



My Town
赤坂 AKASAKA
青山 AOYAMA
Town Journal

Issued by: Akasaka Aoyama Town Journal Editorial Committee, Minato City Akasaka Aoyama Town Journal No. 9, 10, 11
Office: Collaboration Project Section, Akasaka Regional City Office, Minato City Circulation: 3,000 copies

Walking in Green

Akasaka/Aoyama
Walking in Green
The Japan (Tea House)
Street-by-street
Exploration

和
THE "JAPAN"



Akasaka/Aoyama is the urban area with stylish modern buildings. However, one step into the back alleys where Edo era's samurai and townspeople lived and you can come in touch with the traditional Japanese cultures everywhere.
Let's visit the tea houses seeking the "Japan" that still exists in Akasaka/Aoyama.

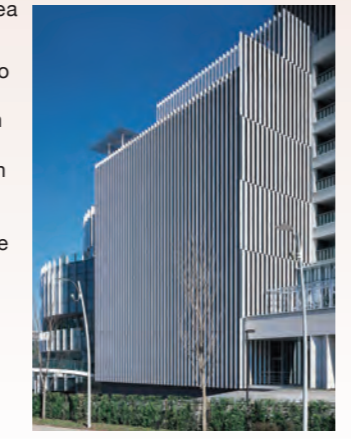


Gencho-an 1
Suntory Museum

"Gencho-an," named by the Grand Master of Urasenke at the time of the foundation of Suntory, which used to be a 4 1/2-tatami-mat size tea room in Akasaka-mitsuke, was moved and extended now has more functional and sophisticated Japanese feeling. It is a modern tea room with the urban buildings in the neighboring area in the background as component of the view designed by the world-class architect, Mr. Kengo Kuma.

It is used for various purposes such as a lobby for the exhibition visitors, green tea service, or for rental use. This room enriches the urban pleasures of art appreciation and Japanese tea ceremony.

- Location: 6F Suntory Museum, Tokyo Midtown, 9-7-4 Akasaka
- Hours/fees: Green tea service (green tea and seasonal sweets) Alternate Thursdays during exhibition period, 11:00 a.m.–17:30 p.m. (reception until 17:00 p.m., no reservation required, closed when the capacity is filled)
- Fee: ¥1,000 Capacity: 50
- Inquire regarding rental use.
- Inquiries: Tel. 03-3479-8600, Fax. 03-3479-8643 <http://suntory.jp/SMA/>



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1 Takagicho-dori (Kotto-dori/Antique street)

Keep walking with Shibuya in your back, Aoyama-dori with "Children's Castle" and "United Nations University" on your left, and "Aoyama Gakuin University" on your right, the street branches off to "Aoyama-dori" going straight at Aoyama 5-chome and "Takagicho-dori (commonly known as Kotto-dori)" going forward-right. Contrary to "Aoyama-dori," it is a two-lane street with much narrower sidewalks and lots of power poles. However, it is also an artistic cultural area with antique shops, boutiques, museums, authentic jazz cafe, restaurants and beauty salons. An old map tells you that this street used to go through the premise of Edo shimo-yashiki of Takagi Mondo-no-kami of Tannan Clan, the former Kawachi-no-kuni. (Origin of the former name of the town.)

This block was expanded after the Meiji Restoration, utilizing the lands of feudal lord's residence, attracting the statesman of Meiji Era to build their residences. There have always been some antique shops but it became a very busy antique area with shops moved from Nihonbashi, Kyobashi, and Shibatomoecho areas after the war.

It seems like there are less antique shops today but the boutiques, the Ohara Hall of flower arrangements, the stately bar in the basement of Nikka Whisky Building, and entertaining restaurants are creating a calm yet modern atmosphere. Walk further towards Nishi-Azabu to find Eihei Temple Betsuin "Chokokuji Temple," where many famous people are enshrined.

Relish the atmosphere while walking on this street.



Waraku-an 2
KSA International

One street down from Route 246, look for the hanging lantern that says "Waraku-an" behind the Canadian Embassy. This tea house was established by KSA International, an international distribution company in Kyoto, with the intention to promote the Japanese culture to the world. It meets a wide variety of user demands including services for local children and residents, tea ceremony experience in English targeting the embassy workers, tea ceremony clubs of companies, lectures for group users, Japanese confectionery making experience and incense burning experience.

Open the lattice door and prepare yourself in "Tsugi no ma" (the "next room"). Behind the fusuma sliding door awaits the soothing hospitality of tea ceremony that blocks out the hustle and bustle of the city.

