



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.



Enjoy a Chii-Bus tour around Akasaka and Aoyama



What do you think about

Akasaka & Aoyama?



Vol.7
Mr. Campbell Cleland

We interviewed Mr. Campbell Cleland who came to Japan from New Zealand 23 years ago. After working as an English teacher, he joined the staff of the World Exposition held in Aichi Prefecture, before entering the financial field, he currently lives in Aoyama and works for a foreign-owned bank.



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."

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.

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".

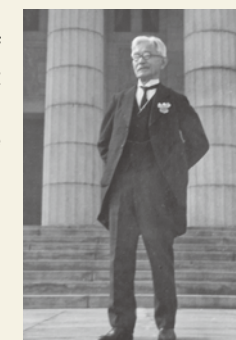
Establishment of pharmaceutical company in Japan and problems ahead

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 Councilors 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)



©The Hoshi Library

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 in the smoke tent



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.

SPECIAL TOPIC

Enjoy a Chii-Bus tour around Akasaka and Aoyama!



What is *Chii-Bus*? Bring a 100-yen coin and take a ride. You'll find new scenes and unexpected things in your area. Get off the bus and discover something exciting. Why not go for a stroll? There's a *Chii-Bus* stop near your home. Go where you want to go, even to places you haven't been to. Remember to take the *Chii-Bus*.



Taro Okamoto Memorial Museum

The artist's residence, garden and atelier, all in one work of art



In the residential area behind Takagi-cho dori Street (known as Kotto-dori Street or Antiques Street), you find a place with an imposing white statue and rich greenery. It's the memorial museum of Taro Okamoto, famous for many distinguished art works including "Tower of the Sun." Okamoto was born in the old house that stood here; renovated after World War II, it was turned into a residence with atelier. It is open to the public, preserved as it was during the life of Okamoto.

Unlike many other museums, you are able to sense his breathing as you trace the drops of paint on the floor. It makes you feel that you are visiting this artist's home, as you enjoy his works.

The garden itself is a work of art, where particular plants rarely found in the Minami-aoyama area are grown in their natural surroundings. If you walk around to the rear of the building, you will find the original gate of the house.

Access near bus stop **AO** #118/133-2 Minami-Aoyama 6-chome
Open 10:00-18:00 (last entry 17:30)
Closed Tuesdays (Open on national holidays)/year-end and New Year's holidays
 For further details, see: <http://www.taro-okamoto.or.jp/>

What is Chii-Bus?

Chii-Bus, the community bus, started operation with two routes—the Tamachi route and the Akasaka route, in October, 2004. The shuttle route between the depot and Tamachi Station east exit started in April 2007. In April 2012, service was started on five more routes: Shiba, Azabu, Aoyama, Takanawa and Shibaura-konan. *Chii-Bus* is the nickname chosen from among names submitted by Minato citizens; it means a small bus loved by the local people.

Chii-Bus routes are decided by the Minato City Regional Public Transportation Council, composed of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Transportation Bureau; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department; and other concerned institutions, after considering the routing, profitability, safety and other factors.

Usually the stops for *Chii-Bus* are located along public roads, but when the Tameike-sanno stop (#40-2) was added to the Akasaka route in 2014, the road was too narrow to accommodate the new stop, so some privately owned open space was used. The stop was located near the elevator to the Tokyo Metro's Tameike-sanno Station to facilitate transfers for those who have difficulty walking or who are accompanied by babies or small children.

Nezu Museum

The gabled temple-like roof comes into view as you get off the *Chii-Bus* at the Seinan Elementary School stop on the Aoyama route. It is the Nezu Museum, which exhibits the antique arts from Japan and Eastern Asia collected by Mr. Kaichiro Nezu who was known as the Japanese King of Railways.

Even though it is located in the heat of Aoyama, the original topography and nature have been preserved in the immense adjacent garden, as an embodiment of the quiet teahouse in a mountain, reflecting the will of Mr. Nezu, who was also a master of the Japanese tea ceremony.

A museum with a garden where you can enjoy nature from all seasons.

