



MY TOWN

AKASAKA 赤坂

AOYAMA 青山

Created by the community residents

Community Information Bulletin

"MY TOWN AKASAKA & AOYAMA" is a community information bulletin created by residents of the two local communities. They make plans, conduct researches, and do the editing by themselves. The bulletin is aimed at spreading information on fascinating things found in and around Akasaka and Aoyama, Tokyo.



Enjoy a Chii-Bus tour around Akasaka and Aoyama

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama?

Vol.7
Mr. Campbell Cleland

Q1: What made you come to Japan?
"When I was a high school student, I had the opportunity of learning about a different culture and lifestyle when I lived in Chile (South America) for one year as an exchange student. This experience inspired my interest in foreign countries and I wanted to go abroad again. Just by chance, I found a job in Nagoya and decided to come to Japan."



Mr. Campbell Cleland

Q2: Then how did you come to work at the bank?
"In the beginning, I planned to stay in Japan about one year, but was gradually given more responsibility at work and spent 12 years as an English teacher. Wanting to do something more

challenging and develop my career, I found an IT-related job at the Aichi World Exposition, following which I transitioned into the field of foreign exchange. I stayed in that position for several years, providing support to customers in Japanese over the telephone, managing risk and trading foreign exchange. After that I moved to Tokyo, where I have been working for a foreign-owned bank in a similar field."

Q3: What do you think about your life in the Akasaka-Aoyama area?
"I've lived in Aoyama for almost four years. It's a very convenient location, within walking distance from areas such as Ebisu, Nishi Azabu and Akasaka. I used to live in Chiba and commuted to Otemachi for work. When my office relocated to my present workplace in Roppongi, I spent three hours every day traveling between my home and office. One day, I realized that I was spending more than ten percent of my daily life just commuting, so I moved to Aoyama so I could walk to work. Here, on weekends, I can enjoy having lunch on the terrace of restaurants or walking along Aoyama-dori to markets, where I can find a variety of imported goods and fresh vegetables. It's fun just to open-air window shop."

Q4: Do you plan to continue living in the Akasaka-Aoyama area?
"I have always reviewed my life plan every three to four years, but my present job is very rewarding and I would like to remain

in this area for a while longer. I still have a way to go, but I would like to spend my retirement years in New Zealand. For example, if you want to do anything in Japan (like tennis or golf), advance reservations are required, but in New Zealand you can just take your equipment, show up at the facility and play. It's a very flexible living environment."

Q5: Please tell me about your happy and unhappy experiences in Japan.
"Usually I don't pay much attention to it, but even though I've lived in Japan for 23 years, I am still considered a *gaikoku-jin* (foreigner). It's unfortunate that we are not identified by our nationalities or thought of as Americans or New Zealanders—just by whether we are Japanese (*Nippon-jin*) or foreign (*gaikoku-jin*). However, generally speaking, the Japanese people are very kind to foreigners, and I had my happiest experiences simply because I am a foreigner. One time I went skiing in Nagano and was staying at a pension. Breakfast was served and the Japanese pickles were so good that I asked for more. The entire crock of homemade pickles was brought out for me. It was much more than I could ever possibly eat but the selection and tastes were wonderful. This was probably because they thought it was unusual for a foreigner to like Japanese pickles. I have had both good and bad experiences simply because I am a foreigner, but overall I would say that I have had more happy experiences than unhappy ones."

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama?

Vol.8
Mr. Lemuel Barbarin



Mr. Lemuel Barbarin

We interviewed Mr. Lemuel Barbarin who came to Japan in 2013. After graduating from the industrial design department of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the southern United States, he worked as a designer. He is now working as an English teacher in Omotesando while studying design.

Q1: What made you decide to live outside of your own country?
"After working for two years, I wanted to learn more about other cultures and lifestyles in an international setting. I came to Japan because, I thought that it would be good both for me and my career to live in a foreign country."

