occupies the center of the city, and one can easily spend an afternoon wandering its various paths, perhaps making a brief tour through the adjoining Seison Kaku Villa. Surrounding the gardens are several prefectural and private museums, some with beautiful Japanese collections displaying Kutani porcelains, Kaga/Wajima lacquerware, and gold leaf metalwork.

The unusual stained glass window in Oyama Shrine was an interesting and previously distinct landmark for sailors at sea. (Western stained glass in a Shinto shrine?) The short tour through the Saihitsu Silk Dyeing House was educational and provided a brief rest from pleasant cycling over the cobblestone streets of the samurai district.

But the highlight of the tour was the so called Ninja-Dera, or Myoruji Temple which was designed with trick staircases and numerous hiding spots for the local lords when they



came to worship. A popular spot, reservations must be made for a guided tour.

Nearly all the various pamphlets were in English and street signs abound. Even though the city is not that large, we chose to rent bicycles from the station for about ¥600 for five hours. Once we were away from the station and headed toward Kenrokuen, the English map worked out very well and we did not get lost. Kanazawa is about a six hour drive from Yokota via the Kan-etsu Expressway to the Sea of Japan, and then west along the coast on the Hokuriku. Because of the distance involved, a trip might be best over a long 3-day weekend.

Teresa K. Negley

## Kyoto

The capital from 794 to 1868, Kyoto is “quintessential Japan.” Thanks to its unattractiveness as a military target and persuasive scholars who recognized Kyoto and nearby Nara as invaluable cultural and historical treasures, the two cities were spared Allied attacks in WWII. Thus, today we can visit these ancient cities and immerse ourselves in art, architecture, religions and culture dating back to the 7th century. Civil wars later destroyed a number of sites, but many were rebuilt and today are three to four hundred years old. Such places preserve the workmanship of artisans during one of Japan’s longest eras of peace and cultural achievement.

Kyoto retains much of the ancient charm difficult to find in modern Tokyo. It is home to over 200 Shinto shrines, 1,500 Buddhist temples, outstanding museums, and other buildings of historical significance. Its geographic setting, in a valley surrounded by mountains, provides both relief from the summer heat and stunning scenery. Kyoto is also an artistic and intellectual center. Many crafts which have passed into obscurity elsewhere are prospering there. Since it is difficult to provide a concise, comprehensive guide for a city about which hundreds of books have been written, we focus on the major attractions. For those with special interests, other resources are recommended.

**DIRECTIONS:** Kyoto is easily accessible by Japan Rail Shinkansen (about three hours from Tokyo; round trip about ¥24,000), and it is a reasonably easy drive from Yokota. Take the Chuo Expressway west towards Kofu. Just before Nagoya, the Chuo and Tomei expressways join the Meishin Expressway at the Komaki Junction. Follow the signs onto the Meishin and on to Kyoto. The distance from Yokota is roughly 475km, and tolls are about ¥10,000 one way. Drive time is a minimum of six hours, and can be much longer depending upon traffic and weather. Be sure your hotel has parking available.

### Where to Stay

There are accommodations to meet every taste and budget, including minshuku, business hotels, ryokan, and a Holiday Inn. Select accommodations based on your mode of transportation and the places you wish to visit.

### Three Sisters Inn

Three Sisters Inn located in Higashiyama has two buildings, the main inn, and the annex. The Japanese-style rooms are large and comfortable. Some suites have private baths. Call 075-761-6336 for reservations 8am-11 pm or fax: 075-761-6338

### How to Get Around

Kyoto is a big city! It has one subway line of little use to tourists. The City Buses are good for reaching places within the city, while the Kyoto Buses will take you to outlying destinations. Consult a good map for bus routes and station locations. Parking is difficult to find and expensive. Driving in Kyoto is fairly easy with a good map, so you could use your car to reach outlying destinations. As with most places, the best way to see Kyoto is on foot. Take comfortable, sturdy walking shoes.

### Shopping/Restaurants

Kyoto can be a shopping paradise, depending on your taste and budget. As mentioned, traditional craft items difficult to find elsewhere are available here. These include paper lanterns & umbrellas, textile weaving, dyeing and painting; hair ornaments, pottery & ceramics, local specialty dolls, bamboo ware, joinery, lacquerware, shikishi & tamazaku paper, washi, fans, damascene, cutlery, woodblock prints, metalwork and stone carving. There are hundreds of shops and restaurants - something for everyone. The main areas are around the Kamogawa River along Shijo-Dori. Gion is on the eastern side; Pontocho and Shinkyogoku on the western side. Kyoto Station is home to a large underground shopping complex. Also of interest: the art and antique areas on Shinmonzen-dori (Gion), and the pottery shops on Kiyomizuzaka en route to Kiyomizu Temple. Most organized tours stop at the Kyoto Handicraft Center. For a more subdued experience and to see the work of many excellent artisans, visit the Kyoto Craft Center (open 11am—7pm; Tel. 561-9660).

### What to See

**Nijo-Jo** is a rare plains castle, built in 1603 for Shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa. The grounds include two palaces, double moats, and splendid gardens. Those who have visited Nikko’s Toshogu Shrine will recognize some architectural and decorative elements. The Ninomaru Palace is the original structure and features fabulous Kano School paintings on the walls and doors as well as nightingale floors, all in splendid condition. The indoor scenes in the “Shogun” miniseries were filmed here. Open 8:45am-4pm Tuesday through Sunday and Monday holidays. Closed Dec. 26- Jan. 4, non-holiday Mondays, and post-holiday Tuesdays. Admission: ¥450. Pay parking available.

**Minamiza** is the oldest theater in Japan and the site of the first kabuki performances. Kabuki programs are given three or four times annually, each lasting about three weeks. Gion corner, a popular stop on night tours, offers a one-hour capsule of traditional dance, bunraku, music & tea ceremony. Consult the local Tourist Information Center for a current schedule of events.



**Kyoto's Imperial Palace** was home to Japan's Imperial family from 1331 until the capital was moved to Edo. The present buildings date from 1855. 30-minute guided tours in English are available. Advance permission (bring your passport) must be obtained from the Imperial Household Agency office on the palace grounds prior to the free tour.

**Nishi-Honganji Temple** is an enormous complex with the eastern portion several blocks away. It was the headquarters of the influential Jodo-shinshu Buddhist sect, the "common man's" sect in feudal times. Buildings on this site are three centuries old. The Karamon Gate and Daishoin Hall feature elaborate carving and decorations moved from Fushimi Jo Castle before Ieyasu Tokugawa had it razed. Admission is free.