Access 2-minute walk from bus stop **AO** #133/119 Seinan Elementary School
Open 10:00-17:00 (last entry 16:30)
Closed Mondays/periods when exhibits are being changed/New Year's holidays
 For further details, see: <http://www.nezu-muse.or.jp/>



Wisteria on a trellis and Japanese irises bloom beautifully between April and May.



Approach from main entrance ©藤塚光政

Suntory Museum of Art

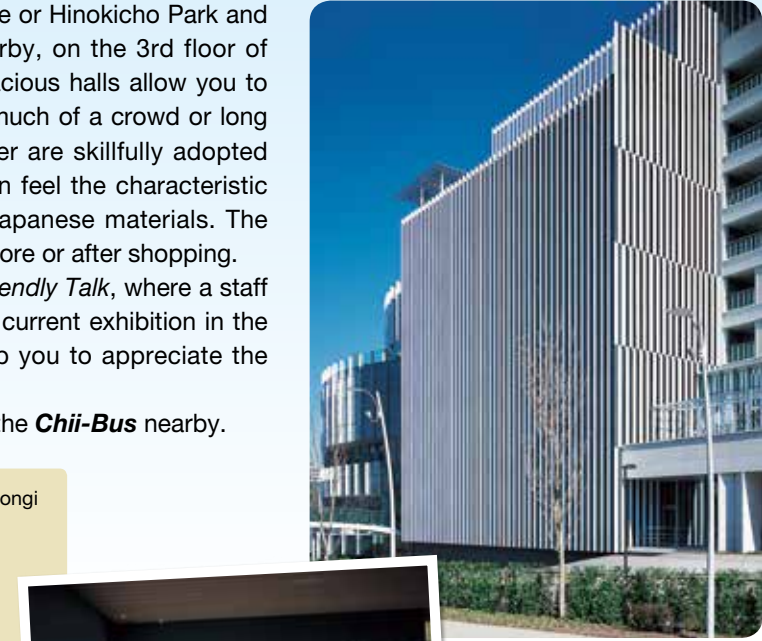
Appreciate historic art in Tokyo Midtown

Get off the *Chii-Bus* at Roppongi 7-chome or Hinokicho Park and you'll find the Suntory Museum of Art nearby, on the 3rd floor of the Galleria Area of Tokyo Midtown. Its spacious halls allow you to enjoy the exhibits comfortably without too much of a crowd or long queue to follow. Wood and Japanese paper are skillfully adopted as materials for the halls, where people can feel the characteristic warmth and delicacy of these traditional Japanese materials. The setting is perfect for you to drop in easily before or after shopping.

Every Saturday there is an event called *Friendly Talk*, where a staff member briefly introduces and explains the current exhibition in the lecture room on the 1st floor. This will help you to appreciate the exhibits even more.

Stop off at this museum when you get off the *Chii-Bus* nearby.

Access 1-minute walk from bus stop **AK** #36 Roppongi 7-chome or **AO** #52 Hinokicho Park
Open 10:00-18:00 (open until 20:00 on Fridays, Saturdays and July 20)
Closed Tuesdays
 For further details, see: <http://suntory.jp/SMA/>



Exterior view ©木奥恵三



3rd Floor Exhibition Hall ©木奥恵三

Myogon-ji Toyokawa Inari Temple

This temple has been often associated with *Ooka Echizen no kami Tadasuke*, who was a chief justice during the Edo period. Its official name is "The Tokyo branch temple of Myogon-ji Toyokawa Inari Temple" but it is more popularly known by its familiar name "Akasaka Toyokawa Inari". It is also famous as a temple visited by many artists in the entertainment field, probably due to the nature of the Akasaka area itself. At the small Yuzu Inari Temple in the precinct, you can receive an amulet called Yuzu-kin to protect your happiness, good fortune, money and treasures; this amulet contains a real coin! Naturally you are supposed to come back to thank the deity for the good luck you've had. You can also visit the seven gods of good fortune in one circle. This temple is a good spot for sightseeing on *Chii-Bus*.

Its familiar name, Toyokawa Inari, may give you the impression that it is a Shinto shrine, but it is actually a Buddhist temple of the Soto Zen Sect.



