



Community Activities In Akasaka Aoyama vol. 12



The Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group
Mikino Imai
is a member in charge of accounting

The Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group works closely with the police and related institutions and organizations to help build a better environment for the community. It works for the protection and upbringing of young people, prevents accidents involving children and the elderly, participates in local events for children, and is involved in other events deeply rooted in the community.

How long have you been involved in this activity? And what got you involved?

I became involved about 13 years ago. I was invited by Toshiko Tanaka, the President of the Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group, and started participating in its activities.

Tell us about the activities of the Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group.

We conduct all kinds of activities, but we mainly work on prevention of juvenile delinquency and the healthy upbringing of young people. We have about 53 members, consisting of the president, vice-president, directors and members. They all participate in various community activities, such as adult traffic safety events and children's events (a rice cake pounding event, a city residents' meeting, emergency drills, a potato stew making event, and a bon dance) to work closely with the community. The basis of our group is the Federation of Tokyo Mothers' Groups. We established ourselves as the Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group through the Akasaka Police Station. There is a training session once every year, sponsored by the Federation of the Tokyo Mothers' Group. In Akasaka, we hold our training as Block No.1. We also hold four directors' meetings every year.



What do you get out from working with the group?

The group's activities will keep people informed about other activities as well. For example, we can take part in a traffic safety event or a movement that will make the society a brighter place, and build a community movement for protecting children from crime, preventing delinquency, and support delinquency recovery. Volunteer work is not something you do for others, but for yourself, so I feel very satisfied. We also have connections with volunteer probation officers or the Akasaka Red Cross volunteer group through their activities for children, so we try to participate in those activities as much as possible.

What kind of difficulties do you have in working for the group?

I don't really feel like I have any difficulties, but if I had to say one thing, it might be that I have a hard time keeping up with the children's energy, since we have so many activities. Also scheduling can be difficult since we often work together with volunteer probation officers and the Red Cross group.

Tell us about your future goals.

The Akasaka Aoyama region has a low youth crime rate. Still, as a mother, I will continue to do my best to maintain a safe and comfortable living environment.

Please give the readers a message about your group.

The activities of the Akasaka Aoyama Mothers' Group are meaningful not just for the community, but for individuals as well. Our activities can be invigorating, so let's work together to improve our living environment in the Akasaka Aoyama region.

Community Activities In Akasaka Aoyama vol. 11



Vice-Chairman of the Aoyama Gaienmae Shopping District Promotion Association
Naohiko Yokota

The Aoyama-Gaienmae Shopping District Promotion Association (hereinafter called the Association) is working on activities to enliven the community and make it beautiful. It celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2013.

How long have you been involved in community activities? I've been involved for about 17 years.

What first got you involved?

I happened to attend a directors' meeting and that's how I came to know of their activities. I wanted to be of some help, so I got involved.

What is the main activity of the Aoyama Gaienmae Shopping District Promotion Association?

Our three major events of the year are the Sports Festival in May, the Gujo Dance in Aoyama in June, and the Aoyama Festival in October.



For the Sports Festival, our role is to find athletic coaches who will participate. For the Gujo Dance in Aoyama, we are responsible for building the yagura (drum stage) and setting up the venue. And for the Aoyama Festival, we try to come up with new plans. We do different things depending on the event.

What are some of the difficulties?

For me, the difficult thing is having to do my own business and also work as a member of the Association. Since we have to negotiate with coaches and companies, we often need to have meetings for the Association during the day time, and when that happens, I have to do my own work before or after the meetings so that I will be able to attend the meeting. Sometimes there are schedule conflicts, so that is the most difficult part.

What do you get most out of your activities with the Association?

When I see many people come to the events, or when I see that the events become something which people look forward to every year, it's a rewarding feeling. Also, it makes me glad when I see events bringing in more customers.

What are your future goals?

We want to create events that are not dependent on demand related to the Tokyo Olympics, but instead establish Aoyama as a place for sports regardless of outside events.

Do you have any message for the readers of this article?