- Location: KSA International Tokyo Branch, 7-4-25 Akasaka
- Hours/fees: Tsukigama (monthly tea ceremony) Every 4th Thursday, 13:00 p.m.–17:00 p.m. (reservation required, open to beginners and others); KSA culture class/experience courses weekdays, 10:00 a.m.–21:00 p.m. (Please inquire for details about tea room rental, etc.)
- Inquiries: Tel. 03-3505-8622, Fax. 03-3505-8630 <http://www.ksa.co.jp> Email webmaster-tokyo@ksa.co.jp



2 Choijamaru-dori
What an interesting name!

It is an off-street alley that takes you from the side of the avex headquarters building through "Bochi-shita (Nishi-Azabu)." It is such a small street that you can easily miss it if you are not carefully looking.

However, this street has a very historic story.

In the Era of Kamakura/Muromachi, Nishi-Azabu was a big harbor area (Shimbashi and Shinagawa areas were still part of the ocean back then) and "Shirokane Choija" and "Kogane Choija (Shibuya Choija)" had great power according to various historical sources including "Kokyoki Edobanashi 1" published in 1687. From the residence of "Kogane Choija (Shibuya Choija)" (present Aoyama 3- and 4-chome) to the harbor area (present Nishi-Azabu area) was the main street back then called "Choijamaru-dori." The name is passed on to us today along with the "Funamitsu Inari Shrine."

Isn't it interesting to find a link between Aoyama and the ocean, and moreover, it still remains there after 7–800 years later?!



Shuso-an 3 *Closed to public
Oracle Corporation Japan

Step into the headquarters building of Oracle Corporation Japan, directly connected to "Gaien-mae Station" of Ginza Line, and take the elevator up to 24th floor, and suddenly, you are in a total tranquility. The black wooden walls and green tea house garden make you feel like as if you are in glowing Gion, but with high-rise buildings in the background.

The tea room was built to offer hospitality for guests from inside and outside Japan and also as a relaxation space for employees to get to interact with each other.

Although it is not opened to the public, this place teaches us how a tea house in the center of a city should be.

- Location: Oracle Aoyama Center, 2-5-8 Kita-Aoyama
- Inquiries: Tel. 03-6834-6666 (operator)



3 Jingu Gaien Icho Namiki
The Perspective

A total of 146 ginkgo trees planted along both sides of Aoyama-dori Street change their beautiful appearances from season to season (verdure, yellow, green, and leafless). These lines of trees are planted to bring perspective to the landscape. In the autumn season when the leaves turn yellow and red, the street is beautifully covered with the carpet of fallen leaves.

The annual "Icho Matsuri (Ginkgo Festival)" at the end of November that has many shops and booths is always ensure a great turnout. [Gaien at Night]

The area lights up at dusk showing a different kind of beauty from the day time. The lighting emphasizes the supple forms of trees and, in a rainy autumn day, the contrast between black asphalt road and yellow leaves takes your breath away. The stylish restaurant-cafe on the boulevard offers a pleasant space for a break with cake and tea after a walk.

*This famous date spot also attracts an endless stream of couples and people walking their dogs.

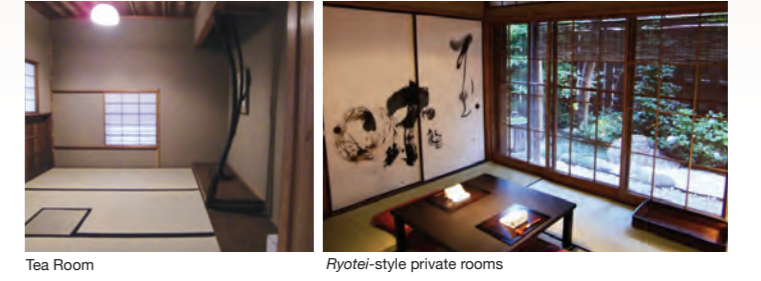


Akasaka Kinryu 4
–Tea Room–

This place has such a style, it makes you wonder if you are by the Kamogawa River in Kyoto or in Okuhakone that was loved by many famous writers and artists of old times. Akasaka Kinryu was built by redeveloping the 80-year old prestigious well-established Japanese restaurant that had the tradition of "ichigensan okotowari" (meaning to "refuse first-time customers"). Akasaka Kinryu sets its prices lower in the hope of serving more customers and spreading the Japanese cultures.

The practical modern architecture perfectly matches the private rooms and *shunga* art on the ceiling. The two Chinese characters written with blue black ink says "Shi Mi," which means the ultimate level of taste achieved through hard work and effort. In the simple 3-tatami-mat size tea room, you will experience the ultimate spirituality.

