

Fascinating Artistic Azabu 34

“Kamon”: The crests of the daimyo families who once lived in the Azabu area

Have you ever seen an old “Edo kirie-zu” map (picture map of old Edo)? These are sectional picture maps created after Edo castle town was divided into several sections. The names of samurai residences, temples and shrines, and localities were recorded on the maps. Kirie-zu maps are marvelous to look at, almost artistic. The map in this article shows daimyo residences, and here and there family crests are drawn above the names of the daimyo residences. Only some of the daimyo residence names have a family crest on the map, others do not. Looking at this kirie-zu map raises a variety of intriguing questions. In search of answers to such questions, I would like to explore the mystery of pure Japanese kamon design. We look back to the distant past, greatly different from now.

1. How many kamons do we have in Japan?

1 It is said that the number of kamons in Japan is between 5,000 and 10,000 (or more). At present, not all of the kamons have been catalogued. Currently, in Japan we often use our own family kamons on kimono for ceremonial occasions and on tombstones. The motifs are wide-ranging, and often include familiar plants and animals, celestial images, and more. It is said that if we categorized the designs in detail, there would be more than 30,000 types. However, most of them are based on kamons that have been used since ancient times, which have been separated, transformed, or added to. So we can only imagine what the originals looked like.

2. How many hans (feudal domains) were there in Japan?

2 In the Edo Period, a feudal system consisting of the Shogunate and feudal domains governed society. Under this system, there were about 300 feudal domains known as “hans,” and these were led by daimyos (feudal lords). The power of a daimyo was shown using the unit of “koku” (or “goku”), which indicated the productivity and economic scale of their territory. Only feudal lords with a stipend of 10,000 goku or more were referred to as “daimyo.”

According to the standard of the time, 1 koku was equivalent to the monetary value of about 1 ryo. Therefore, a stipend of 10,000 goku had a monetary value of about 10,000 ryo.

Incidentally, in modern currency values, 1 ryo corresponds to about 100,000 yen. That meant that the daimyos (≈ feudal domains) had a stipend (economic scale) of no less than 1 billion yen. Needless to say, the economic standards of the Edo Period cannot simply be compared to the standards today. However, don’t you feel that the economic scale (power) of the daimyo was great, as might be expected?

3. What is a daimyo yashiki? (official residence)

3 In the Edo Period, a daimyo yashiki was the residence of a daimyo in Edo, given to each daimyo by the shogun. After the Great Fire of Meireki in 1657, naka yashiki (spare residences) and shimo yashiki (suburban residences) were given to them for emergency refuges. The main residence was known as the kami yashiki, and for the most part this was where the feudal lord and his family members lived and where the feudal domain government office was also established. There were many cases of retired former feudal lords or adult successors living in the naka yashiki. The shimo yashiki served as the city storehouse of the daimyo, as they were mainly built at the water’s edge to unload the goods sent from their home domain.

4. Kami yashiki

4 Looking at the “Edo Kirie-zu – Azabu-zu” map shown in Fig. 1, a daimyo residence with the kamon above the name seems to indicate a daimyo’s kami yashiki. If we count these, there are 17 kamons on the Azabu map.

It’s fascinating to explore Japanese design through the patterns of actual kamons, as well as to find out what kind of people the daimyos living in Azabu were. (Aren’t you also interested in the names of kamons?) We will talk about how these 17 kamons relate to Azabu in the next edition!

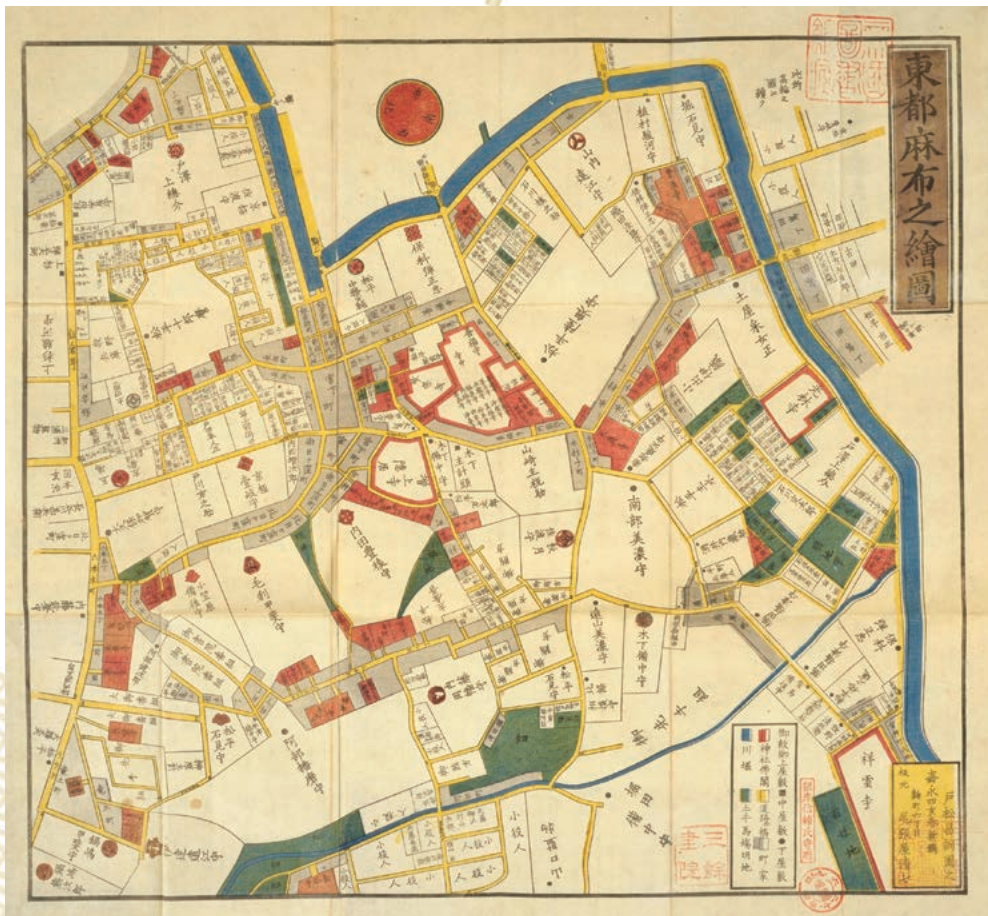


Fig. 1  
“Edo Kirie-zu” Azabu-Ezu (Picture Map)

It is not surprising that there are many differences between the past and present maps. However, there are many places where traces of the past can be found in the present. A band flowing from the lower right to the upper left on the map shows the Furukawa River. Comparing this to the present-day map, the river itself has not changed greatly. Can you find Azabujuban on this kirie-zu map?