**Heian Jingu Shrine** was built in 1895 for Kyoto's 1,000th anniversary! The vermilion buildings are picturesque, small-scale copies of the first Imperial Palace. One of Japan's finest gardens (30,000 square meters) hides behind the facade. It should NOT BE MISSED during the cherry, azalea, iris or autumn seasons. Garden open 8:30am-5pm (4:30 in winter). Admission: ¥300.

**The Silver Pavilion (Ginkakuji)** was built in 1482 as a retirement villa for Shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga. This compact structure was to have been covered with silver foil as a counterpart to his grandfather's gold-covered villa. The dry landscape garden is of special interest, and the surrounding grounds and gardens are beautifully executed and maintained. Open 8:30am-5pm (9-4:30 in winter). Admission: ¥200.

**Nanzenji Temple** is Kyoto's most important Zen temple. The Hojo Hall features Kano School paintings and the attached dry landscape garden's stones are thought to represent

tigers crossing a stream. The precincts contain three other minor temples with beautiful gardens. Konchiin Temple's garden was designed by Enshu, one of Japan's greatest landscape artists. Open 9am-5pm. Zen garden admission: ¥300.

**Chion-in Temple** is headquarters of the Jodo Buddhist sect, and dates from 1234. Its Sanmon Gate is perhaps the most imposing temple gate in the country. The Daihojo Hall features Kano School paintings; the garden is by Enshu; and the temple's bronze bell, Japan's largest, requires 17 people to ring it. Open 9am-5pm. Admission: ¥300.

**Maruyama-Koen** is nestled at the foot of Kyoto's eastern mountains. This park is a delightful place to relax between temple visits and shopping. Its ponds and gardens are quite attractive, especially in spring. Vendors, restaurants and souvenir shops help keep the atmosphere festive. A great spot for people watching! Kiyomizudera is a magnificent temple reached via Kiyomizuzaka, a steep street lined with endless pottery stores, restaurants & other souvenir shops. Established in 798, the present buildings date from 1633. The Main Hall is supported by 139 giant pillars and affords excellent views of the city below. Don't miss the short walk to the ancient pagoda on the adjacent hillside, as you can view the entire complex from it. Open dawn-dusk. Admission: ¥100.

**Kyoto National Museum** is the Imperial Household Agency's repository for precious art objects and other treasures of the emperors. It was established 110 years ago and is divided into sections for history, fine arts, and handicrafts. Over 2,000 items are on display. Open 9am-4pm, Tuesday-Sunday. Admission: ¥250.

**Sanjusangendo Hall** is so nicknamed for the 33 spaces between its pillars. This long, narrow hall was last rebuilt in



Golden Pavilion, Kyoto, photo courtesy Brian & Kristen Marriott 11/00.



1266. Its major attraction is the wooden image of a thousand-handed Kannon, a National Treasure carved in 1254. Over 1,000 statues fill the rest of the gallery, Open 8am-4pm. Admission: ¥300.

**The Gold Pavilion (Kinkakuji)** faithfully recalls the original pavilion constructed in 1397 as a retirement villa for Shogun Yoshimitsu Ashikaga. It was destroyed by arson in 1950. An exact reproduction was completed in 1955. It was repaired and completely recovered with new gold foil in 1987. The pavilion is magnificently reflected by the large pond in the surrounding garden—a sight you won't soon forget! Open 9am-5pm. (5:30 in summer). Admission: ¥300.

**Ryoanji Temple** was founded in 1473 by the Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism, and is famous for its rock garden of 15 stones (Seki-Tei). Don't fall victim to the myopic rush of tourists to see that one garden, however. The temple complex has lovely precincts with other gardens which merit your attention. Open 8am-5pm.

**Uzumasa Movie Village** (Uzumasa Eigamura) is the filming site for many movies. It is complete with sets depicting both feudal and modern Japan. Allow one - three hours to tour the facilities. Open Jan. 2 to Dec. 20. Closed fourth Tues.-Thurs. of July. Hours: 9am-5pm, March 16 - Nov. 15; 9:30am-4pm, Nov. 16 - March 15. Admission: ¥1,100.

**Mt. Hiei and Enryakuji Temple** take the better part of a day to visit, and are off the beaten path. I highly recommend a visit to Enryakuji. Consult your maps for the driving route from either Kyoto or Otsu (there is an excellent toll road). To reach Mt. Hiei by public transportation, take the train from Demachiyana Station to Yaseyuen Station. From there, a cable car and ropeway will transport you high above Kyoto to the top of Mt. Hiei. There are small places to eat along the way, and you may encounter wild monkeys which inhabit the mountain slopes.

**Enryakuji**, the head temple of the Tendai Buddhist sect, was a powerful spiritual, political, and military force during the peak of its prosperity in the 16th century. At that time, some 3,000 buildings comprised the temple precincts. Most of the present 150 structures were built in the 17th century, and the major ones have been refurbished and are quite striking. As you wander the wooded paths between the east, west and north areas of the temple, enjoy the splendid views of both Kyoto to the west and Lake Biwa to the east.

**Yuzen Textile & Dye Museum** is ten blocks due south of Nijo Castle. The displays depict the Yuzen dyeing process (both stencil cutting and hand painting) for Japanese textiles. The first floor contains masterpieces of Yuzen dyeing. The upper two floors have demonstration areas where you can watch artisans at work. Open 9am to 5pm. Closed Dec. 29 - Jan. 4. Admission: ¥300.

**Nishijin Textile Museum** is six blocks north of Nijo Castle. The museum displays world-famous techniques of weaving, the second major method of decorating Japanese textiles. Like the Yuzen artists, weavers in the 15th century enjoyed Imperial patronage and were thus able to elevate their craft into an art form. While the Nishijin Museum is more touristy than the Yuzen Museum, people interested in Japanese textiles shouldn't miss it. There is a short fashion show of contempo-

rary kimono at regular intervals between 10am and 4pm. Fashion show admission: ¥150.

At the **Ponto-Cho Kaburenio Theatre**, see the Kamogawa Odori Geisha Dance of Kamo River, a biannual event in spring and autumn. This dance spectacle is performed by Maiko and senior Geisha.

**The Okutan** restaurant is a wonderful surprise of good food and atmosphere. On first floor, the tables overlook the beautiful garden. The second floor is a large open room with several tables on tatami and large windows overlooking the garden. Lunch consists of several tofu items and tempura. The main course is boiled tofu, cut into large chunks and served in a large pot of boiling water. You take the tofu and place it in a small bowl and pour dashi over it. The taste is similar to miso soup, and surprisingly excellent. (Tofu is the principle food of Buddhist priests and the best tofu is found near temples.)