- Location: 3-17-2 Akasaka
- Hours/fees: For tea room rental, please inquire.
- Restaurant: 18:00 p.m.–23:00 p.m. Bar: 18:00 p.m.–3:00 a.m. (closed on Sundays and Holidays)
- Inquiries: Tel. 03-3583-2033, Fax. 03-3583-2045 <http://www.akasaka-kinryu.com>



Tea Room, Ryotei-style private rooms

4 Hitotsugi-dori
A festive town that used to be a geisha town

Back in Heian Era, this area used to have a heavy traffic of people and horses and "hitotsugi" (=to transport the luggage of travelers from town to town in a relaying manner by changing delivery persons and horses) often took place here, which is the origin of the name.

In 1887, the farm pond was reclaimed and many restaurants and geisha rooms were established. The area, after being burnt down by the aerial attacks in 1945, was redeveloped quickly as there were important government facilities close by such as the National Diet Building and other public buildings in Kasumigaseki. By 1955, about 40 geisha rooms were established. Geisha girls in geisha kimono style traveling the street on rickshaws grabbed people's attention who also called the street "Akogare-dori" (heart-throbbing road). Today, Hitotsugi shopping street is busy with many restaurants for office workers instead of Japanese-style ryotei restaurants.



Akasaka Civic Center 5
–Japanese Room No. 2–

The "Akasaka Community Plaza" on Aoyama-dori (Route 246), first and second floors are the Minato City Akasaka Regional City Office and third to fifth floors are the Akasaka Civic Center, is the center of life and culture in Akasaka/Aoyama.

"Japanese Room No. 2," one of the Japanese rooms on the fifth floor, is the tea room with the tea preparation area. The 16 1/2-tatami-mat size tea room rented with full range of equipment is popular among the users. Why don't you visit this community-based tea room this fall.

- Location: Akasaka Community Plaza, 4-18-13 Akasaka
- Hours: 9:00 a.m.–21:00 p.m. (please inquire with the Civic Center for further details)
- Event: Akasaka Community Festival (held on October 23 (Fri) and 24 (Sat.) 2009)
- Tel. 03-5413-2711, Fax. 03-5413-2714



5 Entsuji-dori
A samurai street turned into a modern street

Entsuji Temple, which was at first built at the top of Sampunzaka slope, was burnt down in a spreading fire and moved to this area. You will see the bell tower and stone stairway of the temple as you walk down the corner of Gadelius Co., Ltd. All the way down to the bottom of the hill on the right side and in the very back, there is Suzufuri Inari Shrine. This shrine, used to be in Igacho, Yotsuya, was moved to the current location due to the order of feudal government. According to the historical materials, Tokugawa Ieyasu, at the time of Honnoji Incident, was stuck on the road of Iga going back from Osaka to his territory Mikawa but then the sound of bell coming out of nowhere brought him to Kannondo where he met a monk to guide him back to Mikawa. Ieyasu built a Inari Shrine in order to honor this service. Such an old tale makes you feel like you might run into a samurai on this street, but don't worry. Today, the Akasaka Sacas stands on the south side of this street and the park facing the street is connected to the cherry blossom boulevard of Akasaka Sacas by an elevator. There is also a modern restaurant that specializes in tomato dishes on the corner of Entsuji-dori and Hitotsugi-dori.



Walking in Green

Akasaka/Aoyama

Walking in Green

Over the seasons of Christmas, year-end parties, and New-Year, we all eat and drink too much. The cold weather makes us just want to stay inside. One day, you step on the scale and see the shocking numbers.

Why don't you try to stay healthy by walking in the autumn/winter season? We know you would like to do that in a nice environment with lots of green.

So, the editors of this brochure went out and searched for green spots in Akasaka/Aoyama areas. Connect these spots and ... here is the perfect Walking Course!

This route may take you to unfamiliar areas where you can make a wonderful discovery!

13th Jingu Gaien Icho Matsuri (Ginkgo Festival)

Young leaves, green leaves, yellow leaves and leafless trees—the appearances of ginkgo trees change seasonally, however, they are most beautiful in the period from middle of November through beginning of December when leaves turn yellow attracting many people to visit the area for a stroll. Turning this season, the Ginkgo Festival is held offering various booths and shops selling specialty goods and local products. Visit the festival and enjoy a gorgeous autumn day.

- Period: November 14 (Sat), through December 13 (Sun), 2009
- Time: 10:00 a.m.–16:30 p.m.
- Location: Jingu Gaien Ginkgo Street and around fountain pond
- Program: Booths and shops with local products
Live performance by street entertainers on Saturday, Sunday and Holidays
- Inquiries: Meiji Jingu general affairs department, Tel. 03-3401-0312



Delicious foods from different places!

Exciting live performance by street entertainers!

Original character An-chan

Original character It-chan



3 TK Minami-Aoyama Building Open Space

A modern garden associated with a small bamboo grove extends from Aoyama-dori Street. You can go through the open space to the back alley.