Our Association holds many events in addition to the three major events I mentioned earlier. All events are listed on the Association's website, so please come and join us. Membership applications for the Aoyama Gaienmae Shopping District Promotion Association are also accepted.

Community Activities In Akasaka Aoyama vol. 10



Aoyama Jobankai Club for the elderly
Kazuo Kubo

The club for the elderly is a group for maintaining and improving mental and physical health. There are six clubs in the Akasaka-Aoyama region. The club that Mr. Kubo represents has 58 members working on various activities that provide elderly people with a purpose in life and help improve their health.

Tell us how you became involved in the activities of the club.

In the beginning, I didn't even know there was a club for the elderly. What got me started was a trip organized by the club. A neighbor asked me if I could participate in a trip to take the place of another member who canceled. Since then I started helping a little here and there, and before I knew it I was taking part in the activities as a regular member, and now I'm the president. I've been involved for about 20 years now.



What kind of activities does the Aoyama Jobankai Club usually do?

In order to help build a stronger sense of purpose, we hold Japanese dance and dance practice meetings, and karaoke. Also, for improving health, we offer exercise, quilts game and ground-golf classes. Our members look forward to these activities.

Mr. Kubo is also the General Manager of the Federation of Minato City Clubs for the Elderly. What vision do you have for the future of the clubs for the elderly?

The most important thing is a positive mindset for trying new things. At the Federation of Minato City Clubs for the Elderly, we have joint gatherings with foreign clubs for the elderly, like those with South Korean and Taiwanese people, since Minato City is a place of diversity. I don't want to narrow the range of our activities just because we're older. At the Aoyama Jobankai Club, there are many members who are really energetic. And in order to take advantage of those healthy and positive attitudes, I want to increase the range of our activities even more.

As a matter of fact, I am also a singer under the name of Ken Ogasawara. I do a lot of volunteer work as a singer, and whenever I do, I make sure to promote our club.

We would like to ask Mr. Kubo, who is very energetic, to please give our readers a message about your club.

Coming together and doing the activities can be very fun and fulfilling, because you can get a greater sense of purpose for your life and improve your health. You can join us whenever you feel like it, so please come and try our activities.

One last thing: Last April, the Federation of Minato City Clubs for the Elderly decided on a nickname for the clubs, since we felt that "club for the elderly," sounded rather dull.

The new name for the club is the Ajsai Club (Hydrangea club). Hydrangea is the official flower of Minato City.

Hopefully the name catches on with everyone.

Community Activities In Akasaka Aoyama vol. 9



President of Akasaka 8-chome Town Council
Kiyoko Shima

The town council of Akasaka 8-chome consists of members, households, and officers. It works to develop the community, prevent crimes in the area, and clean and protect the environment. The council celebrated its 60th year of establishment in 2014 and held a commemoration ceremony.

When did you start taking part in this activity? About seven years ago.

What got you started?

I happened to participate in one of the meetings of the Akasaka 8-chome Town Council. When I learned about its activities, I wanted to help out and that's how I started getting involved.



What are the main activities of the council?

We conduct night patrols as part of our crime prevention activity, and carry out awareness-raising campaigns so that people do not leave their bicycles parked on the streets, etc. We also clean up the streets and work to make the environment nicer. Every year, we work on separating garbage and in relation to this, we tell people about the Eco-life Fair which I also participate in.

What do you get out of participating in the town council activities?

You can get a lot of information about the community that you never would've had if you hadn't become involved. I have gained a lot of knowledge from joining. For example, I didn't know that the town council owned some of the street lights set up in order to prevent crime, and that it was managing these lights, including payment of electricity fees. Also, our crime prevention activities and street clean up and beautification activities have led to a reduction in garbage and bicycles left on the streets, contributing to community safety. Our efforts have led to the creation of an environment that is convenient and pleasant.

What are your goals for the future?

I want to keep working on increasing membership. In anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games, I want to further reduce garbage and bicycles on the streets. And for our crime prevention activities, I want to keep an eye on dangerous areas on a regular basis and continue working to make our living environment clean and safe.