**References:** Visit the Japan National Tourist Organization's Tourist Information Center (TIC) in Tokyo before you visit Kyoto. TIC offices are located at Narita Airport and across from the Yurakucho train station. They can provide assistance with maps, accommodations, current events, festi-



vals, etc. Hours are 9am-5pm weekdays, and 9am-noon on Saturday. Closed Sundays and national holidays.

If you can't get to the Tokyo T.I.C., make the Kyoto T.I.C. your first stop there. It is on the ground floor of the Kyoto Tower, opposite Kyoto Station. Open 9am-5pm weekdays, and 9am-noon, Saturdays. Tel: (075) 371- 5649. They also have a free English tele-recording of current events in Kyoto at (075) 361-2911.

**Recommended Books:** *Japan Solo* (Kanno & O'Keefe) - very large section on Kyoto alone. Includes detailed map done with the English-speaking tourist in mind; itineraries for each day of your visit, directions (foot, bus & train) to attractions, hours, admission fees, restaurant & hotel recommendations & prices, etc.

*Old Kyoto: A Guide to Traditional Shops, Restaurants, and Inns* (Diane Durston). Organized geographically and indexed both alphabetically & by shop type, this book is invaluable if you have specific interests.

*Kyoto: Seven Paths to the Heart of the City* (Diane Durston). A sensitive portrait of Kyoto's michinami (old neighborhoods) and life there. Contains beautiful color photographs with cross-referenced maps, and a section on traditional crafts & cuisine, etc.

*Kyoto, a Contemplative Guide* (Gouverneur Mosher) A serious work for those with a strong interest in Kyoto's past (religious & political).

**Maps:** "Handy Map of Kanto" and "Handy Map of Kansai," Japan Guide Map Co.

Cheryl Raggio, Christine Holmes

## Hiroshima

One moment- 8:15am, August 6, 1945- changed history forever. The atomic bomb that caused the death of over 200,000 people continues to affect the world politically, militarily, and technologically. Your stay in Japan would not be complete without a visit to Hiroshima, where you can witness both the horror of nuclear warfare and the determination of a people to survive.

Today, Hiroshima is a thriving metropolis. Its people not only do not want to forget August 6, they want their city to be known as an international "City of Peace." There are several areas of interest in the city. First and foremost is **Heiwa Kinen Koen (Peace Memorial Park)** adjacent to **Genbaku Domu (Atomic Dome)**, said to be ground zero of the atomic explosion. The bomb exploded directly over the Industrial Promotion Hall, and the structure is now the only A-bomb ruined building still standing in the city. In the Park complex you'll find the Peace Memorial Museum, Peace Memorial Hall, the Memorial Cenotaph, and the Peace Flame. The Peace Memorial Museum displays the effects of the bomb on the city and its people. The museum charges ¥50 for adults and ¥30 for people 19 years and younger. It is open 9am to 6pm, May-November and 9am to 5pm, December -April. The Memorial Cenotaph, shaped like an inverted U, contains a stone chest with the names of known atomic bomb victims. The Flame of Peace will re-

main burning until all atomic bombs have been eliminated from the planet.

A second point of interest is the **Hiroshima, or "Carp" Castle**, originally built in 1589, and rebuilt in 1958. The castle now contains a museum, and the top provides an exceptional view of the city. Admission is ¥300 for adults and ¥150 for all students. It is open 9am-5:30pm, April - September, and 9am-4:30pm, October - March.

A few blocks east of the castle, on the banks of the Kyobashi River, is **Shukkeien Garden**. Built in 1620, this garden was modeled after a famous Chinese lake. The garden has beautiful bridges, carp and pine trees. Early spring brings cherry blossoms, and soon the azaleas bloom. It is open 9am to 6pm in summer, and closes at 5pm in winter. Entrance: ¥200.

**The World Peace Memorial Cathedral** is one of the largest Roman Catholic churches in Asia, built in 1954 at the suggestion of a German Jesuit, Hugo LaSalle, who had experienced the blast. Many countries donated money for the construction. The altar was a gift from Belgium, the organ came from Cologne, and the bronze doors were donated by Dusseldorf.

Other places to visit are the **Hiroshima Museum of Art, the Science and Culture Museum for Children, the Mitaki Temple** and the **Municipal Botanical Garden**. The city is very easy to get around in, and most attractions are accessible from Hiroshima Station by foot, taxi or electric cable cars. Keep in mind most places close for New Year from Dec 29 to Jan 3. When planning your trip, you can stay in Hiroshima or nearby Iwakuni. If you drive, it takes about 12 hours, and the tolls total about \$150, one way. It still might be cheaper than a tour, depending on how many people are in your party. Or you can try to EML to Twakuni Marine Corps Air Station.

Wiki Lyn Paulson-Cody Karen Ozment, Margaret Summers Rita Mayer



## Miyajima

Along with Matsushima Bay and Ama-no-hashidate, Miyajima, the Island of Shrines, ranks among the three most beautiful sights in Japan. Although only 19 miles in circumference, Miyajima is a place you'll want to visit, especially if you plan a trip to Hiroshima. Miyajima is also known as "Itsukushima" after its famous shrine, built on supports that extend out to the sea. A stone lantern-lined road connects the landing-stage to Itsukushima Shrine, which was first recorded in 811 and is dedicated to the daughters of the Shinto wind god, Susanou. Rebuilt and restored many times, this unique shrine creates the illusion of floating on water at high tide. The white walls with orange-colored frames create a spectacular view. Even more stunning is the largest wooden torii gate in Japan that stands 200m, directly in front of the shrine. Built in 1895, the Torii (Grand Gate) also appears to be floating in the water.

Other popular sights include: the **Hall of Industrial Traditions of Miyajima**, the **Aquarium** (which houses 15,000 rare fish), the **Mt. Misen ropeway** (1.6km-long cable car that runs over Momijidani Koen to the top of Mt. Misen), the **Historical and Folklore Materials Museum**, the **5-story Pagoda** (built in 1407), and **Senjokaku** (1000 mats). Tame deer wander freely all over the island and readily accept food that visitors hand-feed them (the food can be bought around the island for ¥100).

The rice scoop is a traditional souvenir of Miyajima. The method of making the spoon dates back to the Edo period. The spoon is unique because it is resistant to heat, and the rice doesn't carry the scent of the wood. Miyajima is easy to get to by train from Iwakuni or Hiroshima. From Miyajima-guchi, exit the station and walk (use the underground walkway at the intersection) to the pier (about 5 min) and take a 10-minute ferry boat ride.