1 Periphery of Aoyama Park

Walk towards Aoyama Cemetery from Subway "Aoyama-itchohme Station." On your left is the Aoba Park, and the green scenery behind Aoba Park is the Tokyo Metropolitan Aoyama Park (North Area). Stylish café and restaurants are along the Loop Road No.3.



5 Premise of Municipal Aoyama Kitamachi Apartment

It is a municipally-operated apartment with lots of big trees and abundant of green. Enjoy the cherry blossoms in spring as well as other types of flowers and green throughout the year.



2 Back alley of Aoyama 2-chome

An impressive site of green found in the alley of Aoyama 2-chome in front of a traditional eel restaurant. Across from this restaurant is a gallery also surrounded by lush green providing a tranquil feeling.



4 AOYAMA the TOWER Open Space

Connected with the greens in the neighboring areas, such as Aoyama Cemetery, sports field, parks and others, it creates a townscape full of green.
★Awarded of the 2006 Minato Greener Community Development Award



6 Miyuki-dori (From First Dori)

Miyuki-dori, also known as From First Dori, runs from Omote-sando to Minami-Aoyama. The street is lined with many fashionable buildings designed by various architects and the Seinan Elementary School with cheerful voices of children!

7 Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum

Taro Okamoto, the well-known artist, lived for nearly fifty years and made many of his works here. We also recommend you to visit the galleries in Aoyama as there are a number of art spaces including rental galleries.



8 Periphery of Nezu Museum

The Nezu Museum, which went through a 3-year renovation plan, stands at the end of Miyuki-dori. The bamboo grove surrounding the building and its gently sloping yard give you the feeling of "Japan."



9 Gondawara-zaka Slope

Take a right at the corner of Meiji Kinenkan from Aoyama 1-chome and you will be on the Gondawara-zaka slope lined with horse chestnut and tulip poplar trees. Walking up and down of the gradual slope will be a perfect relaxation exercise.

At six thirty in the evening around Kyosai Kaikan, you will hear a temple bell, and at seven, the bell of St. Ignatius Church. Also enjoy the seasonal flowers in the hedge of Imperial Palace.



10 Yagen-zaka Slope

Due to the Yagen-zaka redevelopment, the area around Akasaka Regional City Office, from 4-chome to 5-chome, was beautifully renovated. It is now a soothing green environment where you can eat your lunch and relax your eyes tired from working in front of computers.



11 Hikawa Park

This usually-quiet park gets very busy around lunch time. People from the office buildings in the area come to have their lunch, read or take a nap to make their lunch break special.

13 Hinoki-cho Park

It is a spacious park in downtown adjacent to Tokyo Midtown. Walk through the area where children are playing and dogs are being walked to a sumptuous Japanese style garden. The pure atmosphere will clear your mind of the hustle and bustle of urban life.



12 Periphery of Akasaka Hikawa Shrine

In contrast to the days of festival, Akasaka Hikawa Shrine area is usually very peaceful full of green. The building of the American Embassy Compound across from the Shrine is the former Mitsui Residence, probably why so much green still in this area.



14 Former Nogi Residence, Nogi Shrine, Nogi Park

This area is on the border of three towns—Akasaka, Aoyama and Roppongi. The route from the garden of former Nogi Residence through Nogi Shrine and to Nogi Park offers nothing but peace and comfort. The sacred tree and ancient trees and the sounds of gagaku, the ancient Japanese court music, are majestic.

Aoyama Boulevard Trees ~Be grateful to the trees every day~



Tulip poplar in Aoyama 1-chome through Gondawara

The trees in Aoyama have the growth rings. Aoyama 1-chome through Gondawara. The street in front of Aoyama Funeral Hall. According to our measurement, giant tall trees with trunk diameters of 1.5 to 2 meters stand 10 to 13 steps apart. Tulip poplar or Magnolia family are planted each labeled with the name and number. The large leaves similar to that of plane trees provide perfect shades. The plane trees in Aoyama-dori, ginkgo trees in Gaien-dori, zelkova trees in Omotesando and acacia trees in Miyuki-dori. They are constantly absorbing CO₂. We must appreciate and take good care of these routes.



Lush green in Aoyama Cemetery

Aoyama/Tour around the town of green
Akasaka/Walking in peaceful green

Walked by editors in:
About 50 min.
About 30 min.

Aoyama

Tour around the town of green

Aoyama is full of modern fashionable shops and museums. Unique design architectures harmonizing with their green surroundings creates the stylish townscape. Enjoy walking in this stylish town.

Walking in peaceful green <Akasaka-mitsuke~Nogi-zaka>

Traditional green in Nogi Shrine and Akasaka Hikawa Shrine and modern green created by urban redevelopment in Tokyo Midtown and Yagen-zaka. Explore the town of Akasaka full of lush green telling you the tales of present and past.

Akasaka