



MY TOWN

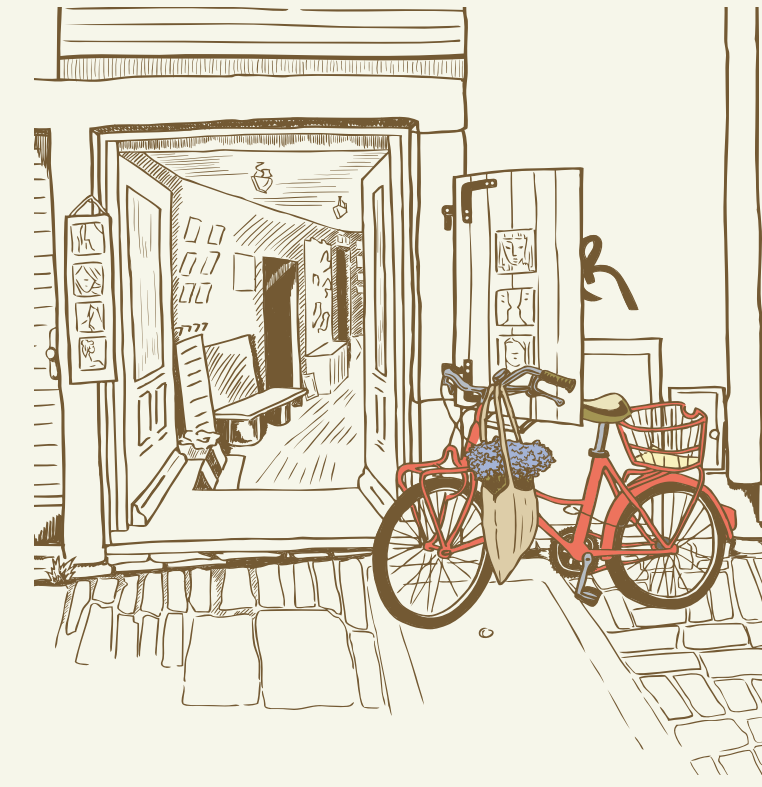
AKASAKA 赤坂
青山 AOYAMA

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 researchs, and do the editing by themselves. The bulletin is aimed at spreading information on fascinating things found in and around Akasaka and Aoyama, Tokyo.

LET'S ENJOY CYCLING IN AKASAKA & AOYAMA!



What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama? Vol.3



Mr. Luangweera when he visited Nara

We interviewed Amnaj Luangweera (37), a man from the Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand. He is currently studying Japanese at the Aoyama International Education Institute. He walks around the Akasaka and Aoyama area when he does not have classes.

Q1 : Why did you come to Japan?

"Since I was a child, I've loved Japanese comics and cartoons such as 'Doraemon.' After graduating from university in Thailand, I got a position in a Japanese company over there. I started to develop an interest in Japanese culture and went to a Japanese language school. I then decided to come to Japan to learn more Japanese, and I arrived here in September, 2011."

Q2 : You speak Japanese well. How long have you been studying Japanese?

"It has been approximately seven years since I started studying Japanese in Thailand. I can read and write Japanese quite well now, but I would like to deepen my understanding of the Japanese language and learn to speak more fluently and naturally."

Q3 : What is the best thing about living in the Akasaka & Aoyama area?

"The best thing about this area is that it is very convenient in transport. I usually walk to the institute, but when the weather is bad, I use Minato-City community bus called Chii bus. I also love reading books, so I go to secondhand bookshops to buy various books at reasonable prices."

Q4 : Is there anything you feel inconvenient about this area in everyday life?

"Most hospitals and clinics close on Sundays and public holidays, so I am not sure what to do if an emergency occurs on one of these days. Also I know there's nothing I can do about it because it is the climate, but for someone like me who came from Thailand where it is very hot all year around, winter in Japan is too cold. Although I put on many clothes in layers, but I just can't get warm. I wonder when it will get warmer this year (Laugh)."

Q5 : Do you have any favorite places in Akasaka & Aoyama?

"I like Ichonamiki (gingko tree road) in Jingu Gaien, and I went to the Icho Festival last year. Japan has four seasons, and the changes in scenery are beautiful in each season."

Q6 : Do you have any interesting stories about living in Japan?

"Once, I ordered katsudon and put so much of 'shichimi togarashi' (a mixture of ground red chili peppers and other spices) until the whole surface of the katsudon was covered. My Japanese friend was worried and said, 'You'll end up with a stomachache.' But for me, I am used to spicy food, it was not hot at all. When I cook, I buy ingredients which are similar to Thai flavors, but unfortunately I can't buy chili hot enough to make the unique hotness of Thai food."