I also think we have to start thinking about finding the right successors for our activities.

Do you have any message for the readers of this article?

For me, taking part in the town council activities helped me to become more acquainted with the people living in the neighborhood. Through the activities, I want to continue building the kind of relationships where we know each other well and can invite each other to take part in the different events. For example, members of the council call on each other to participate in the emergency drill and they all come together. This type of relationship becomes very helpful during emergencies, and I want people to know that the activities of the town council are helping to build this kind of a relationship.

Make use of the recyclable collection system available at designated collecting stations.

The recyclable collection system is a system in which collection boxes are set up at places, such as regional city offices, for gathering recyclables like PET bottle caps, used small home appliances, used batteries, used fluorescent tubes, used cooking oil, and used clothing brought in by local city residents to be collected by Minato City (only household recyclables are collected).

PET bottle caps

The collected bottle caps are sold to recycling companies and the money received is donated to Japan UNICEF's "PET bottle cap fund." The bottle caps can be taken to a nearby garbage collection site as recyclable plastic; however, it would help us if you take them to a designated collecting station.



Used small electric appliances (9 items including mobile phones)

Mobile phones and other small home electric appliances often disposed as noncombustible garbage sometimes contain useful metals (precious metals like gold, silver, copper, and rare metals like palladium). Minato City makes effective use of these small electric appliances as resources, and promotes recycling of useful metals contained in them.



Used batteries

We only collect cylindrical batteries. (Rechargeable batteries, micro cells, etc., should be put into boxes set up at stores that sell them.)



Used clothing

Please wash any used clothing to be recycled (no need to dry clean). Put it in a clear plastic bag and in to the collecting box at the designated collecting station.



Accepted items

Any clothing that can be reused (only clothes that can be worn again), shoes and socks (must be in pairs), towels, kimonos, and kimono sashes.

Unaccepted items

Blankets, zabuton cushions, carpets and other floor mats, rubber and plastic products, company uniforms and other uniforms, and clothes that are very dirty, wet, or have been used for pets.

For inquiries Minato Recycling and Waste Management Office, Operation Office TEL: 03-3450-8025

List of designated collecting stations (Not exclusive)

Designated site	Address	PET bottle caps	Used batteries	Used small home electric appliances	Used fluorescent tubes	Used clothing	Used cooking oil
Shiba Regional City Office	1-5-25 Shibakoen	○*	○	○	×	○	×
Azabu Regional City Office	5-16-45 Roppongi	○*	○	○	×	○	×
Akasaka Regional City Office	4-18-13 Akasaka	○*	○	○	×	○	×
Takanawa Regional City Office	1-16-25 Takanawa	○*	○	○	×	○	×
Shibaaura-konan Regional City Office	1-16-1 Shibaaura	○*	○	○	×	○	×

*The Minato City Recycling Co-op collects the garbage.

There are other collecting stations set up in places besides the regional city offices. For more information, please check our "Sorting Recyclables and Waste Guidebook" or go to the Minato City website.

Akasaka-Aoyama Kids-to-Teens Joint Activity (Tomoiku) Annual schedule

The Akasaka-Aoyama Kids-to-Teens Joint Activity (Tomoiku) aims to create a system where local companies, groups, and residents work autonomously to plan events for the children of the community. It will find and recruit talented people who will take active roles in the community. Local companies and groups have joined hands to offer various classes for elementary, junior high, and senior high school students living in the Akasaka-Aoyama region. Classes will provide children with experiences that make them "surprised, impressed, and aware," inspiring them to "think on their own and take initiative." This will not end with the children simply participating in classes, but will help raise their awareness of the importance of being a part of society, with the aim of revitalizing the Akasaka-Aoyama region. Tomoiku also supports local groups involved in planning children's events in the community and helps them build a network, promote information sharing, encourage the entire community to keep a watch out for the children, and build a sound environment for raising children.