Viki Lyn Paulson-Cody, Karen Ozment, Margaret Summers, Rita Mayer

## Iwakuni

Although small, Iwakuni is worth a visit any time of year, especially if you plan a trip to Hiroshima and Miyajima. Perhaps the most famous sight in Iwakuni is the **Kintai-Kyo (Bridge of the Silver Brocade Sash)**. This bridge is very graceful and unusual. It is made from wood and has five arches. The bridge is 193m long and very different because not only does the frame arch but so does the actual walkway. The first bridge built in 1673 stood until 1950 when a flood destroyed it. The current bridge is an exact replica built in 1953. Another factor in the bridge's construction is that it's built entirely without nails. It is a one-of-a-kind and truly worth the visit.

Another sight you won't want to miss is the **cormorant fishing**. **Ukdi** is a "spectator event" with an atmosphere you'll find culturally rich. The fishing is done using cormorants (large pelican-like) to catch dyu (freshwater trout) - Ukai fishing has been done for over 2000 years. Nowadays, the fishing is done more or less for tourists. The fish are sold to specialty restaurants in the local area. Cormorant fishing is done at night with the birds put on leashes (with rings around their necks), and controlled by the fishermen so they cannot swallow the fish. At the front of the boat, a bonfire is lit to

attract the fish to the surface of the water where the birds can easily catch them. A typical boat has 12 cormorant birds "working" at one time. The fishing takes place at the Kintai bridge and can be seen from the bridge or from the river banks. It is performed from June to August after dark. The fishing will not be performed on nights when there is a full moon or when the water is muddy after heavy rains. Ukai fishing is also famous in Arashiyama and Uji.

Another point of interest is the **Nishimura Museum** near the Kintai Bridge. The museum is best known for its samurai collections, including armor, weapons and other objects used in daily life by samurai warriors. It is by far one of the best collections in Japan.

While in Iwakuni, you can stay in billeting, the Iwakuni House. Call 253-3221. Or you can find a Japanese inn. Reservations are not always taken at Iwakuni, especially during peak travel and PCS times. You can, however, be placed on the space available waiting list. If you call early, you will be near the top of the list upon your arrival. Iwakuni is a beautiful place and it can be reached by car, train or by flying Space A. Driving is very easy and I recommend buying "Japan: a Bilingual Atlas" which will get you there as well as anywhere you want to go with absolutely no problem. Train directions can be obtained at the Yujo Rec Center.

Viki Lyn Paulson-Cody

(See "Sanzoku Restaurant" listing in Dining Section.)

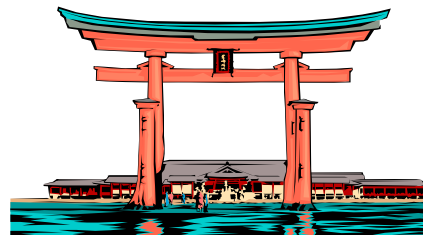
## Iwakuni - Sanzoku Restaurant

This is a delightful eating experience in the hills of Iwakuni. The atmosphere is charming and the food is tasty too!

**DIRECTIONS:** Go out the main gate to 4 Corners. Turn left onto Rt. 188 until you cross the bridge over the Monzen River. Turn right at the first traffic light over the bridge. Follow this road (the river will be on the right) until you see the double bridges. Turn left at Rt. 15 (Rt 2 Bypass) and follow this road for a distance. Drive through 3 tunnels. (This is a good little drive, about 30- 45 minutes.) At the next traffic light turn right. Go up the hill and the "Chicken Shack" is located on the left. At the "Chicken Shack" there are 3 buildings. Sanzoku Shop, right side, Kamado Shop, near the waterfall; Torian Restaurant, upstairs. Each shop is closed on various days.

Sanzoku Shop	10:00 am - 5:00 am
Kamado Shop	10:00 am - 11:00 pm
Torian Resaurant	10:00 am - 11:00 pm

Dawn Leach/ Feb '02



# Nagasaki

I don't know if I could recommend Nagasaki to newcomers. The charm and the history of Japan's first international city appeals to Westerners, often causing disappointment in other Japanese cities. For anyone here over a year or who has seen the sights in Tokyo, I highly recommend this city.

Nagasaki Harbor, on the northwest corner of Kyushu, was opened in 1570 for foreign trade and flourished from 1641-1858, the period of national isolation. The city's colorful history makes this a worthwhile journey. Long before it became famous as the setting of Puccini's immortal opera "Madame Butterfly," Nagasaki had a high population of Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish settlers and soon after, Christian missionaries who began to preach the Gospel to Japan. It is said the Japanese ruling classes feared that the Jesuits wanted to influence the government and westernize the country. It was then, 1587, when Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued an edict and one year later on February 5, 26 Christians were crucified at Nishizaka hill. By 1639, all foreigners with the exception of a few Dutch traders who professed no religious preference, were expelled from Japan. Christianity did not stop here; today, more than 80,000 Christians live in this city, and churches are a common sight. The Meiji Period led to the reopening of Japan and although the importance of Nagasaki declined with the loss of its monopoly of European goods and ideas, it remains as a center of ship-building and as a principal port for both import and export.

Following Hiroshima, Nagasaki was hit by the second atomic bomb on August 9, 1945. The bomb was meant for a shipyard, but missed by several miles and landed where over one-third of the Christian population lived. Some 75,000 lives were lost and more injured, and that number does not include later radiation-caused deaths. This stunning number is less than that of Hiroshima, due to the city being surrounded by hills and much of the firestorm being blown out to sea by heavy winds. There are three principal reminders of this horrifying day: Peace Park, The International Hall of Culture (Atom Bomb Museum), and the large black pyramid. Peace Park is a memorial indicating the epicenter of the atomic explosion. Statues donated by other countries line the way to the Peace Statue built in 1955. The right hand of this bronze statue points to the threat of nuclear weapons, while the left hand and closed eyes symbolize peace and a prayer for victims of war. Also at the south end of the park is the International Hall of Culture, a museum consecrated to bomb material: statistics, maps, pictures, and the remains of buildings, clothing, and Catholic rosaries. Located across the street is the black stone pyramid that points straight up to where the bomb exploded 500 meters above at 11:02 a.m. Unlike Hiroshima, Nagasaki places some blame for the war on the leaders and government at that time.

Within walking distance of Peace Statue is **Urakami Cathedral**, known before the bomb as the finest church in Japan. Originally built by a small group of devoted Christians, it was rebuilt in 1959, and has the residuum of statues mauled by the blast. Near Urakami Station rests the **Half Torii of Hie Jinja Shrine** which survived the explosion and now stands as a monument. Next is the **Sakamoto International Cem-**

**etry**, the burial spot of Thomas Glover. Near Nagasaki Station is the **Site of the Martyrdom of the 26 Saints**. As stated, the memorial is for the 20 Japanese and 6 foreigners who were crucified for refusing to condemn their faith. There is an old bell and several fumi-e (step-on picture plaques) of Catholic holy subjects on which suspected Christians, it is said over 650, were to prove their "innocence" or face death by torture. The Chapel has two towers: one symbolizing man's prayers for peace and the other for God's grace. Around this area is a large silver statue of Kannon, the Japanese goddess of mercy, Ming style, and a National Treasure.