● Kamon sources:  
“Kamon no Iroha” (All about Family Crests)  
<https://irohakamon.com/>  
Uwajima Date Cultural Properties Association  
<http://wwwb.pikara.ne.jp/off-date/index.html>

● References  
“Edo Kirie-zu” Azabu-Ezu: Written by KAGEYAMA Muneyasu, TOMATSU Masanori and IYAMA Yoshitomo, edited and published by Owariya Seishichi between 1849 – 1862  
“Definitive Edition: Shireba Shiruhodo Omoshiroi! Edo 300 Han” (The more you know, the more interesting it is! Edo’s 300 hans), written by YAMAMOTO Akira, published by Seitosha in January 2011  
“Omowazu Hito ni Oshietakunaru ‘Kamon’ no Subete ga Wakaru Hon” (With this book you can understand all about “Kamon,” which I can’t help but want to tell you), written by NOSAKA Toshio, published by Shinjinbutsu Oraisha in May 2009  
“Edo 300 Han Taizen: Zen-Han Hanshu Henkan Hyo Tsuki” (Encyclopedia of Edo’s 300 hans with list of the changing feudal lords of all hans) written by NAKAYAMA Yoshiaki, published by Kosaido Publishing in March 2015



# THE VOICE

The Current Voices of the Young People Who Gather in the Roppongi and Azabu Areas

These days we hear the phrase “solo activity” all the time. This phrase basically means to enjoy spending time alone. However, it is commonly misunderstood. The “activities we can enjoy alone” are not always “solo activities.” In society, interpersonal relationships can sometimes lead to stress. In such situations, individuals may feel the need to engage in solo activities. For example, while some people may consider using social media as a hobby, it is not truly a solo activity because it involves connections with others. Solo activities are activities through which people can have fun by alone without spending time with others. Today, I would like to deliver a message from a person who fully enjoys solo activities every day.



**Mr. OHNO Haruki**  
He was born and raised in Ueno, Tokyo. While he was a university student in Bunkyo City, he started a part-time job in Roppongi Hills. After he studied in the US and came back to Japan, he went back to this job again in Roppongi. Even now that he has become a working member of society, he enjoys daily solo activities in Roppongi.

## My childhood was greatly influenced by my parents.

“My parents worked in Tamachi, and I often went there from my home in Ueno. My parents worked for the Japan Times<sup>\*1</sup>. As an only child, I learned to do things alone from an early age. The foreigners in my parents’ office, who often socialized with many others, were quite familiar to me. When I started high school, I wanted to study in the US. Therefore, I enrolled the high school that had a partnership with a school in the state of Oregon and offered a student exchange program. When I was studying alone in high school in Portland(the largest city in Oregon), I had an encounter that later led me to a part-time job in Roppongi.

## From Portland to Roppongi, Azabujuban to Eugene and again to Roppongi

“Portland is a town so popular that it has been selected as the most popular town to live in the US. In this town, a unique coffee culture was established even before the coffee shops like Starbucks that originated in Seattle spread all over the US. While I was spending my high school life alone, I would often go to coffee shops. I got to know the coffee shop staff so well they nicknamed me “Luca.” This was a great experience for me, and it made me want to work for the company that created this coffee shop in Oregon, which by then had developed their overseas business and opened a coffee shop in Japan. When I became a university student, I worked at that coffee shop in Roppongi Hills. Around this time, I started another solo activity I called “city walking,” from Roppongi Hills to the Azabu-Juban Shopping Street. In the autumn of my third year, I went to the US and studied as an exchange student at the University of Oregon in their highly

regarded Department of Global Studies. This marked the beginning of my life in the city of Eugene Oregon. In the spring of my fourth year, I returned to Japan and resumed my part-time job in Roppongi Hills. However, due to the global pandemic, social interactions were scarce for everyone at the time. This prompted me to consider activities I could enjoy on my own.



## Solo activities became my main activities.

“My first place of assignment after I started working was Malaysia, and it was during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, I found it challenging to stay indoors all the time, so I took necessary precautions to avoid infection and explored solo sports. I went on vacations if my job allowed me to. The main idea of these vacations was solo activities to play sports. I started playing golf<sup>\*2</sup> when I was a student and I still golf regularly. When I go golfing or engage in marine sports such as surfing, riding the waves, I do not communicate with anybody. The solo experience of riding the waves is some-

thing I really enjoy. Solo activities were a great way to reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since coming back from Malaysia, I have been working for a specialized freezer manufacturer as a salesperson on Tennoz Isle. often go abroad to countries such as the US, Taiwan, Singapore, etc. on business. The Roppongi and Azabu area is about three kilometers away from my current home and it is within walking distance. However, there are many slopes here, and I have found a conveniently located cycle port<sup>\*3</sup>, so I usually travel on an electric assist bicycle. When I have time, I go to the gym in the morning to work up a good sweat. After that, I fully enjoy solo activities by walking and strolling around town. I usually go to the Nissin World Delicatessen to select various types of meat from around the world, and plan to go the Azabudai Hills Market that opened in March this year.

The Roppongi and Azabu areas are familiar to me, and I feel they share a similar urban atmosphere with towns in Oregon. The regional development of both areas has been planned to create a comfortable space for both residents and visitors. There is an acceptance of a diversity of values in this area where there are many foreigners. I feel that these points make the Roppongi and Azabu areas similar to towns in Oregon for me. I hope I can continue to enjoy various solo activities as I interact with the town.

<sup>\*1</sup> The Japan Times, Ltd. is Japan’s oldest English-language newspaper company, established in 1897. The company was located in Shibaura until 2018, which is why there is a monument to the English-language newspaper here.  
<sup>\*2</sup> Normally, two to four people play this game in one group. However, recently a “one person round” playing style where the game is played alone was created, and it is becoming increasingly popular. The player can enjoy golf, focusing on the play itself, without concern for others.  
<sup>\*3</sup> There is also a bicycle sharing port in the Azabu Regional City Office (in the city of Portland, where NIKE’s main office is located, NIKE bicycles are available for sharing).



1 English-language Newspaper Monument



2 Cycle Port (Azabu Regional City Office)



3 Nissin World Delicatessen







Town's Tips No. 16

"Azabu Minna-no Radio" (Everyone's Radio) started broadcasting on August 8, 2023. There have been four broadcasts so far, with the warm support of local people in the Azabu area and staff members of the Azabu Regional City Office.

"Azabu Minna-no Radio" was established as a new way to transmit information, creating a virtual space where the charms, people, and activities in Azabu could be introduced. In this place, we hope that a wide variety of people can connect, develop ideas, and have the opportunity to discover and exchange information. The 7th period of the "MINAYOKU" local project aims to achieve this with the Collaboration Project Section of the Azabu Regional City Office.