Toyokawa Inari Temple Main Hall: main deity is Toyokawa Dakini Shinten

Access near bus stop **AK** #43 or **AO** #125-2 Toyokawainari
 For further details, see: <http://www.toyokawainari-tokyo.jp/index.html>

Hinokicho Park

Open park with welcoming atmosphere

This Park, part of the Midtown garden located among offices and residences, provides a relaxing urban space. It is designed to show its history as part of the compound of the outer villa for the feudal lord Mouri, the Japanese style rest house by the pond is a part of it.

It attracts many visitors now as a new Tokyo sightseeing spot, but an archeological excavation in 2002 proved that the site had been a settlement during the period from the Jomon period (ca. 11,000 B.C. - 500 B.C.) through the Kofun (Tumulus) period (ca. 3rd century A.D. - 7th century A.D.). Stone Age pottery dating back to some 30,000 years was also excavated on that occasion.

The land served as a Japanese military facility with many barracks after the Meiji Restoration. After World War II, it was used by the Allied Occupation Forces and then became the location for the Japan Defense Agency. The site, with its serious and oppressive atmosphere was converted into a bright and fun area with its historical value preserved upon the completion of Tokyo Midtown.

Redevelopment of the former Japan Defense Agency site as Tokyo Midtown

The former site for the Japan Defense Agency and Hinoki-cho Park were merged to create a space of some 100,000 square meters, where six buildings rise, including the 248-meter Tokyo Midtown, with 54 stories above and 5 stories underground.

The park is alive with families

Playground equipment such as swings and a slide for children are designed to match the artwork installed in the garden.