Walk 200 meters to see **Seifuku-Ji**, a Chinese temple, with a reclining god of fortune. Also nearby is the **Prefectural Art Museum** housed on the grounds of St. Mary's Church; Suwa Shrine; Kofuku-ji temple; the remains of Koei-ji temple; and in a section filled with old shops and restaurants there are several stone bridges, the oldest and most famous being a double-arched megane-bashi, "**Spectacle Bridge**," built by a Chinese Buddhist priest in 1634. The bridge remains as one of the three most famous in Japan. Near the bridge is **Hamanomachi Shopping Arcade**.

Quite a hike, but do-able from the arcade is **Sofuku-ji temple**, the oldest Chinese temple dedicated to the Obaku Zen Sect in Japan and one of Nagasaki's trademarks. The main gate is a stunning example of Ming temple gates and is, along with the main building, a National Treasure. Pass the numerous monuments, climb the stairs, and pass through the second gate that was brought over and set up from China in 1685. There is a fish-shaped gong and a sub-temple for the goddess of the sea, which only two temples in Nagasaki have. **Kofuku-ji temple** is one kilometer down the street and was strategically built on higher ground to encourage Buddhism against Christianity in 1620. This is the other location of the sea goddess.

**Chinatown** is on the way from the temples to Nagasaki's Confucian Shrine. It is smaller than Yokohama's and San Francisco's, but it has many restaurants worthy of eating at! The prices are reasonable, and most shops have plastic food in the windows to make ordering easy.

Walking up Hollander Slope one soon sees luminous colors and roofs with sharp curves and dragons. This is the **Confucian Shrine**, and also the location of **The Palace Museum and The National Museum of Chinese History**. First built in 1893 by Chinese residents with the support of the Ch'ing Dynasty government, it was severely damaged by the bomb and not reopened to the public again until September, 1967. This is the only Confucian shrine built outside China and on the grounds are 72 statues of wise men, a gate of rites, a statue of Confucius, and several dragons known as symbols of courage. Behind Da Cheng Hall is the museum with valuable exhibits offered by the National Museum of Chinese History and the Beijing Palace Museum.

Designated as a National Treasure in 1933, **Oura Catholic Church** is the oldest Gothic wooden church in Japan. On March 17, 1865, the hidden Christians of Nagasaki were discovered here; thus, the official name, Cathedral of the Devotion of 26 Saints," consecrated to the souls of the slain saints. Built by a French missionary, it is known as locally as the "French Church" and it is an important part of Japanese Chris-



tian history. Next to the church is Glover Garden, 30,000 square feet of trees, flowers, fountains, and Victorian colonial-style buildings, a reminder of the thriving European settlement in the late 19th century. The **Glover House** is the oldest Western-style building in Japan, built in 1863 by a British man. It has a breathtaking panoramic view of the harbor and city. It is said this is where "Madame Butterfly" was inspired. Also on the grounds are the **Steele Memorial Academy**, a mural fountain and statue of opera singer Miura Tamaki, the Mitsubishi No. 2 Dock House, Alt House, Ringer House, and the Nagasaki Museum of Traditional Performing Arts. The museum has floats and gear used during one of the three most praised festivals, Nagasaki Kunchi Festival, held every year from October 7 - 9. A short ferry boat ride takes you to Dejima, an island where for nearly 250 years, the Dutch were sequestered.

For shoppers, Nagasaki is famous for pearls, pottery, and glassware. If you like to taste food native to the area, Chinese cakes, castella sponge cake, and a sweetened dried fruit called zabon-zuke are most noted here. Special dishes include Shippoku, Chanpon, Saraudon, and anything Chinese.

Local fruit includes mandarin oranges, loquats, and zabon (shaddock).

Other areas of interest are Mt. Inasa, Unzen National Park (with smoldering volcanoes), Saruiwa (Monkey Park), Dozaki Church, Isahaya Megane-Bashi, Shimabara Castle (noted for its Christian exhibits), Shiraki-mine Plateau, and Huis Ten Bosch, also known as the "Dutch Village."

Nagasaki, with its fresh air, friendly people, and beautiful patches surrounded by factories, homes and shops is one of the most charming and interesting cities I've visited in Japan. To me, it is unsurpassed.

For more information, write the Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Federation at Ili-1, Daikokumachi, Nagasaki City T850 or dial (0958)26-9407, fax 24-3087. For the City Tourist Information Office at 1-88, Onoue-machi, dial 22-1954. For the Nagasaki City Hall Tokyo Office at 1-3, Hibiya Park, Chiyodaku, Tokyo, dial (03) 591-7600. Note, the Nagasaki City Tourist Information Center is located across the street from Nagasaki Station. There is a Holiday Inn at 6-24 Doza-machi, Tel. 0958-28-1234.

**DIRECTIONS:** Nagasaki is an easy trip by Shinkansen (bullet train) to Hakata, and then via express train to Nagasaki Station. It takes over ten hours by train, but the trip is definitely worth it! Nagasaki is an easy drive from Sasebo Naval Base, although some Yokotans prefer to rent vehicles at Iwakuni MCAS and drive across the Shimonoseki straits. From Yokota and Atsugi, it is possible to fly space available to Sasebo (Nagasaki). Once there, it is easy to get around by street car, bus, taxi, or train.

Karen Ozment

## Okinawa

Okinawa is an island paradise reminiscent of Mazatlan and Cancun, Mexico or non-Oahu Hawaii. Its open spaces, clean air, warm friendly people, and laid-back ways are elements I'd like to experience more. This island is 67 miles long and 2 to 17 miles wide, with a population of 857,000. The

average yearly temperature is 72 degrees and its main industry is tourism. Visit during May-June or September-October if you are hoping to find sunshine, clear clean skies and great beaches to go swimming. If you go between late June and early September, you will find the heat and humidity unbearable.

There is a great deal to do on this small island and many places to entertain children. The local parks have wonderful playground equipment designed for children, but often found enchanting to adults. A few sights to see are: **Shuri Castle, Southeast Asia Botanical Gardens, Peace Park, Museum and Memorial Temple** (very impressive), **Izumi Pineapple Gardens, Naval Underground Hdqrs.** (Imperial Navy Hdqrs. and tunnels where over 4,000 men lived and committed suicide), **Naminoue Leisure Park** (water slides, wave pool), **Aha Village and Waterfalls, Expo '75 Memorial Park, Hedo Point** (swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving), and **Gyokusendo Cave and Snake Center.**

Living at Yokota AB, the first sights I wanted to see were the BX and Commissary! I was not disappointed. I then found my way to Camp Foster... What a PX, or BX as we call it. Yes, I purchased a few more items and even made it to the **Marine Officers' Wives' Gift Shop** as well as the **Kadena Gift Shop.** There's a variety of malls plus local shops and an open market on Heiwa Street (Makishi Market) with over 1,000 stalls. There are also ten bases on this island, so there are plenty of places to shop.