Q2: Why did you choose Japan?
"I think that Japan has more attractive cultural aspects than other countries. I studied packaging in industrial design at university. The concepts for packaging relate to Japanese

housing and traffic systems. Japan has developed all kinds of ways to solve various problems: how to move people around inside a small territory; how to protect people's lifestyle and their coexistence — not only cars, but also trains and other public transportation facilities are well developed compared to other countries. I have an impression that Japan is very innovative in solving various problems in daily life."

Q3: What do you think about Akasaka and Aoyama?
"I like Akasaka and Aoyama. I also enjoy walking from Akasaka to Omote-sando. I think it's an area that's not only elegant and sophisticated, but also has interesting characteristics. As you walk towards Omote-sando, you will notice that the scenery of the city changes gradually. The designer-brand stores coexists with local restaurants and stores. All the stores cooperate to support each other, in this highly refined and unique neighborhood. There is a distinctive cultural atmosphere that helps the foreigners to feel less isolated. For example, when I entered a sushi train restaurant in this area, even though I couldn't speak Japanese, the waiters were very kind to me and made me feel comfortable. I would say that Akasaka and Aoyama are one of the best cities in terms of hospitality."

Q4: What is your favorite place in this area?
"I like the showroom of foreign automobile companies located in Aoyama. I like sketching their cars from outside the showroom for my study. I may look strange to the people in the streets, but

perhaps they will understand better once they read this interview (laugh)."

Q5: What is your goal?
"My goal is to work in a field that I am interested in. To achieve this goal, I would like to learn more Japanese. To understand both linguistically and culturally, communication is indispensable. I want to expand my connections in the design industry in Japan and learn from them. I am also interested in studying in Germany. I am planning to acquire a degree in design there in the future. Just like in Japan, designs for public transportation and cars in Europe are also creative and massive in scale. I believe that it is everyone's dream to continue doing what you like to do for your job, and succeed in that business."

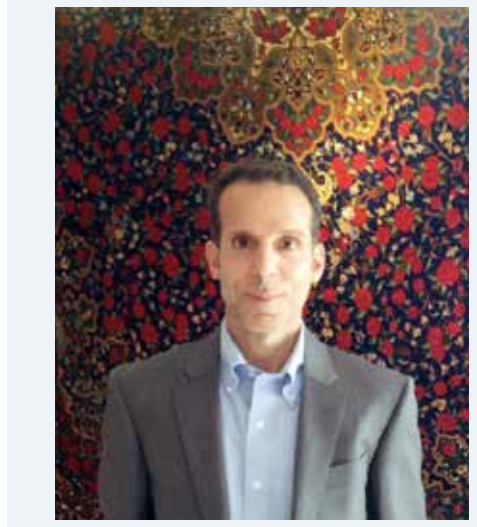


Always carrying a notebook filled with sketches of cars.

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama?

Vol.9
Mr. Ali Ghanizadeh

We asked Mr. Ali Ghanizadeh, a trader in Persian carpets in Akasaka, about his impressions of Akasaka and Aoyama and the differences between his home country of Iran and Japan.



Mr. Ali Ghanizadeh, in front of his favorite Persian carpet. He says that Persian carpets have 7,000 years of history and it takes six years to complete weaving one carpet.

Q1: What motivated you to come to Japan?
"My motivation was curiosity about how Japan could rehabilitate itself so quickly from the devastation suffered during the war. I still remember that I was fascinated by seeing the Japanese people working so hard when I got here. I also admired

the wonderful traditional culture of this country. When I learned that the Japanese political system had not been forced upon the violence, but had been based on the democratic ideas since the Edo period, I felt that my understanding of Japan had become deeper."

Q2: What do you think about Akasaka and Aoyama?
"I opened my Persian carpet store in Kiou-cho 13 years ago, but I wanted to keep my shop in more relaxed surroundings. Then I found this place behind Toyokawa Inari Temple and moved my store here two years ago. Sometimes I go shopping or walk from near the Canadian Embassy to Gaiemmae and Omote-sando. My impression of the people in this area is neat and clean, and the people create sophisticated atmosphere."