For details on the future schedule and venues, please check the website or Facebook page of the Tomoiku Information Bureau.



Cooperative Manners Development Course



Kids Fashionista Training Course

Akasaka-Aoyama SPORTS LIFE annual schedule

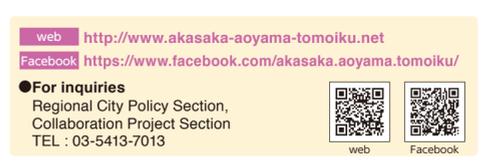
As part of the Akasaka-Aoyama Kids-to-Teens Joint Activity (Tomoiku), the Akasaka Regional City Office will create opportunities for children and young adults to meet with top athletes and receive guidance from them for enjoying sports in the lead-up to the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We also hope that the participants will not just raise their physical ability through sports, but also gain social skills such as manners, people greeting, fair play spirit, and communication skills.

For details on the future schedule and venues, please check the website or Facebook page of the Tomoiku Information Bureau.



The 9th Tomoiku Event (Rugby)



The 10th Tomoiku Event (Baseball)

web <http://www.akasaka-aoyama-tomoiku.net>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/akasaka.aoyama.tomoiku/>

For inquiries
Regional City Policy Section,
Collaboration Project Section
TEL: 03-5413-7013



The three Akasaka goodwill ambassadors will report on Akasaka's many charms!

The three Akasaka goodwill ambassadors, Ayumin, Akasakamen, and Akao-kun are sharing information about the charms of Akasaka on Facebook. They will participate in various events to offer regular and updated reports on the fun times they had. Please check out the Facebook page of the Akasaka goodwill ambassadors!

*The Facebook reports are written only in Japanese.

Challenge Marathon

The 18th Akasaka Challenge Marathon was held on Saturday, April 9, 2016 in front of the Akasaka Biz Tower! This was an event planned by the Akasaka Shopping Street Association and the 2016 Akasaka Spring Festival Executive Committee. It accepts entries for the following categories: the toddler run, costume run, and challenge run. I entered the costume run. Everybody cheered for me and that really helped! I was so pleased! It was an event that allowed many people to not just enjoy running but also enhance their health. I hope to join again next year! (by Akao-kun)

Like Comment

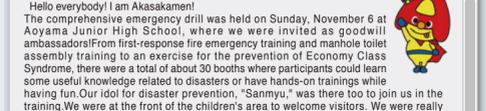
Jodoji Temple Bon Dance Festival

Hi everyone! I am Akao-kun! The Jodoji Temple's Bon Dance Festival was held on July 26 and 27, and all three of us went to the dance on the 27th. The Bon Dance Festival is held by the town council, the residents' association, the local Chamber of Commerce, and business operators. It is a popular summer event in Akasaka. The temple was thronged with people lining up in front of the stalls or doing the bon dance. We also joined the bon dance and did pretty well, since we've been participating in the event every year. A lottery was held toward the end, bringing the event to its climax. We really had fun dancing with everybody! We will surely go there again next year! (by Akao-kun)

Like Comment

Comprehensive Emergency Drill

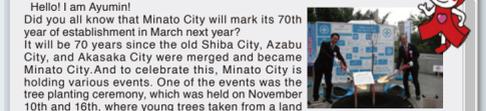
Hello everybody! I am Akasakamen! The comprehensive emergency drill was held on Sunday, November 6 at Aoyama Junior High School, where we were invited as goodwill ambassadors from first-response fire emergency training and manhole toilet assembly training to an exercise for the prevention of Economy Class Syndrome, there were a total of about 30 booths where participants could learn some useful knowledge related to disasters or have hands-on trainings while having fun. Our idol for disaster prevention, "Sanmyu," was there too to join us in the training. We were at the front of the children's area to welcome visitors. We were really impressed to see so many elementary school children come to participate in the training. When a disaster occurs, you must be able to protect yourself and help others in the community. For this, it is really important for you to participate in the type of drill. A total of 1,009 people participated in the drill, so it was a very worthwhile event! (by Akasakamen)