Gate 2 Street, near the Kadena USO, has more shopping opportunities. You'll see **China Pete's** as you walk out the gate. There are also many Indian Merchants who carry American brand name clothes. There are some wonderful children's clothes in a store named Sally's. They also have adult clothes upstairs. On your left, about three blocks from

the gate, there is an outside mall with lots of small shops. Opposite the mall, on your right, there is a small street that goes down a hill, before the big intersection. Two good restaurants are on that street. The **Four Season Steak House** (Kobe Beef) will be on your left. The **Hamarama** (Japanese) is diagonally across from it. Ask for the special.

Some of the Japanese resort beaches are accessible to Americans even if you are not staying overnight. One that I enjoyed was **Manza Beach.** We brought our own snorkeling equipment, but you can rent it from MWR. There are showers at the back of the hotel, by the main pool, and restaurants on the beach.

The WWII tour was an unforgettable experience. The Tea House of the August Moon exposed me to Okinawa dancing and music, which is very different from mainland Japan. The Okinawan food served at the Tea House is unique — another chance to experience other cultures.

Before you start sight-seeing, I suggest you stop at the Kadena USO or Schilling Recreation Center for information, maps and an Off Duty welcome guide. First, you will need to inquire about transportation. Okinawa's public bus system can take you nearly anywhere you want to go. Almost everything is in English, so you shouldn't have trouble knowing where to go and how to get there. Ask at these recreation centers for bus schedules. For automobile rentals at Kadena AB, Fuji Rent A



Car (633-0007) is the BX concession for auto rentals and is located adjacent to the gas station on Douglas Blvd. Their hours are 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday-Saturday and 10am to 4pm on Sunday. Prices listed include their mandatory insurance and are subject to change.

## Okuma Rest Center

Okuma, known to the Japanese as Cape Alamaru Peninsula, is only two hours north of Kadena AB, depending on traffic and weather. The Joint Recreation and Conference Center is a tropical paradise nestled within 120 acres of wooded hills and spectacular beaches. Facilities include a restaurant and lounge, reception center, small resale store, boathouse with rental equipment, and laundromat. Okuma's lodging consists of 63 cabana rooms, each with a color TV, FEN reception, a VCR (small selection of rental tapes available at reception center), and a refrigerator. Many can be converted into two-bedroom units for larger families. Room rates depend on season and are based on type requested. There are two campsites available - one for families and the other for singles. Tents to accommodate three or seven people are available for rent. Call early (90 days in advance, maximum) to get your reservations at Okuma. A deposit must be mailed to hold your accommodations. (A beach and campground closer to Kadena is Torii Beach on Torii Station. White Beach is also a nice place.)

This diverse facility has activities for everyone. Water sports, boating, fishing, hiking, biking, tennis, table games, miniature golf, and a nine hole golf course are available for your enjoyment. You can even rent equipment needed for these activities including bicycles and a full range of camping gear. Reservations can be made up to 90 days in advance by contacting the Schilling Recreation Center, Kadena AB, at 634-4322. For more information, write Schilling Recreation Center at 18 MWRS/MWMR, APO AP 96368.

Okinawa. It's a tropical island that you shouldn't miss!

**DIRECTIONS:** You can reach Okuma by using the Okinawa Expressway or taking the scenic drive up Highway 58.

Fran Calene, Mugs Wedemeyer, Christine Thomas

## Misawa

Clean clear air, dazzling bright snowy days, and breathtaking mountain scenery are a few memories that come to mind of Misawa. Misawa is a growing city of 45,000 nestled in the center of Aomori Prefecture, the northernmost prefecture on Honshu. The tourist gateway to northern Japan, Misawa welcomes tourists traveling by jet or train.

Many stay at the nationally famous Komaki Onsen resort and see Sabishiro Beach and the luscious Oirase river valley of Lake Towada. The Komaki Onsen complex next to the train station is a fascinating mixture of old and new Japan. The complex consists of four modern hotels, but Komaki is more than hotels. It includes museums, recreated thatched-roof houses, rock gardens, an open air Noh stage, teahouses, temples, a bowling alley and swimming pool. Connecting all these attractions is a maze of tunnels lined with ancient artwork. The jewel of the complex is the nationally known hot spring. This giant

bath, complete with a waterfall and trees, is a reminder of Lake Towada and the Oirase river. Komaki takes days to completely enjoy. In early August, a brightly-colored dragon festival celebrates the legend of creation. A large park, complete with a man made lake hosts this festival. Three intricately carved and brightly painted boats carry huge smoke-breathing dragons to the outdoor pavilion. There the dragons engage in a dance of smoke, twists and turns recreating the territorial fight that occurred at the beginning of time near Misawa. This festival is an amazing spectacle of beauty, tradition, and art.

Another point of international interest is Sabishiro Beach. From this windswept location, two American aviators launched the first non-stop trans-Pacific flight. Clyde Panborn and Hugh Herndon put Misawa on the international map with their flight to Wenatchee, Washington. Today, the beach is bordered by a dense pine tree park with hiking trails, commemorating their historic flight. The beach with its treacherous undertow is an interesting family picnic area. Misawa offers easy access to the Oirase river valley and Lake Towada. The valley includes a 12 kilometer road with twisting, tight turns. Each bend in the road brings more spectacular scenery. Rushing waterfalls and overpowering rock formations line the valley. The highway up is paralleled by bicycle/hiking trails. The valley opens up into a volcanic crater lake called Towadako with water of a clear crystal blue. Camping sites and hotels are available. A rose garden complete with a restaurant and youth hostel borders one shore.

Host to the U.S. Air Force's 432nd Fighter Wing, Misawa and its air base have maintained a close friendship with numerous cultural exchanges. The base hosts "Japan Day" at its high school inviting Japanese artists, dancers, musicians, athletes, historians, chefs, and others to demonstrate their unique abilities to Americans. Misawa, in turn, sponsors "American Day" at their beautiful auditorium downtown. Americans proudly share their art, crafts, dance, music and food with the townspeople. Additionally, the base and the town residents come together for the many summer festivals. Tanabata, Bon Odori, Miss Vedool, and Lake Ogawara are a few of the wonderful street dancing celebrations. Misawa offers a variety of shopping opportunities. "Green Pole Street" as the Americans fondly call the main street, offers everything from pet shops and fabric shops to flower shops and antique stores. China Pete's and Tony's offer a wide selection of dishes at their shops just outside the base's POL gate. The people of Misawa are friendly and helpful. The area is honeycombed with parks and obstacle courses for children. Shimoda Park, nearby, is the wintering habitat of the white Russian swan. A delightful park with playgrounds and quietly moving streams is adjacent to the "swan lake."