Q7 : What is your future goal?

"When I return to Thailand this year, I am planning to start a business which is related to both Japan and Thailand. Therefore, in order to improve my Japanese as much as possible, I try to study the language not just at school, but also surrounding myself with Japanese language by reading newspapers and watching dramas and news on television."



Thai cuisine of Tod Mun Pla (Fish Cake)

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama? Vol.4



The very fashionable Mr. Caludis

We visited "Associazione Italo-Giapponese", which has a seventy years history in Akasaka. The Association sponsors various events related to Italy, including Italian language lessons, lectures and social activities. We interviewed Mr. Cristiano Caludis (44) who is from Turin and he works as an Italian language teacher.

Q1 : When did you first come to Japan?

"My first visit to Japan was in 1996, and I stayed in a homestay for three months in Tokyo in order to learn Japanese. I went back to Italy and came back to Japan again in 1998 as an Italian language teacher."

Q2 : What made you interested in Japanese language and culture?

"When I was a child, I used to watch Japanese cartoons such as 'Heidi, Girl of the Alps.'"

I was surprised at the perfection of the story lines, which was quite different from European cartoons. Most Japanese cartoons were subtitled, so I was automatically listening to Japanese. We also had Japanese wrestling matches, and Japanese wrestlers were very popular. Whenever my mother visited Japan as a tour guide for a travel company, she bought me a present, and I was very impressed with the items she brought home. Due to these influences, I decided to study Japanese Language in the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Turin."

Q3 : What are the attractions of Akasaka and Aoyama? Do you have any favorite places there?

"I often come to Aoyama. The town's atmosphere and the fashion in Aoyama are similar to those in Europe, and we can buy food and goods from all over the world. It is very easy to get around in the Akasaka and Aoyama area. The inconvenient thing in this area is ... well, the only thing I can think of is that the area is too large to walk around."

My favorite place is the backstreets. I like walking through the backstreets between Aoyama-dori and Omotesando and finding interesting shops and historical places. The Ichonamiki (ginko tree road) of Jingu Gaien is also beautiful."

Q4 : What is the biggest difference between Japan and Italy?

"Most Japanese people are punctual, unlike Italians. Because I have been in Japan for a long time, it has become normal for me to be punctual. My Japanese friends always tease and ask me, 'Why are you punctual even though you are an Italian?' (Laugh). Whenever I go back to Italy, I now get confused with their sense of time."

Q5 : What would you like to try now — like a hobby or anything else?

"One of my hobbies is art. I am into pencil drawing, but in the past, I did Japanese calligraphy and oil painting. I also like making clay sculptures. It's my dream to have a private exhibition to show all my art works. When I am concentrating on art, I can take a break from my busy daily life and feel relaxed. But in reality, I am often too busy to spend the time for my art work (Laugh)."

● Associazione Italo-Giapponese
http://www.aigtokyo.or.jp/
Akasaka Chuo Mansion 2F 7-2-17 Akasaka
Telephone: 03-3402-1632

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama? Vol.5



Mr. Pierre Prigent

It has been 45 years since he came to Japan and 40 years since he opened the French home-cooking style restaurant "Chez Pierre." He started as a baker and has always been in the food business. We interviewed the owner and chef Pierre Prigent who has been living in Aoyama since his arrival in Japan and is currently still working hard in his restaurant.

Q1 : Please tell us about your upbringing.

"I was born in Saint-Denis, a suburb of Paris, on June 30, 1947. I always wanted to become a baker, so I entered this business when I was 15. I left there for military training and cooked in the army for one and a half years, and then I went back to work as a baker. The baker who was mentoring me at that time was sent to Japan, so I came to Japan in 1968 to visit him. I started to work at Donq in Aoyama. In those days Aoyama was a town influenced greatly by the Western bread cultures, with 'Kinokuniya' selling British style bread, 'Donq' selling French bread and 'Andersen' selling mainly German bread."

Q2 : Please tell us what Aoyama was like when you opened your restaurant.

"It was in 1973 when I opened my restaurant in the basement of the building next to a large florist named 'Hanamo'. It was when a large scale city expansion plan was underway after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. While making French bread and cakes at Donq, I was putting everything into opening 'Donq Kansai' at the same time as the 1970 Osaka Expo. It was at a time when the eating habits of Japanese people were just about to change along with Japan's recovery from the World War II."

In the midst of all that, I opened a full-scale French home-cooking style restaurant near Kinokuniya with support from the owner of Donq and others. The young cultured people who all left for western countries after the war to study — such as artists, architects and fashion designers — all came back to Japan. They initiated new trendsetting activities, with Aoyama at the center. People who were inspired by other cultures used my restaurant quite often as a 'hangout'. Their 'word-of-mouth' was the basis for the success of my restaurant."