With the expectation that a variety of projects and interactions would develop from here, the project was named "Azabu Minna-no Radio." The name consists of three simple, easy-to-remember words: "Azabu," "Minna" (Everybody), and "Radio."

Both Japanese and English versions are provided through YouTube so that the program is accessible for foreigners and can also be used to enjoy listening practice in these languages.

Currently, four students (Ms. KATAYAMA Ayaka, Ms. HAYASHI Elena, Mr. MORIMOTO Shin and Mr. WATANABE Ryosei) of the Hiroo Gakuen Senior High School International Course have become members of the project group, having been introduced by the Azabu Regional City Office, and work together with the existing members.



## Hearing from the Radio Project Members



### Has anything changed from before and after your participation in this project?

**A:** Because I had never really listened to radio broadcasts, I had no clear picture of how information could be transmitted with this form of media.

**B:** First, I felt a bit anxious about uploading audio and names on YouTube, that the scenery and my face might be recognized and that my personal information might be revealed.

**C:** Using the voice editing software "Audacity," dialog is edited and uploaded on YouTube and Instagram. I think that this is a proactive project where we can include things to express our individuality.

**D:** As I was wondering what to do about the future direction of the project, "Wai Wai Children's Cafeteria Alice's Table" invited us to gather information from them. We were able to plan and collect information, and this gave us a lot of confidence.

**A:** We had an idea of what we were going to ask in advance. However, as we just tried to get to know them better, we were able to hear a surprising story through casual conversation, and we got access to a wider world view.

**B:** The other day, we established the Hiroo Gakuen Student Community, including the "Azabu Minna-no Radio" project members. I am looking forward to seeing my school juniors develop various activities in the future.

**C:** I was a bit nervous because it was difficult for me to express my opinion in Japanese. After participating in this project, I think that my communication ability in Japanese has improved a little.

### Previous Broadcasts

#### Episode 1

What is "MINAYOKU"?

#### Episode 2

Robot Future Entrepreneur x Community Contribution

#### Episode 3

International Children's Cafe - Alice's Table

#### Episode 4

Culture Preservation x Community Support



### During the production of the English version, how did you make it creative? Was there anything that left an impression on you?

**A:** I thought that a direct translation would lack originality, so we decided to hold an English discussion based on what we heard in the interview.

**B:** I hope to think about providing information to foreign people and the role of the project for language-learning in the future.

**C:** It is disappointing that we are not able to deliver the voices of guests in the English version. However, it was very good that the four of us were able to discuss things together.

**A:** We were able to take advantage of our level of English, and I really enjoyed the work where each of us could shape our own opinions.

**B:** Each of the four of us have different interests, so when we decided to pick the most interesting part, four different opinions arose. I realized that each of us had a different perspective, which was very interesting for me.

### Please let us know your dreams for the future.

**A:** I am interested in making hypotheses, conducting experiments, and analyzing the results. I would like to put myself in an environment where I can gain experience of that at an early stage. As I have been riding horses for a long time, I would like to continue spending an enjoyable time with horses in large open spaces.

**B:** I am interested in learning about particular phenomena, and I want to continue learning about the Earth on a global scale in a cross-curricular faculty based on science. I would like to contribute to people and society in a variety of fields such as disaster prediction.

**C:** I am interested in analyzing things deeply, so I want to learn how to make use of that. My grandmother looks forward to this radio program and people around me are happy to see me grow, which encourages me a lot. I thank my family from the bottom of my heart.

**D:** I have devoted myself to a variety of activities to gain a deeper understanding of people around me. I want to place myself in an environment where I can deepen discussions about laws and policies. I am always appreciative of the people around me for their support and I want to become a person who lives cherishing the bonds between people.

They spoke frankly about their trials and errors in their first experience with radio program production and broadcasting, and their hopes for the future.

Instagram: @azabu\_radio



Access Instagram here.







JAMAICA

Area: 10,990km<sup>2</sup> (Almost the same size as Gifu Prefecture)  
(based on World Bank figures)

Population: 2,827,000 (based on World Bank figures, 2022)

Capital City: Kingston

Language: English (Official Language)  
and Jamaican Creole (including so-called Patois)

Head of the State: King Charles III

Legislature: Bicameral System (Upper House: 21 seats, Lower House: 63 seats)

From the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/jamaica/data.html>

Interview Support: Embassy of Jamaica in Japan

JAMAICA

Visiting Ambassadors  
From the “World”  
of Azabu

“One Love” Evolves in a Diversity of Cultures.  
That’s JAMAICA.

Blue skies, clear seas, white beaches with reggae music coming out of nowhere.  
This time we were invited by the Embassy of Jamaica to speak with H. E. Miss Shorna-Kay M. Richards, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Jamaica to Japan (hereinafter called “the Ambassador”).

Connection with Japan  
Strong Wishes for Peace, from Nagasaki and Hiroshima

The Ambassador concurrently also serves as the Chairman of the United Nation’s Secretary-General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. She came to Japan for the first time in 2005 as a participant in the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament. “I received training in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and met with some atomic bomb survivors. I was shocked and overwhelmed at their misery.” On the last day of the program, she gave a greeting as a representative of the fellowship and said, “I promised myself that I would accept the complaints of atomic bomb survivors and work for nuclear disarmament so that nobody ever again has to endure the suffering that was brought on them, if I am to work at the United Nations”.

In 2020, she became the Ambassador of Jamaica to Japan. She said “When I wished for peace in Hiroshima 15 years ago, I never thought that I would become the ambassador to Japan”. As she spoke, we felt her deep and solemn energy.

“Omotenashi” (Hospitality), “Monono Aware” (Appreciation of the fleeting nature of beauty), “Ichigo Ichie” (Once-in-a-Lifetime Encounter), and “Wa” (Harmony)

In Japan, “Everybody treated me warmly was deeply engraved in my heart as one of the charms of the Japanese people, ‘Omotenashi’”

“In Japan, people appreciate the changing seasons, nature and impermanence. For example, cherry blossom viewing is to enjoy the fleeting beauty of beautiful seasonal flowers. That’s truly wonderful. Everything I have experienced in Japan is special. I like the words “Ichigo Ichie”. I like the words “Ichigo-Ichie” very much.

She was deeply impressed by the

idea of “Wa” (harmony). She said, “In Japan there is a perfect balance between humans and nature, and the modern and traditional: “Wa”. She loves everything about Japan, and remarked that “If I ever have to leave Japan, I would need counseling and therapy!”. She said this with a charming smile.

Her Favorite Place is the Azabu-Juban Shopping District, close to the Jamaican Embassy.