Like Comment

Tree planting ceremony manuscript

Hello! I am Ayumin! Did you all know that Minato City will mark its 70th year of establishment in March next year? It will be 70 years since the old Shiba City, Azabu City, and Akasaka City were merged and became Minato City. And to celebrate this, Minato City is holding various events. One of the events was the tree planting ceremony, which was held on November 10th and 16th, where young trees taken from a land associated with the Akasaka-Aoyama region were planted. On the 10th, a cherry tree known as "Yoshimune-zakura," which was popular among the people of Edo, was presented by the city of Wakayama, the historical base of the Kishu Domain, and was planted in Enitsu Park. Mr. Masahiro Obama, the mayor of Wakayama City, also came to help plant the tree. On the 16th, a young magnolia tree from Gujo City, which is closely associated with Aoyama, was presented as a symbol of friendship and planted in Aoyama Park. The Mayor of Gujo City, Mr. Toshiaki Hiko, also came to help plant the tree. Many people from the community, including children, participated in the tree planting ceremony to wish for the healthy growth of the trees and lasting friendship between the cities and Minato City. It was truly a wonderful event!



Like Comment

境界線を歩く 1 Aoyama Kitamachi Apartment

Walk down Aoyama-dori Street and turn at the corner of the Aoyama Jidokan (children's recreational facility). -Walk a little further ahead and a fascinating sight will appear before your eyes: A line of old apartment buildings made of concrete with thick trees in between and an old rusty bicycle parking lot. The sight and atmosphere will make you feel as though time had stopped there decades ago.

Aoyama Kitamachi Apartment was built between 1957 and 1963 amid Japan's rapid economic growth. It was the first Tokyo-operated public housing complex built after the war. In a spacious area of 40,000 square kilometers, there are 25 four- to five-story apartment buildings. Surrounded by lots of greenery, it is a luxury to be able to live here considering the housing situation nowadays. We spoke to Mr. and Mrs. Omamiuda, an old couple who has lived in the apartment since it was first built.

"Before the apartment was built here, there was the old Tokyo Aoyama teachers' college. In May 1945, during the great Tokyo air raid, this area was completely burnt down and the school was also destroyed. After that, the war victims who lost their homes built barracks here. This municipally-owned housing was completed in the year before the Tokyo Olympics," explained Mr. Omamiuda.

There are more than 500 homes in these buildings. The residents operate an autonomous association that organizes festivals and night patrols. It was almost as though the buildings themselves had deteriorated, they are going to start a redevelopment project and begin tearing them down the next year. Heading toward the next Tokyo Olympics, the Metropolitan government will construct over three years a 20-story building with the Aoyama Daycare Center on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors."

After the interview, Mr. Omamiuda walked with me to the main street. "Until last year, we built a scaffold here for the Bon festival dance."



境界線を歩く

Do you know exactly where the borders of Akasaka and Aoyama are? This question was raised in the editorial staff meeting of this free newspaper, and to find the answer, the staff walked along the entire borderline with a camera.

This walk along the borderline is a recommended walking course because it will let you discover new attractions as well as solve some of the mysteries you've always wondered about in the area.

The area around Jingu Stadium (Kasumigaoka-machi) in Shinjuku City is now full of construction projects that have already begun for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. A place where Minato City (location of Advanced Technology Gallery), Shibuya City and Shinjuku City connect (the latter two are where the Olympic Games will be held), it exudes excitement about the future. The positive vibes might rub off on you if you visit.

Notice the address sign on the electricity pole.

This is the street that separates Minato City to the right and Shibuya City to the left. On the right side, you will find the popular children's bookshop, the Crayon House. If you walk straight ahead, you will hit Omotesando, another street that is separated between Minato City and Shibuya City.

It was also a street sign pointing to the left.

Zenko-ji Temple to the left

Aoyama to the right

A nostalgic landscape right in the middle of the city

Why? A deformed borderline stretches from a popular ramen shop to the end of a crosswalk

Is this a POWER SPOT? This is the point where Minato City, Shibuya City, and Shinjuku City intersect.