Q3: What is your favorite Japanese food?
"I am very fond of *sashimi* (raw fish). In Iran we don't eat raw fish but once I got used to it, I love it. I love *iseebi* (spiny lobster) too. I can eat *umeboshi* (pickled plums) as well as *natto* (fermented soy beans). I like to taste the local specialties wherever I visit and I also order local food sent to my home. In my neighborhood, I love Japanese sweets from *Toraya*."

Q4: Do you find any problems in Japan? Is there anything in common between Iran and Japan?
"The cost of living is very high in Japan; the proportion of expenses that goes for education, in particular, is higher than in other countries. My heart aches when I hear that there are some

people who die in poverty without receiving livelihood assistance. In Iran, we value ties among people strongly and everyone treats each other like a member of their family. It's not unusual to be served a meal in a stranger's home. It's a part of Iranian culture that we always give a hand to someone if he or she is in trouble. I heard that people in Japan were helping each other after the war as we do in Iran. I hope that young people do not lose this beautiful Japanese tradition. I also hope that more people will explore about warm hearted Iranian people and our great culture."



Many colorful Persian carpets are displayed in Mr. Ghanizadeh's store.

Aoyama Cemetery A Person and History

No.21 Hajime Hoshi (1873-1951)



Hajime Hoshi was the founder of Hoshi Pharmaceutical Co., the first Japanese company to succeed in refining morphine domestically, and known as a statesman. He is also known as the father of science fiction writer Shinichi Hoshi. Hajime Hoshi's entire life was a series of challenges.

Youth devoted to study despite the loss of sight in his right eye

Sakichi Hoshi (later, Hajime Hoshi) was born in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture, as the first son of a farming family. He was an active boy and lost the sight in his right eye when it was pierced with an arrow. In spite of this accident, his curiosity and energy were so strong that he continued reading books in all fields and achieved very good grades at the school in Tokyo. As he became familiar with English and foreign cultures, thanks to the books he had been reading since his childhood, he started thinking about studying economics in the U.S. where he would be able to study while working for his living.

12 years of study under harsh circumstances in the U.S. and meeting political leaders

As the literacy rate was not very high in those days, Sakichi changed his first name to Hajime so it could be read easily by anybody (see note*). Then he set sail for the U.S. at the age of 20. But soon after he landed in this unfamiliar foreign country, he was cheated out of the funds he had worked so hard to raise for his studies. Undergoing repeated failures, he earned his living as a peddler and a houseboy, finally reaching his destination — New York City, and being accepted at Columbia University as a student. While at the university, he attracted attention by publishing Japanese-language newspaper and magazines highlighting relations between the U.S. and Japan. He could barely afford the costs for his publications, and continued to work hard, but he always wore worn-out clothes and shoes.

Hoshi's English proficiency and good knowledge of the American economy were highly appreciated by political leaders such as Hirobumi Ito, Shigemaru Sugiyama and Shimpei Goto. He often served as an interpreter or a temporary secretary for them, and accompanied them on their tours of foreign countries including Europe. He was also involved to a certain extent, in political affairs, such as his introduction of Dr. Hideyo Noguchi to Hirobumi Ito.

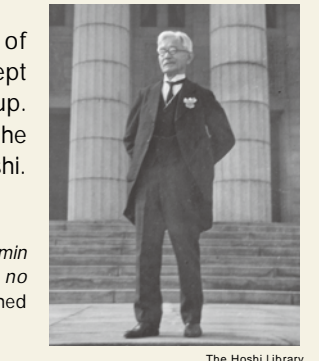
*In Japanese *kanji*, Hajime is written in a one-stroke character, "一".