“In the Azabu-Juban Shopping District there are both new trends and traditional friendly warmth. For example, my favorite flower shop owner sometimes gives me a small flower as a bonus. It warms my heart. In Jamaica, we cherish the bonds between people. Therefore, when I visit such a shop, I am reminded of our capital town Kingston”.



Japanese Food and Jamaican Dishes

The Ambassador loves soba, sashimi, yuzu, rice cake, Yakisoba (stir-fried noodles), even Natto (fermented soybeans) very much, which relaxes her greatly! She also loves Onigiri and has posted a video on YouTube about it. In addition, she loves Kaiseki Cuisine (Japanese traditional tea-ceremony dishes) which is enjoyed using all five senses.

On the other hand, when we

Mr. Usain St. Leo Bolt (1986 - ) set an unprecedented world record of 9.58 seconds in the men’s 100-metre final in 2009. As of September 2024, this record has not been broken.

asked her to recommend some Jamaican dishes, she answered “I recommend Jerk Chicken with its many spices, and Ackee, something only Jamaican people eat. Ackee is a fruit, but there is a dish where it is cooked with codfish”. Also, “Rice and Peas” similar to Japanese sekihan, where rice and peas are stewed for a long time in coconut milk. These are her specialty dishes.

“ONE LOVE” “Good Vibes Only”

“The population of Jamaica is about 2,900,000 and almost the same size as Gifu Prefecture. The people have developed a strong will because of their history of hardship, and live optimistic hope-filled lives. The music and dance created under these circumstances bring power to the people. The lyrics of Bob Marley’s songs have become universal messages for the resolution of various conflicts” she told us passionately.

The Azabu Area and the Future of Jamaica

“Cultures connect people and knowing about these cultures can deepen mutual understanding. I would like to introduce Jamaican culture to Japanese people through various events including cooking classes in continuous cooperation with Minato City”. She told us about her aspirations.

The Ambassador is quite friendly, but has a dignified aura; this is our impression. Her statement that “Japan is the only country that has suffered atomic bombings. Therefore, I hope more messages about peace shall be dispatched from the Japanese people” resonated in our minds.

HP <http://jamaicaembassy.jp/indexJ.html>



The endless blue seas. Jamaica has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.



A wide variety of popular cocktails can be made from the rum produced there. It is made from sugarcane, and is one of their specialty products. However, the alcohol level can be as high as 40 to 50%. Be careful not to drink too much.



The capital city Kingston has Jamaica’s largest craft market with more than 100 shops. The place is lined with shops filled with souvenirs.



River Rafting on a bamboo raft is a popular activity for sight-seeing visitors.



During this interview, we saw the decoration commemorating Bob Marley (1945–1981), a legendary artist who Jamaica is proud of, behind the Ambassador. In 2024, the biographical film “Bob Marley: ONE LOVE” became a huge hit. Bob Marley is called the “God of Reggae” and his famous song “ONE LOVE” expresses the spirit of Jamaica where a diversity of ethnic groups coexists.



This shows the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, the first World Heritage site in Jamaica. In this National Park, the Blue Mountains are well known as the Blue Mountain Coffee production area. There are also many enthusiasts of this high-grade coffee in Japan. These mountains are the habitat of endangered birds and the largest butterfly in the Western Hemisphere.





29

"The Local Community" 29

# Azabudai Shopping Street has just begun! A totally new shopping street connecting Kamiyacho Station to the Azabudai area

The Azabudai Shopping Street emerged in November 2023, was created to revitalize the area from Kamiyacho Station to Tokyo Tower. The goal of the project is to spread the charms of the local area, and this is ongoing. Groups of local people, companies, high school students, and university students all join in. We asked the people involved about their future vision and how this shopping street will bring fresh energy into the local community.



Azabudai Shopping Street Project Members

## What is "Azabudai Shopping Street"?

– "Local Community and Cross-Generational Collaboration" is highly valued.

"Azabudai Shopping Street" is the name of an innovative citizen collaboration project composed of stores, neighborhood associations and companies between Kamiyacho Station and the Azabudai area. Local companies, start-up companies, large companies, PTA presidents, local IT entrepreneurs, local supporters, and high school students and university students working as company interns have all participated in this project. Currently, about 50 members are working hard as the key people for a variety of creative collaborations. With this project, people from various backgrounds work together and create new values.

## Connection with the Town

**Mr. KOBAYASHI Toru** (Advisor to the Azabudai Shopping Street Project, Chairman of the Iikura Neighborhood Association and a representative of the Nishikubo Hachiman Shrine)

I have served as the chairman of the Iikura Neighborhood Association for 18 years. In the past, we were able to hold the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 because the neighborhood associations in Tokyo collaborated closely. Azabu Elementary School is also celebrating its 150th anniversary. The power of the townspeople surely contributes to the improvement of Japan. I would like to create a great town, which can be left to the people of the next generation.



From the left: Mr. KOBAYASHI and Mr. NOMURA

**Mr. NOMURA Tomoyoshi** (Advisor to the Azabudai Shopping Street Project and Chairman of Iikura 3, 4-Chome Neighborhood Association)

My opportunity to connect with the Azabudai Shopping Street project came in the autumn of 2023, when I spoke about the production of the scarecrow robot with Mr. IZAWA, who participated in an Azabu area traditional festival called the "Kakashi Matsuri" (Scarecrow Festival). This participation is just one of the "MINAYOKU" activities. After that, Mr. IZAWA introduced me to a project where children are taught about robots and computer programming at local festivals. Companies and schools participated in this project and cooperation has been growing. I would like to develop a new project with young people, cherishing the local traditional culture.

## The Chairman of the Azabudai Shopping Street Project came from a start-up company!

**Mr. IZAWA Ryota**,  
Chairman of the Azabudai Shopping Street Project  
(President & CEO of Proof of Japan)



The purpose of this project is to improve the local community by establishing useful cooperation between the local residents and "industry, government, academia and the town" and creating new value as a next-generation shopping street.

I got acquainted with the chairmen of the Neighborhood Associations through the "MINAYOKU" project a local project operated by the Collaboration Project Section of the Azabu Regional City Office. This led to the creation of the cross-generational and beyond-border Azabudai Shopping Street project. The shops, companies, local residents, high school students and university students have learned about each other in this area, aiming for the sustainable development of the district. In January 2024, they cooperated with one of the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education's programs. This program was designed to give high school students a chance to gain entrepreneurship experience in the shops in the shopping street. They are trying to foster next-generation innovators to grow the town and spread its charms\* both inside and outside of Japan.

\* There is an ongoing project through which project members cooperate with each other to collect information about the area from Kamiya-cho to Tokyo Tower. This information will be used to prepare a PR magazine in both paper and digital media, so that both local residents and visitors can recognize the charms of this town.