Standing on the borderline. Jido Yuen! (Children's recreational facility)

TEPIA Advanced Technology Gallery

Chichibunomiya Rugby Field

The premises are divided between Minato City and Shinjuku City

Walk along the slope. You will eventually see to your right the State Guest House, which is called Geihinkan in Japanese

The slope which appeared in the famous Japanese literature, Chushingura

Where is this? With Nogizaka Station behind you, Minami Aoyama Overpass Stairs are to your right. There's only a slope to your left!

This Minami Aoyama Overpass is a convenient way to go from Akasaka to the precinct of Aoyama Cemetery. Once you cross the overpass, Aoyama Park will be very close.

Japanese maple trees at Hinokicho Park near Tokyo Midtown. Come visit next year!

Did you know that this is a taxi resting area? Although parking and stopping of vehicles is prohibited on this street, the sign that also says "Taxis only" tells you why there are so many taxis parked around here. The area is in fact a place where taxis are allowed to park and drivers can rest without worrying about traffic rules. There are public toilets in Aoyama Park and Aoyama Park will be right in front of you. The Aoyama Cemetery will be to the west. Here, away from the traffic, an oasis of rich green will spread before your eyes. These areas along the borderline are perfect for taking a walk or going jogging.

The outside walls of the Geihinkan. Turn right at this corner you will reach the front gate of the Geihinkan

To the Japanese archery court of Sophia University

Minato City Shinjuku City Chiyoda City

There is an intersection

To the right is Chiyoda City. Left is Minato City. The borderline is right on

Benkei Moat

Walk along the borderline and look up. You will find a large torii shrine gate

1-1-1 Akasaka is here

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境界線を歩く 3 Geihinkan Akasaka Palace

Seven people, including four of our editorial staff, gathered in front of the west gate at the entrance for the guesthouse tour. There was a big line of people waiting to get in. Our guide was a Cabinet Office staff. Let's go in!

This room is where guests who have come to make a courtesy visit are first escorted. It is used as a room to have an audience of the Emperor, signing ceremonies and interviews. Tour members were all astonished by the luxurious decorations.

A room mainly for holding official banquets. Animals and flowers painted on the ceiling, walls, and cloisonne are said to be motifs of foods.

The room is decorated with Japanese art works from various places, like the sculptural relief of samurai armors on the wall and a Japanese painting in front of the fireplace.

Speakers glittering of gold are hidden inside the French chandelier. Can you find them?

The large stairway in front of the main entrance. Unfortunately, this is closed to the public. The column with marble pattern is impressive.

This largest room is used as the conference and reception halls or to hold indoor welcoming events on a rainy day. The walls are decorated with many sculptural reliefs of musical instruments.

You can see on the wall an orchestra pit located on the mezzanine floor. There is no record of a ball having been held here.

The painting on the ceiling was not painted directly on to the ceiling, but was painted in Europe and plastered on to the ceiling. You can see traces of plaster left after many years, which is also an interesting sight.

This room is used as the salon for state guests. The ceiling painting of the goddess, whose name is also used for the room name, is magnificent!

This huge beautiful white gate opens only when state guests are welcomed. Go through the gate and you will find a coffee stand in the front garden.

stand, there may come a time when you will be able to enjoy a nice meal as you indulge yourself in the luxurious atmosphere of the guesthouse. Our final comment after the tour is: "You should really go visit and see it for yourself!" If you decide to go, please visit the Cabinet Office website and check how to apply for the open tour.

Geihinkan Akasaka Palace

境界線を歩く 2 TEPIA Advanced Technology Gallery

Adjacent to the Jingu Stadium, the TEPIA Advanced Technology Gallery is located right on the borderline between Minato City and Shinjuku City. There are displays and information about Japan's advanced technology of the day, including booths and corners where visitors can experience some of the cutting-edge technology. We asked an attendant, Ms. Miki Urayama, to guide us through the gallery.