Establishment of pharmaceutical company in Japan and problems ahead

When Hoshi returned to Japan at the age of 31, he was offered various positions, such as government official, newspaper publisher or railway company executive, as he has a great reputation and connections. However, he declined all of these

offers and established his own company, Hoshi Pharmaceutical Co., to manufacture over-the-counter medicines similar to the ones in U.S. that were still hard to obtain in Japan at the time. Later he succeeded in refining morphine for the first time in Japan. The medicines produced by Hoshi Pharmaceutical Co., were selling well, especially when the import of medicines from Germany was suspended due to World War I. The company grew rapidly into a gigantic industry with many plants. But when a political opponent of Shimpei Goto, one of Hoshi's constant supporters, came to power in Japanese politics, Hoshi was indicted on fabricated charges of illegal trade in opium. The charges were made by those who wanted to block the flow of financial resources from his Pharmaceutical to Goto. Although Hoshi was later acquitted of all charges, his company had lost the trust of the people and went into bankruptcy. Hoshi still did not give up developing new medicines, but his company lost its land when Japan lost Taiwan as a territory, and the plant in Tokyo burned down during World War II. He was elected a member of the House of Councillors and he was trying to rehabilitate his business when he passed away while visiting the U.S. at the age of 77.

Hoshi's life was a succession of setbacks and challenges, and he kept working until the end without giving up. His life story continues to be told in the books written by his son Shinichi Hoshi.



Reference books: "Meiji, Chichi, America," "Jinmin wa yowashi, Kanmin wa tsuyoshi," "Meiji no Jinbusu-shi" written by Shinichi Hoshi (Published by Shincho Bunko)

Minato City held Disaster Prevention Drills (Akasaka area)

On Sunday 2nd of November 2014, Minato City Disaster Prevention Drills were conducted at Aoyama Junior High School (Akasaka venue).

The aim of these disaster prevention drills is to provide Minato City residents the appropriate information, in case of a major earthquake in Metropolitan Tokyo, and to enable all disaster-prevention-related public institutions to practice cooperating each other and learning what they need for emergency.



Simultaneous discharge of water

On that day we had about 60 groups and 990 individuals participated in these drills. At the drill venue, participants had a strong sense of awareness of how to deal with possible disaster situations, and they were experiencing the various booths. Each of them had its own drill exhibition, including extinguishing a fire in its early stages, riding out an earthquake on the earthquake simulator and practicing giving first-aid treatment to the injured.

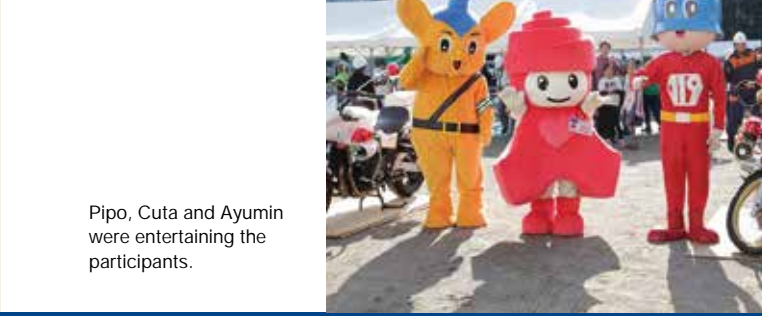
We had new programs in the drills: a demonstration of the difficulty of pushing a door open or closed against the pressure of water in case of flooding; experiments with fire to compare fireproof and non-fireproof products; practice in the correct handling of spray cans; and learning how to handle your pets under extreme or dangerous circumstances in the pet disaster prevention booth set in the enlightening corner.



Experience on the earthquake simulator

In the kids' corner, three characters, the Metropolitan Police Department's "Pipo," the Tokyo Fire Department's "Cuta," and Akasaka's goodwill ambassador, "Ayumin," appeared and posed for photos with children, enlivening the overall atmosphere.

Nobody is able to expect when a major disaster will occur, so it is always better to prepare in advance.



Pipo, Cuta and Ayumin were entertaining the participants.