Q3 : Then why did you move your restaurant to Nogizaka?

"Since the opening of the restaurant, business was great, but as a quintessential French man who loves ambiance, I wanted to have a shop from which you could see people walking by and you could also experience elements of nature. Everything started when I heard the person sitting next to me at a meeting of bakers saying 'I am going to close my shop.' After numerous discussions and negotiations, I finally moved my restaurant in 1985. I finally came out of the ground, so to speak. As well as our regular customers, new customers from consulates and embassies began to come to our restaurant."

I owe my success to the people around me and the trends of the times. I feel thankful I can blend in here quite well having a Japanese woman as my wife. With a lot of greenery and many tourists from overseas, Aoyama is somewhat like Paris and is a nice quiet town. It is still as charming as when I first came to Japan. I would like to keep living here in the future."



'Chez Pierre' is celebrating its 40th year anniversary.

What do you think about Akasaka & Aoyama? Vol.6



Ms. Isabelle Massabo

She was born in Tokyo in May, 1981. Traveling between Japan and France, she currently works as an advisor in productions of television travel programs, events and content, while running her own trading company.

We interviewed the energetic Ms. Isabelle Massabo who lives in Akasaka, Minato-ku.

Q1 : Please tell me about your upbringing.

"I am the daughter of a French artist father and a Japanese mother from Ishigaki Island. I was born in Tokyo, but I was brought up in a bilingual environment moving between Nice, France and Japan. In Japan, I attended the Lycée Franco-Japonais, so I was brought up completely in the French language and culture. When I was 18 and started university and I started working as a TV personality and realized how wonderful Japanese language and culture are."

Q2 : What do you like about Japan and France?

"The things I like about Japan are, more than anything else, 'kikubari (attentiveness)', 'mekubari (watchfulness)' and 'kokorokubari (thoughtfulness)'. Whether it is with food or work, Japanese people are sensitive and precise, and always place others or customers first. In addition, each region has unique attractions, as well as beautiful sakes, food and hospitality. My favorite foods are mentaiko (spicy cod roe), karage (Japanese-style fried chicken), natto (fermented soy beans) and shimesaba (mackerel marinated in vinegar)."

The things I like about France (Southern France) are that people are open to everyone, that people are proud of their own culture, and that they are trying to make the environment easier for immigrants and the elderly population. For example, in Southern France, the government provides a year-long free language course for newly arrived immigrants and even finds jobs for them afterward. Also, education in France is almost free up until university, and the self-sufficiency rate is 120%! Therefore, it is a good environment in which to raise children. These are the cultural aspects I wish Japan would adopt and follow."

Q3 : What are the attractions of Akasaka? Do you have any favorite places?

"Akasaka has the atmosphere of a foreign country. Particularly along the northern side of Roppongi-dori and around Midtown, we see many French people, and the green areas and parks make me feel relaxed. I also like the "downtown" atmosphere you experience when you first enter the side roads leading into town. My favorite place is Hinoki-cho Park. When I'm not working, I walk in the park or read books."

Q4 : What is your future goal?

"I would like to keep challenging myself to try new things. First, I would like to expand my activities to connect Japan and overseas countries through media and events, with the catch phrase of 'bringing high quality content to Japan and sharing the high quality content which Japan can be proud of to overseas venues!', using the network of people I have established in Japan and overseas."

This year I am going to introduce information and attractive products to Japan mainly from the twenty-eight EU countries."

Ms. Massabo as the MC at an event sponsored by the Croatian National Tourist Board

Aoyama Cemetery
A Person and History

No.18
Tokuzo Akiyama
(1888-1974)



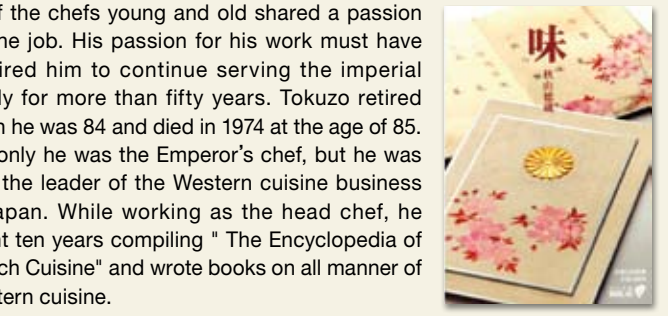
Tokuzo Akiyama, who was working as "Chef for the Emperor" and the main chef at the Imperial Cuisine Division of the Imperial Household Agency for over fifty years and contributed greatly to the French cuisine business in Japan, was born in 1888 as the second son of a wealthy family in Takefu, Fukui. He was quite an energetic boy when he was little. He told numerous adventurous stories, including the story that when he decided to become a Buddhist monk and went to a Zen temple for training, he went too far with his mischief — he threw the headstones of successive holy priests off a cliff — and was expelled from the temple after just one year.