The skiing near Misawa is terrific. The Hakkoda Mountains offer a variety of resorts and onsens designed for modern skiers. The base has a ski club with up-to-date information on facilities and costs. Misawa is not as fast-paced, hectic or crowded as central Japan. The fresh air and open spaces of the nearby rice fields are a pleasant change. Misawa with its friendly people and simple life-style offers a sample of true Japanese living.



**DIRECTIONS:** You can EML from Yokota or Atsugi, take the bus from Yokota's AMC Terminal, fly from Haneda (about Y38,420), take the bullet train (via Morioka for about Y32,000), or drive north on the Tohoku Expressway (about 12 hours, \$110 for tolls + \$30 for gas).

**Places to stay:** It may be difficult getting accommodations on base on a short notice, so check with billeting at 226-3526).

**Local transportation:** The base is within walking distance of the town. However to Komaki or anywhere else, you must travel by bus or rent a car (226-6722).

Mary Dierker

#### Exploring Around Misawa

*Note:* The articles on the areas surrounding Misawa were contributed by the Misawa Family Support Center.

#### Tanesashi Seaside

Along the coast, just south of Hachinohe City, there is a place where you can hike, picnic or just hang out at the beach.

Starting just past Kabushima, or "sea gull island," you can hike or drive the 5.2km along the rocky shore and sandy beach of Tanesashi Seaside. The Shirahama Beach is covered with white sand and is safe for swimming. The Tanesashi area has a small campground and is perfect for picnics. You can enjoy a beautiful hike through the pine trees, along the rocky shore. The trail starts at the Ashigezaki Observatory, a small stone tower which overlooks the sea, continues all the way to the Shirahama Beach, on through a tiny fishing village and ends up at Tanesashi seaside.

At the observatory, there is also a small restaurant, which offers snacks, drinks and ice cream cones. There are some food booths at Shirahama Beach as well, but are only open during the summer season.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Misawa AB, go out the POL Gate, continuing straight to the toll road. Take the toll road to Hachinohe. After exiting the toll road turn right at the light. You will be on Rt. 45. Stay on this road, keeping in the left lane, until you see the blue sign for Kabushima, distinguished by the white sea gull design. Turn left at the sign, following the directional signs for Kabushima and/or the Marine Science Hall. The road gets very narrow, right before you cross a set of railroad tracks in front of the Marine Science Hall. Turn right, continuing along the coast. Eventually, you'll see a parking lot on the left and the stone tower.

#### Monkey Camp

The fishing village of **Wakinosawa** is located about 42km past the town of Mutsu. This area is known for its snow monkeys. There is a rest area and monkey zoo, in case you aren't lucky enough to see them in the wild.

There are cabins available at the Wakinosawa rest area. They cost Y3000 per night and comfortably sleep six in an upstairs loft. The downstairs has a low table and lots of storage space. Each cabin also has a covered porch, which works well as an area to cook in bad weather. There are some tables for cooking or eating, but no chairs. There is a large sink area,

including an area with a pay stove that costs Y100/15min. There are pit toilets, but flush toilets are available when the refreshment center is open. Also, there are cabins with beds for six, a fridge and an indoor flush toilet for Y7800/night and cabins for 15 for Y15,000/night. For reservations, call 0175-44-3252. (Not much English is spoken there).

**Umizuri Park** is located at the town beach. It includes some small water slides, a refreshment area, a playground and warm showers.

About 7km from Wakinosawa is the fishing village of **Kusodoman**. There is a wide walkway along the ocean leading to a campground, about a mile down the coast. This is a great place to explore tide pools and look for monkeys and mountain goats. You'll also see a traditional fishing boat on display in a cedar boathouse. To get to the beach or tide pools, head back into town, turn left at the post office. At the end of the road, turn left and continue to the beach/ark and eventually the end of the road, where the hike along the coast begins.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Misawa AB, take Rt. 338 north (got out the POL Gate, turn left at the first light and head past the airport, until you run into Rt. 338) all the way to Mutsu, and on to Wakinosawa. In Wakinosawa, Rt. 338 winds through town. About 3km down the road is the rest stop and refreshment area, where you check in (look for the giant blue rest stop sign).

Misawa Family Support Center

## Aomori City

A perfect day trip from Misawa, the drive to Aomori City takes about an hour and a half through the Hakkoda Mountains. Once there, you can visit the giant statue of Buddha (Y800 for adults, Y400 for children) or visit local museums. You can stop by the Aomori Prefectural Center for Tourism and Industry or ASPAM, which features displays of local crafts and products. There you can eat in a rotating French restaurant or take the elevator to the top for a great view of the bay. There is a park nearby also where you can have a picnic.

Aomori city has many other things to see and do, from browsing through shops to tasting delicious tidbits in restaurants. There are nice city parks to walk through as well. One more popular reason for visiting in August is the famous Nebuta festival and parade, not to be missed. The spectacularly colorful floats, painstakingly made of rice paper, hand-painted, then lit from within put American parades to shame!

Not far from Aomori, but in the opposite direction on Rt. 4 is the Asamushi Aquarium and Marine Park. The aquarium features dolphin shows and a wide variety of sea life. The cost is Y1550 for adults and Y510 for elementary school children. Right across the street is an amusement park, complete with rides and snacks.

**DIRECTIONS:** Go out Misawa AB's main gate. At the second light, turn right. Go through 3 lights, and then turn right at the 4<sup>th</sup> light. Go all the way to Green Pole Street and turn right. Take the next left onto Rt. 8. Continue on for about 25 min. When you reach the town of Ottono, there will be a light. Turn left here, crossing the blue bridge. (There is a sign for Aomori at the intersection.) Stay on this road. Eventually, you will cross Rt. 4. Continue straight. When you reach the mountains, you will be on the Michinoku toll road. There will



be one rest area on your left, just before you leave the toll road. Pay the toll (Y800 for passenger cars), at the end. Continue straight until you reach Rt. 4. Turn left, if you want to go to downtown Aomori, or right if you want to go to the aquarium and amusement park.

Eddie Levensgood

## Hirosaki

Located about 3 hours from Misawa, Hirosaki is known throughout Japan for its castle, particularly during cherry blossom time. The castle was the fortress of several generations of the Tsugaru clan. There is a fee for the museum (Y300 for adults, Y100 for children; open 9am-5pm from April 1 to November 23), but the castle grounds and park are free. The park contains over 5000 cherry trees, truly a spectacular sight during the cherry blossom festival held during the end of April/beginning of May.