## The Expectations of Companies and Stores

**"Kamiya-cho Navigator" Mr. NAKAMURA Takuto**  
(Public Relations and Marketing Dept., Mori Trust Co., Ltd.)

I expect that we can highlight local charms with the cooperation of the Azabudai Shopping Street project, and contribute to the development of local commerce. The four themes of Mori Trust are Open Innovation, Smart Technology, Wellness, and the SDGs. These are important for the development of the Kamiya-cho area, and integral to the creation of the next-generation shopping street promoted by the Azabudai Shopping Street project. I have great expectations that this will create opportunities for local people and companies to collaborate, making use of both Mr. IZAWA's perspective as an entrepreneur, as well as that of large companies. I will spread information about Kamiya-cho through the website of my company, including the project "Kamiyacho Megumachi Plogging," as a "Kamiya-cho Navigator."

**Ms. TOKINAGA Yuka**  
(Shinmai Saryo proprietress)

The Shinmai Saryo\* is a project that provides new eating and drinking experiences using local ingredients. This project's goal is to develop new business using the local food culture. We aim to rediscover the local area's charms and create a shop that is loved by both local people and visitors.

\* Shinmai Saryo is a new type of café, where innovation blends with traditional Japanese materials. Azabudai Shopping Street, where confectionery has come to be produced and sold, works together with company interns to provide gluten-free sweets made using 100% rice flour. This café attracted attention because of a press release dated August 21, 2024. The press release said that the "Mori Trust concluded a collaboration agreement with the Azabudai Shopping Street project for the enhancement of the Kamiya-cho and Azabudai areas."



From the left: Mr. IZAWA, Ms. TOKINAGA, and Mr. NAKAMURA



## Voices of High School and University Students

**Ms. HOSHINA Risako**  
(3rd year high school student)

I experienced starting a business in Azabudai Shopping Street. I attracted high school students to the store, and achieved 300 visitors and sales of 300,000 yen. I was surprised that this town has a local community network despite being in a big city.

**Ms. YAMADA Kokoro**  
(2nd year high school student)

I also experienced starting a business in the Azabudai Shopping Street. They accepted a program created by high school students. I got the impression that the Shopping Street people were very friendly.

**Mr. NISHI Ryuta**  
(3rd year high school student)

I heard that town greening was the theme behind the building development in the local area. I really wanted to stay actively involved in the community.

**Ms. KONDO Hina**  
(4th year university student)

I participated in a plogging (a sport where trash on the street is collected while jogging) event in Kamiya-cho. Next time, I will plan an event and spread information relating to the town.



From the left: Ms. HAYASHI Elena, Ms. HOSHINA Risako, Ms. YAMADA Kokoro, Mr. NISHI Ryuta and Ms. KONDO Hina

**Ms. HAYASHI Elena**  
(3rd year high school student)

I participated in "Azabu Minna-no Radio" (refer to page 3) in the "MINAYOKU" project, and became interested in Azabu town development. I would like to continue to spread information after I go on to higher education.

## Future Projects

The "Azabudai Shopping Street" project will actively develop a variety of other new projects as their own activities expand. This will be in accordance with local needs, such as the reinforcement of local disaster-prevention measures, city development using the latest technology, and promotion of digitalization for the shops along the shopping street. We expect that the Azabudai Shopping Street project will make the Azabudai and Kamiya-cho area a much more fascinating and lively place through cooperation that transcends borders and generations.

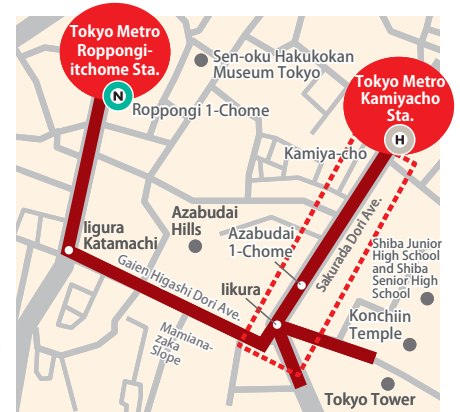
## After the Interview Sessions

Many people gathered together for our interview sessions. We could truly imagine a cross-generational future when we saw the chairmen of the Neighborhood Associations together with entrepreneurs, senior high school students and university students young enough to be their children, all gathered together to discuss the local community.



Picture of Meeting

Azabudai Shopping Street  
<https://azabudai.tokyo/>



(Interview and text by SATO Masako, HORIUCHI Akiko, and KASHO Misaho)



麻布の軌跡

The Historical Footsteps of Azabu

Mitsui Family Lands and Buildings (Part One)

–Main Residence in Imai-cho and the Surrounding Area Before the War–



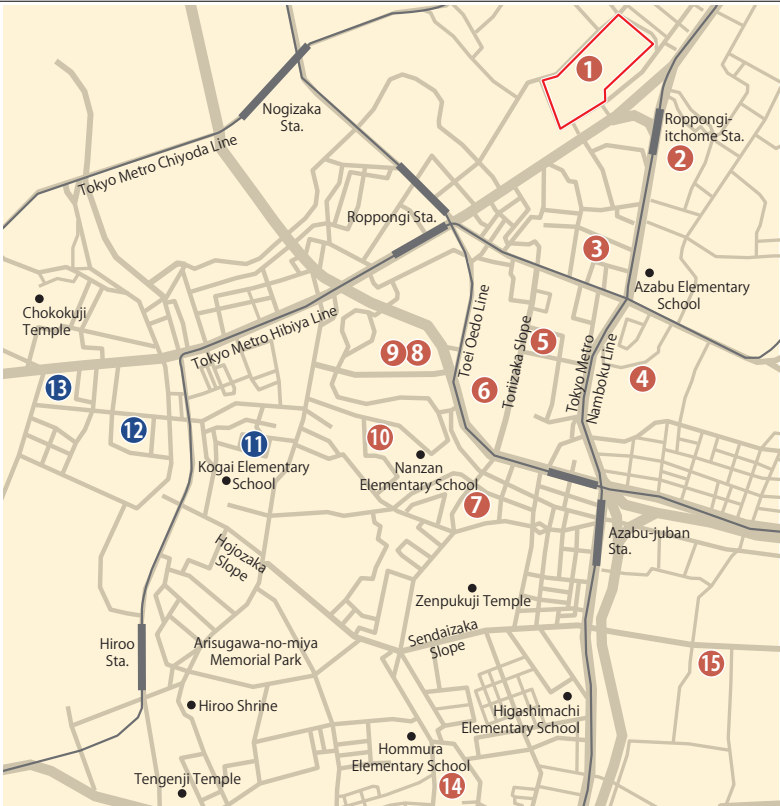
Main Residence Entrance Hall



Outside of the Grand Banquet Hall



Prince of Wales Invitation Entertainment List (In English and Japanese)



The places related to the Mitsui Family are shown on this modern-day map (The places with a blue No. will be described in the second part).