We first went to the 2nd floor to see the avatar robot at the Technology Lab. The avatar robot collects and sends information about its surroundings to the person it represents, waving and nodding to convey his/her will to the surrounding people. The robot was developed based on the concept that since it is people who can comfort other people, having a robot which is just like you and stays close to the people you care about would be helpful.

On the 1st floor, there is a display of a real example of "bio mimetics" which analyzes and copies the useful functions of different life forms. You can also learn some unique facts: for example, the ends of a Shinkansen bullet train were designed after the beak of a kingfisher. You can also take a look at the Technology Show Case, which is a display centered on the idea that the history of science and technology is also the history of how mankind has overcome various limits. Other attractions such as the Space Elevator and a series of displays

on the much-talked-about future energy source, Euglena, which can be used as a food source and jet fuel, also follow. Finally, at the Technology Studio, you can experience a device that absorbs and weakens the tremors of an earthquake.

According to Ms. Urayama, since the gallery is all about advanced technology, she must always come up with new ideas for the exhibition and constantly learn new things. Every year between March and April is when the entire exhibition plan changes. A guided tour that requires a reservation is recommended, but a regular tour around the gallery is plenty to enjoy the entire facility.

A worthwhile experience awaits you here, so why not pay a visit?

TEPIA Advanced Technology Gallery



What's this!?

There's a tall man! A mysterious stone monument standing by the back gate of the Nezu Museum.

The name of this temple is not Hase-dera. 長谷寺 Chokokuji is the correct name.

Daihonzan Eiheiji Betsuin Chokokuji (2-21-34 Nishiazabu) The temple is in Nishiazabu, but it is considered a landmark of the borderline with Aoyama. The 10m tall eleven-faced Kanzeon bodhisattva called Azabu-Kwannon is overwhelming.

Why? A deformed borderline stretches from a popular ramen shop to the end of a crosswalk

It's always interesting to look at a usual landscape with a different point of view, as you will discover new things. Walking along the borderline offers plenty of fun and interesting discoveries.

Before the raid of Chushingura

If you walk across Roppongi-dori Street with ANA Intercontinental Hotel behind you and as you face toward Tokyo Metro Akasaka Station, keep walking straight into a residential area, there is a slope to your right. At the bottom of the slope, you will find a large stone monument that says, "Nanbuzaka." This is the slope that stretches between north and west as you look toward the American Embassy's quarters, which is between Akasaka district to the right and Roppongi district to the left. It is believed that the "Nanbuzaka" engraved on the monument comes from the fact that the house of the Nanbu family of the Morioka Domain was built here during the Edo period. (There are other stories that tell the reason.)

And Nanbuzaka is also famous as the place of farewell in the famous Japanese literature, Chushingura. In the spring of 1701, the feudal lord of the Ako Domain, Asano Takumino-kami Nagano-ri attacked Kira Kozukenosuke in Edo Castle in an attempt to kill him. Asano was shortly afterward sentenced to commit seppuku. His family was discontinued and the samurai who served him were dismissed. In the winter of 1703, Oishi Kuranosuke, a high-ranking samurai who worked under Asano led a group of samurai to break in to Kira's mansion and take revenge. But before they left for the mansion, Oishi Kuranosuke climbed up the Nanbuzaka hill in the snow to bid a final farewell to Nagano-ri's wife, Yozenin, who was staying at a house of the Miyoishi Domain (on the Hikawa Jinja shrine grounds).

As you go up the Nanbuzaka slope to Hikawa Jinja in the snow, try to imagine how Oishi Kuranosuke must have felt as he went to bid his final farewell.

The borderline runs through Suntory Hall!?

The luxurious and splendid Geihinkan guesthouse was truly the perfect place to welcome our country's state guests. The Cabinet Office staff who guided us through the building said, "The building became open to the public just this year, so there are things that may seem inconvenient, but we are planning to do our best to improve whatever is necessary to have the visitors enjoy the tour." Although the only thing you can have is a cup of coffee bought at the coffee