In addition to the castle and park, Hirosaki has other points of interest. There is a 5-storied pagoda, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to comfort the souls of warriors who died in the service of the Tsugaru clan.

The Choshoji Temple, the family temple of the Tsugaru clan, was built in 1629. There are statues of the 500 disciples of Buddha, a large temple bell, and other features. The temple has been designated an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government. Admission is Y300 for adults and Y250 for children. Hours are 8am-5pm, April-October and 9am-5pm, Nov-March.

Another interesting place is the Neputa Village (Tsugaru Neputa Mura). Here are exhibits of floats used in the Neputa Festival (similar to Aomori's Nebuta Festival). There are also demonstrations of local folk crafts. Admission is Y500 for adults, Y300 for Jr. and Sr. high school students. Hours are 9am-4pm, mid November through March and 9am-5pm, the rest of the year.

**DIRECTIONS:** Follow the directions to Aomori. Stay on Rt. 4, all the way through Aomori, until it becomes Rt. 7, which takes you all the way to Hirosaki. When you reach Hirosaki, exit Rt. 7 and head west to the castle park.

Eddie Levensgood

## Sapporo



There are lots of things to do in Sapporo besides winter sports and seeing the Snow Festival. There is shopping, mostly in the Susukino area south of Odori Park, including an underground mall called Poletown (with a McDonald's) and a four block-shopping arcade on the street level. Special items of the region include woodcarvings of foxes and bears, weavings and dairy products.

There are wonderful restaurants in the area including Ramen Alley. Just a brief word about Hokkaido's ramen: it is thicker than Tokyo style. We thought it was the best we've had

in Japan. The mama-san cook spoke no English, but we were able to place and order (in tourist-Japanese) and had plenty to eat! Another local specialty is crab in all forms. One of our best meals was at the Sapporo Beer Brewery, a few minutes ride by taxi from the hotel (we took a bus there and taxi back). Upstairs featured an all you can eat Mongolian barbecue dinner for Y4000 (with all the beer you can drink). Downstairs was the same menu in set portions for less money.

You can rent cross country skis in Nakajima Park, visit the Clock and TV towers, Botanical Gardens, and University. Day trips include an Ainu village, observatory, and hot spring.

Most of all enjoy the clean white snow and fresh air – a treat after living in Tokyo!

Eddie Levensgood

## Otaru

Otaru is 25 miles west of Sapporo, the key city of Hokkaido. It takes an hour to reach Otaru from Sapporo either by car or train. Nothing reminds you more that Otaru was once one of the biggest shipping ports in Japan, as Yokohama and Kobe are now, than the atmosphere from the red brick warehouses and restored canals. There were a couple of large piers and many canals that were used for transportation long ago.

Ten years ago, some members of the Chamber of Commerce in Otaru started a glass factory named Kita-ichi Glass. It is here that you'll come across many knickknacks like a clear Cinderella shoe, wonderful vases for flower arranging and beautiful lamps. They have jewelry, glass flowers and of course many traditional pieces like glasses and bowls. I'll bet that once you get inside you'll forget how many hours you've been there. Admission is free, and no purchase is necessary. The phone number is 0134-33-1991, although it is improbable that you'll reach someone who speaks English.

Walking further along the street, there is a wonderful music box shop names "Otaru Music Box Hall". The shop is filled with fantastic music boxes in every style and material imaginable, at reasonable prices. They have wooden, ceramic, and glass music boxes. There are elegant pieces and others depicting famous cartoon characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Some are shaped as carousels, victrolas and everything in between. Perhaps the most interesting section that caught my eye was the create-your-own section! They had glass boxes with miniature glass and plastic figurines (animals, furniture, food, etc...), which you could purchase separately to create your won special music box, and at a reasonable cost. The shop also has an annex called the "Music Box Museum" and offers free shuttles there, from the hall, on weekends. You'll see many antique reed organs and an expensive pipe organ. Their phone number is 0134-22-1108.

Otaru also has some wonderful hot springs and some of the best seafood in Hokkaido; good luck and enjoy!

Wiki Paulson-Cody

## Sapporo Snow Festival

In Japan, one of the biggest and most popular events during winter is the annual Sapporo Snow Festival. Every year,



over two million spectators from all over Japan, as well as from all over the world, gather to see the festival. In 1950, when some high school students made six statues from snow in Odori Park, they never dreamed it would become the gigantic event it is today. Nowadays, you will find sculptures in all sizes, ranging from small one-character designs to huge castles. The sculptures can be seen in three main locations: Odori Park, Susukino and Makomanai (a Japanese army base located about 45 minutes from downtown Sapporo). The sculptures at Makomanai are massive structures including enormous ice slides, which are quite an experience to try. Overall, the numbers of sculptures are in the hundreds. Even in Sapporo there is not enough snow in the immediate area for all the sculptures, so snow is trucked in from the outlying suburbs.

The snow sculptures are modeled after a wide variety of popular Japanese and international personalities, buildings or designs. For example, you may see a scaled-down replica of the White House, a Japanese sumo monkey, some Japanese fairy tale characters (Momotaro the Peach Boy and his followers) and Hansel and Gretel, complete with a witch and gingerbread house. The festival has many sculptures done by schools and other organizations, such as the Japanese military, but one highlight of the festival is the international snow sculpting competition, in which teams from all over the world participate. These sculptures, located in International Square, are judged and are given awards for first, second and third place. There are honorable mentions as well, and considering the number of entries each year, any award or honorable mention is a real honor. The event is taken very seriously and the teams work hard to create award-winning sculptures.

During the festival, another special event, the Snow Queen Contest takes place. Along with the honor of becoming Snow Queen, the winner automatically becomes Miss Sapporo and reigns for one year, making her eligible to competing the Miss Japan contest later. There are many events and the festivities are endless with extensive national television coverage for those not able to travel the distance to Sapporo. This is a popular festival in Japan; one which many may never get to see in person.

The Sapporo Snow festival is held annually over the first weekend in February. The larger sculptures are begun in advance of the festival dates while smaller sculptures may not be started until the festival begins. At whatever time you choose to go during the festival, you will not be disappointed! The Yujo Community Center usually has a special tour to the Festival. Keep in mind that airline and hotel reservations can be very difficult to obtain. Please make your reservations several months in advance otherwise you could be disappointed! Remember to dress warmly; Sapporo will snow most, if not all of the days of your visit. Pack some warm boots for walking on the snow packed streets and sidewalks. Gloves and a hat are also strongly recommended.

Viki Lyn Paulson-Cody