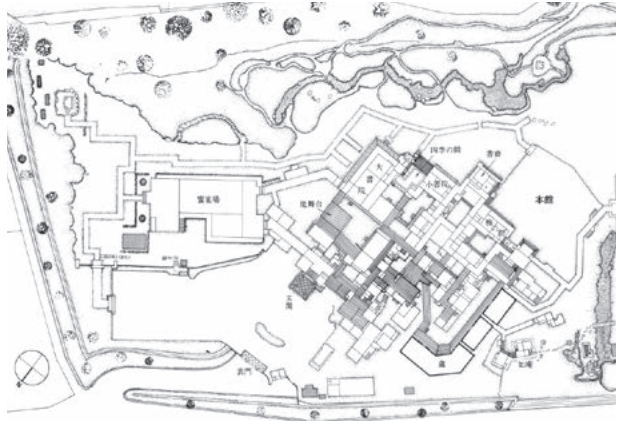
Mr. MITSUI Hachiroemon Takamine

Before the war in the mid-20th century, all the residences of the Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo main families (the three major conglomerates of Japan) were located in the Roppongi area. Mr. IWASAKI Koyata, the fourth head of the Mitsubishi Family, lived on premises 6 with an area of about 4,000 tsubos (13,200 m<sup>2</sup>) in Torizaka-cho. The second residence of Mr. SUMITOMO Kichizaemon Tomoito, the 15th head of the Sumitomo Family, was located on premises 2 with an area of about 3,000 tsubos (9,900 m<sup>2</sup>) in Ichibei-cho. Both of them had equally impressive large mansions, however, the magnificence of the mansion 1 owned by Baron MITSUI Hachiroemon Takamine, the 10th head of the Mitsui Family, was exceptional. The Mitsui Family's main mansion, residences of relatives, a guest house, and an educational institution for their children were all clustered closely together. So, as you can see, the Azabu area has a long history and deep ties to the Mitsui clan. Places related to the Mitsui Family will be introduced in two parts.

The Main Family's Main Residence

The main mansion of the Mitsui Family (Kita Family) was known as the “Imai-cho Main Residence,” based on the name of the location. The premises had an area of 13,500 tsubos (44,550 m<sup>2</sup>) (and when the surrounding area with their offices was included, it reached 16,000 tsubos (52,800 m<sup>2</sup>)). This is truly enormous, and larger than the whole area of the present-day Akasaka Ark Hills (about 12,500 tsubos: 41,250 m<sup>2</sup>). In addition to the main 14 buildings completed in 1908, there were three buildings for the tea ceremony, including the “Jo-an” hermitage that later became designated as a national treasure, three storehouses with thick earthen walls, a greenhouse and tennis court, and more. In 1920, when Takakimi, the first son of MITSUI Takamine, got married, the “New Residence” was completed. The land next to the main premises was also purchased and a Japanese-style building and a Western-style building were constructed there.

\* This was introduced in The Azabu Vol. 14.



Main Residence Ground Plan (Partial)

Grand Banquet Hall

A visit by the Prince of Wales was arranged in 1922. At that time, the Mitsui Family's second residence in Tsunamachi was set up as a guest reception hall 15, but they presumed that the Imai-cho Main Residence of the Mitsui Family with their Japanese tatami rooms and the Noh stage would be better than a Western-style house. A new grand banquet hall with an area of 200 tsubos (660 m<sup>2</sup>) was therefore built on the premises of the Mitsui Main Residence. They say that the Prince of Wales particularly enjoyed the Noh play “Momijigari” (maple-tree viewing), performed as entertainment at a dinner party. The Grand Banquet Hall was used for a long time after being renovated after the Great Kanto Earthquake.

A Reception Facility for Survivors of the Great Kanto Earthquake

Although they were well known for doing things like holding splendid banquets, the Main Mitsui Family quickly established a relief headquarters when the Great Kanto Earthquake occurred on September 1, 1923. They opened about 400 tsubos (1,320 m<sup>2</sup>) of the Imai-cho Main Residence and surrounding land as part of their efforts to support the community. They also constructed emergency housing barracks for survivors. Four landscape paintings from that time were attached to the “Thank You” book of letters from 145 residents of the emergency housing sent to the Mitsui Family. The following photo shows one of these paintings. The roof of the main building entrance hall is shown in the front center, the main gate at the back, and the barracks on the right-hand side of the photo.



Barracks in the Imai-cho Residence (drawn by Mr. MURAKAMI Izan)

Name (Period of Residence)	Address at that time	Current Location
1 Kita Family 1 (Before the War)	42 Imai-cho	2-chome Roppongi Staff Residence of the Embassy of the United States of America in Japan
2 SUMITOMO Kichizaemon's Second Residence	1-3 Ichibei-cho	1-chome Roppongi Izumi Garden
3 Isarago Family	20 Nakano-cho	3-17 Roppongi
4 Nagasaka-cho Family 2 (Late Taisho Period)	1 Nagasaka-cho	1 Azabu-nagasakacho
5 Nagasaka-cho Family 1 (Early Taisho Period)	6 Higashi-torizaka-cho	5-chome Roppongi Embassy of the Philippines in Japan
6 INOUE Kaoru's First Residence (Early Meiji Period) IWASAKI Koyata's Residence	3 Torizaka-cho	5-chome Roppongi International House of Japan
7 Ipponmatsu-cho Family	20 Ipponmatsu-cho	1-chome Moto-azabu Australian Embassy in Japan
8 MAGOSHI Kyohei's Residence	46 Kita-Higakubo-cho	6-chome Roppongi TV Asahi Main Office Building
9 MAKITA Tamaki's Residence	43 Kita-Higakubo-cho	6-chome Roppongi TV Asahi Main Office Building
10 INOUE Kaoru's Second Residence (Late Meiji Period)	40 Miyamura-cho	3-chome Moto-azabu
11 Kita Family 2 (After the War)	4 Kogai-cho	3-chome Nishi-azabu Park House Nishi-azabu
12 Jishu-sha	146 Kogai-cho	4-chome Nishi-azabu Wakabakai Kindergarten
13 Kogai-cho Assembly Hall	172 Kogai-cho	4-chome Nishi-azabu Park Wellstate, Nishi-azabu
14 Hommura-cho Family	169 Hommura-cho	3-chome Minami-azabu Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Japan
15 Second Residence in Tsunamachi	(Shiba-ku) Mita	2-chome Mita Tsunamachi Mitsui Club

The Eleven MITSUI Families

The Mitsui's assets and businesses were shared by the 11 Mitsui Families, the descendants of the founder. Each family was named according to where they lived. Because the main Mitsui Family used to have a residence on the north side of Aburanokoji-cho in Kyoto, they were called “Kita Family,” meaning “North Family.” Even after they moved to Tokyo in the middle of the Meiji Period (1868–1912), the name remained the same. Some family names were changed, for example the “Torizaka Family” became the “Nagasaka-cho Family” due to relocation.