However, this changed when Tokuzo visited to the mess hall of the 36th Regiment who were staying in Sabae, and Tokuzo became interested in Western cooking. One day, he was very impressed by the beautifully presented, fragrant food served at the hall, and he decided to become a chef of Western cuisine. He went to Tokyo when he was 16 and trained at famous Western restaurants of that time period, such as Kazoku Kaikan and Tsukiji Seiyoken. He was quite a hard worker — he even attended one-on-one French language classes after work.

When Tokuzo was 21, he finally made it to Europe. It had been his dream. He trained at best restaurants in Paris, including the Ritz-Carlton. Although he was smaller in stature than other trainees, but he was competitive in showing his fighting instinct in those grand French kitchens full of larger men. When a chef asked him to carry soup in a large pot — that they are too heavy for any man to lift on his own — Tokuzo lifted up the pot after draining all the soup into the sink. After that, he gained everyone's respect, and his cooking skills improved significantly. Although Tokuzo's skill was well recognized in France, he returned to Japan in 1912 when he was offered the position of main chef for an imperial ceremony of the Taisho Emperor. He got married and began working as the main chef at the Imperial Cuisine Division of the Imperial Household Agency at the age of 25.

His attitude toward cooking was quite strict. He commented, "The most important thing is the basics. Follow the basics, and try not to cut corners. Not only your skills, cooking from your heart is also important." While adhering to these intense values, he was at the same time quite playful. He often chose to amuse guests visually by positioning ice sculptures and tray landscapes in interesting ways at dinner parties.

Occasionally he felt stressed about times changing and the fact that the new young trainees starting out were not as traditionally minded as the older generation of chefs, but he noted that the most important thing in the world, and indeed the only thing which would never change, was that all of the chefs young and old shared a passion for the job. His passion for his work must have inspired him to continue serving the imperial family for more than fifty years. Tokuzo retired when he was 84 and died in 1974 at the age of 85. Not only he was the Emperor's chef, but he was also the leader of the Western cuisine business in Japan. While working as the head chef, he spent ten years compiling "The Encyclopedia of French Cuisine" and wrote books on all manner of Western cuisine.



"Aji - Tanno no Ryoriban ga Kataru Showa" by Tokuzo Akiyama (Chuko Bunko)

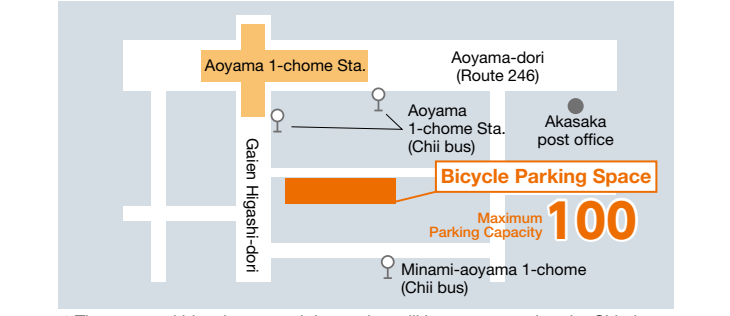
Sourced by: "Aji" by Tokuzo Akiyama, "Showa-tenno no Oshokuj" by Makoto Watanabe

Please use the nearest bicycle parking spaces.

When using a bicycle, please park it in the dedicated bicycle parking space at the destination or at a temporary bicycle parking space managed by the Minato-City shown below. Minato-City has strengthened its measures against illegally parked bicycles around the railway stations for which Minato-City has established paid temporary bicycle parking spaces. All the illegally parked bicycles will be removed immediately and periodically. Please use the bicycle parking at the destination whenever you use a bicycle.