Residences of the Mitsui Clan

Out of the 11 Mitsui Clan Families, the following four families lived in the Azabu area.

- The Isarago Family of Mr. MITSUI Motonosuke moved from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1898. They lived at “20 Nakano-cho” in the Taisho Period (1912–1926). The former owner of the premises 3 was Mr. FUKUZAWA Sutejiro, the second son of Mr. FUKUZAWA Yukichi. Next door, “19 Nakano-cho,” was the residence of Mr. KITA-ZATO Shibasaburo. This Mitsui Family moved to “50 Isarago, Shiba-ku” at the beginning of the Showa Period (1926–1989) and became known as the “Isarago Family.”
- The Nagasaka-cho Family of Mr. MITSUI Morinosuke moved from Higashi-torizaka-cho 5 to Nagasaka-cho 4 in 1919. At that time, part of the mansion in Torizaka was dismantled and reconstructed in Karuizawa as the Mampei Hotel, which still exists to this day. This gracious Japanese style-building was made entirely of cypress.
- The Hommura-cho Family of Mr. MITSUI Yonosuke moved to Hommura-cho in 1914 14. Part of the study hall building of this residence was dismantled and reconstructed in the graveyard of the Mitsui Family in Nogata in 1935 as a resting room for Mitsui Family members. After that, a Western-style building was constructed on the site in Hommura-cho.
- The Ipponmatsu-cho Family of Mr. MITSUI Tokuemom started living in Ipponmatsu-cho in 1923 7.

Mitsui Family Houses for Company Executives

Some houses for executives of the Mitsui Family's companies were built near the Imai-cho Main Residence. Mr. INOUE Kaoru was a politician and advisor to the Mitsui Family, and lived in the mansion 6 in Torizaka (later owned by Mr. IWASAKI Koyata). This was before the Mitsui Family obtained the land for the Imai-cho Main Residence. He lived in the “Uchidayama Residence” 10 in Miyamura-cho in his final years. In addition to this, Mr. MAGOSHI Kyohei (who became known as the king of beer after he worked for Mitsui & Co., Ltd.), and Mr. MAKITA Tamaki, a top executive of Mitsui Mining & Smelting Co., Ltd. and a son-in-law of Mr. DAN Takuma, the chairman of the House of Mitsui, had houses next to each other. They divided the site of Soto-shu University (presently Komazawa University), which moved to Komazawa in 1913, between them. They purchased about 2000 tsubos (6,600 m<sup>2</sup>) each. 8 9

All the mansions mentioned here, including the lavish Imai-cho Main Residence and Grand Banquet Hall, were reduced to ashes in the air raids of May 1945. The Western-style house owned by Mr. MAKITA Tamaki narrowly escaped the fire. However, it was taken over by the occupying forces and later transferred to the Embassy of the Argentine Republic in Japan.



Nogata Graveyard Resting Place (Old Hommura Family Study Hall Building)

- Main References:.....
  - “Mitsui Hachiroemon Takamine Den” (Biography of Mr. MITSUI Hachiroemon Takamine) published by Mitsui Bunko in 1988
  - “Mitsui no Shukajjo: Yurakucho kara Sapporo made” (Mitsui's Assembly Halls from Yurakucho to Sapporo) written by Mr. ISHIDA Shigenosuke, published by Architectures, Constructions & Engineerings News (Daily) in 1993
  - “Mitsui no Tochi to Tatemono” (Mitsui Family's Lands and Buildings) written by Mr. ISHIDA Shigenosuke, published by Architectures, Constructions & Engineerings News (Daily) in 1993
  - “Makita Tamaki Denki Shiryō” (Biographical Data of Makita Tamaki) written by Mr. MORIKAWA Hidemasa, published by the Japan Business History Institute in 1982
- Illustration provided by.....
  - Mitsui Bunko
  - Tokyo Metropolitan Central Library (Main Residence Entrance Hall Photo)

(Research and text by YAMAKI Ayako)





## Information Items in March

### Have you completed the proper procedures for transferring the ownership of or scrapping a motor vehicle?

The Motor Vehicle Tax is imposed on motor vehicle owners (or motor vehicle users in the case of vehicles purchased in installments) noted on the automobile inspection certificate as of April 1 each year. When ownership of a motor vehicle is transferred, you need to complete a transfer of registration. When scrapping a motor vehicle, there is a deregistration process that must be completed. To complete either of these procedures, please visit the relevant District Transport Bureau or Automobile Inspection and Registration Office by March 31, 2025.

**Inquiries: Tokyo Metropolitan Motor Vehicle Tax Call Center Tel: 03-3525-4066**

### City taxes can be paid through smartphone payment app.

It is recommended for you to pay city taxes using smartphone payment app. Using this app., the barcode on the payment slip can be read and the city tax can be paid anywhere anytime.

For details, access the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website.



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

### The procedure can be followed without visiting our office.

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation has a system where taxpayers can go through the procedure easily by mail or through the Internet etc., without visiting our office. Report, application or notification can be accepted by mail, or through electronic devices. Also, a cashless system for paying tax is available.

For details, refer to Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website.

**Inquiries: For properties, etc., located in Minato City:**  
**Minato City Metropolitan Taxation Office Tel: 03-5549-3800 (rep.)**



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

### You need to complete the procedure to register your new address for the Motor Vehicle Tax when you change residences.

When a vehicle owner moves, the owner's new address needs to be registered with the local Transport Bureau or Automobile Inspection and Registration Office. Delaying the procedure could create issues for you such as not receiving Motor Vehicle Tax notices. If delaying the procedure is unavoidable, please notify us about your new address for Tax Notices through electronic application or by telephone.

**Inquiries: Tokyo Metropolitan Motor Vehicle Tax Call Center Tel: 03-3525-4066**

### Applications for Motor Vehicle Tax exemptions for the disabled are being accepted in regular taxation procedures for FY2025.

Applications from people who have just received their Shintai Shogaisha Techo (Certificate of the Physically Disabled) or have not applied for the Motor Vehicle Tax exemption for the disabled yet, are now being accepted for FY2025.

- **Eligibility:** Persons who have received their certificates of physical or mental disability, and who also meet certain requirements
- **Application Deadline:** June 2 (Fri), 2025

※ There is an upper limit for the exemption amount.

**Inquiries: Tokyo Metropolitan Motor Vehicle Tax Call Center Tel: 03-3525-4066**



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

### Land/Building prices that are the basis of the Fixed Assets Tax will be available for viewing from April (Within Tokyo's 23 Wards).

- **Eligibility:** Taxpayers owing land/buildings in the 23 wards as of January 1, 2025
- **Records to be viewed:** Land/building prices taxable in the relevant ward where the taxpayer owns properties (Public Inspection Ledger)
- **Period:** From April 1 (Tue) to June 30 (Mon), 2025 (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays)
- **Time:** From 08:30 to 17:00
- **Location:** Metropolitan Taxation Office in the relevant ward where the taxpayer owns properties

The notice of tax payment will be sent on June 2 (Mon), 2025. For more information, visit the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website or the office below.

**Inquiries: For properties, etc., located in Minato City:**  
**Minato City Metropolitan Taxation Office Tel: 03-5549-3800 (rep.)**

### Real Estate Acquisition Tax for newly-built Tokyo Zero-Emission Housing will be exempted (Within Tokyo's 23 Wards).

The eligibility and rate for the tax exemption are as follows:

- **Eligibility for Tax Exemption:**  
Newly-built Tokyo Zero-Emission Housing that meets certain requirements.
- **Tax Exemption Rate:**  
Real Estate Acquisition Tax for housing exemptions up to a maximum of 100%, can be applied for.

Applications need to be made for tax exemptions. Other tax exemptions, such as the Earthquake Resistance Promotion Tax etc., can be applied for when you build a new house. For details, refer to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website or contact the following office.

**Inquiries: For properties located in Minato City: Minato City Metropolitan Taxation Office Tel: 03-5549-3800 (rep.)**

## The "Home Evacuation Guidebook For When an Earthquake Strikes" is being distributed!



**If your house is not damaged in an earthquake etc., do not go to a shelter: consider "Home Evacuation," or "sheltering in place," and continue living at home.**

Shelters are temporary living spaces for people who cannot live at home, because their homes were seriously damaged, collapsed or burnt down, etc.

Living space in a shelter is limited. Because of this, we need to be careful about privacy, health management and hygiene management (such as for toilets, etc.) Therefore, each of us needs to realize the importance of home evacuation.

For this reason, the Azabu Regional City Office has created the "Home Evacuation Guidebook For When an Earthquake Strikes," recommending home evacuation in the Azabu area following an earthquake. This guidebook outlines important details regarding safely living at home during a disaster, telling us exactly what home evacuation means, what we should prepare, etc.

This guidebook is being distributed at the Collaboration Project Section counter at the Azabu Regional City Office.

More details about the guidebook can be found on the Minato City website.

Evacuation shelters can become overcrowded.



Aza-Buu

Access our website using this QR code to read the "Home Evacuation Guidebook For When an Earthquake Strikes".



**Inquiries: Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office Tel: 03-5114-8802**

Information from the Azabu Regional City Office

At last, the “Azabu Slope Curry” is now on the menu in ordinary restaurants in the Azabu Area!



The special “Azabu Slope Curry” project expresses the charm of the slopes of Azabu, and is a new type of “Curry” on the menu. These Curries are new local delicacies that express the local culture and history of the Azabu Area, with a great variety of tastes. The first round of curry menu items appeared in three selected restaurants on January 10th, 2025.

Please look forward to the experience, not only to fill your stomach, but also to enjoy the unique individuality of each slope.

Serving Restaurant

**Sakura Saku  
(cherry blossoms blooming)  
“Sakura-zaka (Slope) Curry”**

**Serving Restaurant**  
“PILIPILI”, The Pioneer European Curry  
Specialty Restaurant in Azabu

**Address**  
1-18-1, Higashi-Azabu

**“Nadare-zaka (Slope) Curry”**

**Serving Restaurant**  
Keema Curry Specialty Restaurant “BIBIBI”

**Address**  
1-5-23, Nishi-Azabu

**“Sendai-zaka (Slope) Curry”**

**Serving Restaurant**  
European-Style Curry Restaurant  
“GAVIAL Plus” Azabu-Juban Shop

**Address**  
1-9-9, Azabu-Juban

**We continue to recruit new restaurants to participate in the “Azabu Slope Curry” Project!**

For applications or for the details of the Azabu Slope Curry Project, access from here.

Inquiries: Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office  
Tel: 03-5114-8812

The members for the citizen participation organization are being recruited now!

To formulate a new comprehensive plan called “MINATO Vison”, citizen’s opinions will be exchanged in workshop format in the FY 2025 and the recommendations related to the regional projects in the Azabu Area, will be compiled. The recruitment numbers are about 20.

Why don’t you join the local activities in Azabu Area, to learn about the town you are living in, and to make the community better.



- Activity Days** Weekday nights, basically about once a month
- Depending on the activities of the subcommittee and session meetings, sometimes events or research will be performed on Saturday or Sunday, etc.
- The Activity Period is one year from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.
- Application** Clearly write down your address, name, age, occupation (school name), telephone No. (contact number) on the application form and send it to Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office by March 17 (Mon.), by fax or post. Applications are available also through the Minato City Website.
- Lottery** The lottery will be performed based on first-timers first and considering the age balance, etc.
- ※ Compensation or transportation expenses are not provided.
- Others** All meetings and documentation will be in the Japanese language.

Inquiries:  
Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office  
Tel: 03-5114-8812  
FAX: 03-3583-3782



Application Form

● Locations of the Newsletter: Roppongi 1-chome, Roppongi, Hiroo, Azabujuban and Akabanebashi subway stations, The Chii Bus, Minato Library, Azabu Library, Minami-azabu Iki-Iki Plaza, Nishi- azabu Iki-Iki Plaza, Iigura Iki-Iki Plaza, Azabu Civic Center, Azabu Regional City Office, etc.

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**Editor’s Note**

Kamons are Japanese emblems that have come to be used to identify each family. Although they are small, their excellent design and beauty are obvious. This is why people around the world have been attracted by these kamons since ancient times. It is well known that certain brands of fabric pattern use Japanese kamon. This time, we described kamons related to Azabu. However, kamons are not only for famous people— they remind all of us about the traditional culture that we inherit from our families. I would be very happy if this article inspires you to become more interested in your own roots or kamon.

(HATANAKA Minako)

The original article is written in Japanese.

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**“Minato Call”** information service answers your questions about everyday life! Feel free to ask about services provided by City Hall, facility guides, event information, and more. Available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day.

※ This service is also available in English.

**Minato Call**  
Tel: 03-5472-3710 Fax: 03-5777-8752  
Inquiry submission form: <https://www.city.minato.tokyo.jp/kouchou/kuse/kocho/iken/form-inquiry.html>