Aoyama 1-chome Station Temporary Bicycle Parking Space

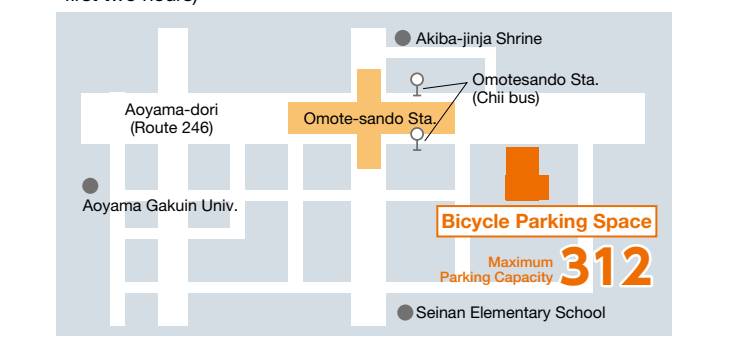
- Address: Minami Aoyama 1-1 to 1-2
- Maximum Parking Capacity: 100
- Hours: Open 24 hours
- Parking Fee: Free for the first two hours (¥100 every six hours after the first two hours)



※The removed bicycles around the station will be transported to the Shirokane-takanawa Station Bicycle Collection Point.

Omotesando Station Temporary Bicycle Parking Space

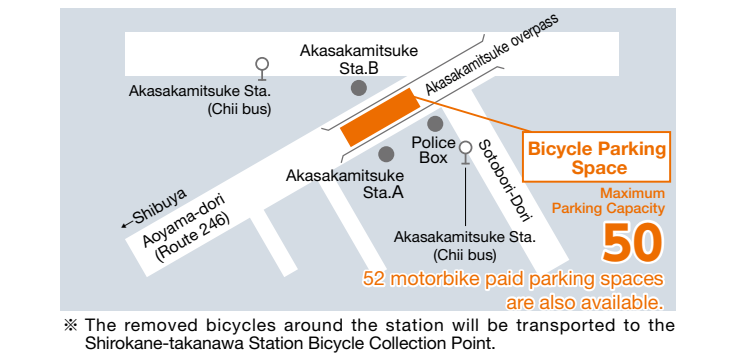
- Address: Minami-Aoyama 3-13
- Maximum Parking Capacity: 312
- Hours: 4:30 am to 1 am (the next morning)
- Parking Fee: Free for the first two hours (¥100 every ten hours after the first two hours)



※The removed bicycles around the station will be transported to the Kaigan 3-chome Bicycle Collection Point (five minutes walk from Yurikamome Shibaura-futo Station).

Akasakamitsuke Station Temporary Bicycle Parking Space

- ※This parking space began charging fees on July 1st, 2013.
- Address: Akasaka 3-9, Moto-akasaka 1-2
- Maximum Parking Capacity: 50
- Hours: Open 24 hours
- Parking Fee: Free for the first two hours (¥100 every six hours after the first two hours)



※The removed bicycles around the station will be transported to the Shirokane-takanawa Station Bicycle Collection Point.

●Contact: Community Development Support Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Akasaka Regional City Office
Telephone : 03-5413-7272

Local cleaning activities in Akasaka and Aoyama



In order to keep the Akasaka and Aoyama area safe and clean, many people in the area participate in local cleaning activities. Below shows the list of several of these cleaning activities.

Cleaning Group	Date	Cleanup Area
Esplanade Akasaka Shopping Market Union	2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month Starts from 12:15pm (Duration: about 30 mins)	The Esplanade Akasaka Shopping Market between Akasaka-mitsuke Station and Akasaka-dori
Aoyama-Gaienmae Shopping Market Union Namboku Aoyama 2-chome Town Council	2nd & 4th Friday of the month Starts from 9am (Duration: about 30 mins)	Gaiemmae Station Area
Aoyama 3-chome Shop Association	2nd Friday of the month Starts from 9am (Duration: about 40 mins)	From the Aoyama 3-chome intersection to Zenkoji Temple
Omotesando Shop Association	2nd & 4th Friday of the month Starts from 9am (Duration: about 40 mins)	Omote-sando Station area
Aoyama 1-chome Town Council	3rd Friday of the month Starts from 10am (Duration: about 40 mins)	1-chome Town Council area
Aoyama 2-chome Town Council	1st Thursday of the month Starts from 10am (Duration: about 40 mins)	2-chome Town Council area
Akasaka Regional City Office	1st Friday of the month Starts from 9am (Duration: about 30 mins)	Akasaka Regional City Office area
Greenbird Akasaka Team	2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month Starts from 8:30am (Duration: about 60 mins)	Akasaka-dori and Hitotsugi-dori area

* Each group may cancel the cleaning activity on a rainy/stormy/extremely hot day.

People from relevant town councils, shopping malls or local business entities also participate in the cleaning activities. When you volunteer, your town becomes clean, and you will also have an important opportunity to talk to the local business people and other residents of the area. Individuals and group participation are both welcome.

If you are interested, please call the number below!
●Contact: Collaboration Project Section, Akasaka Regional City Office
Telephone : 03-5413-7013