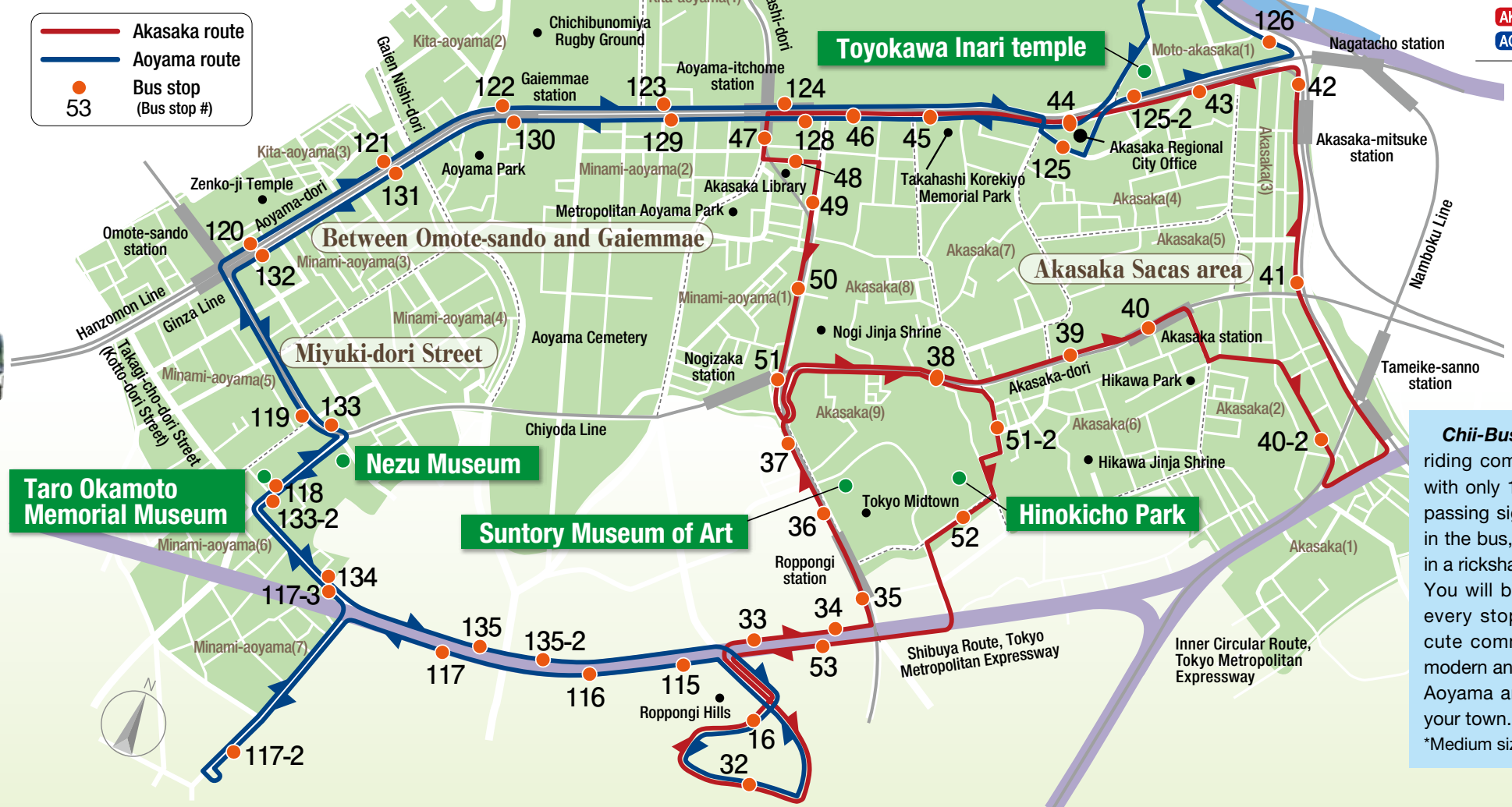


Midtown Garden



Rest house by the pond

Access near bus stop **AK** #52 Hinokicho Park
Address 9-7-9, Akasaka



Akasaka Route		Aoyama Route	
16 Roppongi Hills	38 Akasaka Elementary School	16 Roppongi Hills	32 Roppongi Kayakizaka
32 Roppongi Kayakizaka	39 Akasaka 5-chome Police Box	32 Roppongi Kayakizaka	33 Roppongi 7-chome
40 Akasaka Sta.	40 Akasaka Sta.	33 Roppongi 7-chome	34 Roppongi Sta.
46 Akasaka Post Office	46 Akasaka Post Office	34 Roppongi Sta.	35 Roppongi Crossing Kita
47 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.	47 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.	35 Roppongi Crossing Kita	36 Roppongi 7-chome
48 Minami-Aoyama 1-chome	48 Minami-Aoyama 1-chome	36 Roppongi 7-chome	37 Nogizaka Sta. Ent.
49 Akasaka 8-chome	49 Akasaka 8-chome	37 Nogizaka Sta. Ent.	
50 Sanno Hospital	50 Sanno Hospital		
51 Nogi Park	51 Nogi Park		
52 Akasaka Elementary School	52 Akasaka Elementary School		
53 Roppongi Sta.	53 Roppongi Sta.		
51-2 Akasaka 6-chome	51-2 Akasaka 6-chome		
52 Hinokicho Park	52 Hinokicho Park		
53 Roppongi Sta.	53 Roppongi Sta.		
116 Nishi-Azabu	116 Nishi-Azabu		
117 Nishi-Azabu 4-chome	117 Nishi-Azabu 4-chome		
117-2 Nisseki Medical Center	117-2 Nisseki Medical Center		
117-3 Minami-Aoyama 7-chome	117-3 Minami-Aoyama 7-chome		
118 Minami-Aoyama 6-chome	118 Minami-Aoyama 6-chome		
119 Seinan Elementary School	119 Seinan Elementary School		
120 Omotesando Sta.	120 Omotesando Sta.		
121 Minami-Aoyama 3-chome Crossing	121 Minami-Aoyama 3-chome Crossing		
122 Galerimae Sta.	122 Galerimae Sta.		
123 Aoyama 2-chome Crossing	123 Aoyama 2-chome Crossing		
124 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.	124 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.		
125 Akasaka Regional City Office	125 Akasaka Regional City Office		
125-2 Toyokawainari	125-2 Toyokawainari		
126 Akasaka Regional City Office	126 Akasaka Regional City Office		
127 Moto-Akasaka 1-chome	127 Moto-Akasaka 1-chome		
45 Takahashi Korekiyo Memorial Park	45 Takahashi Korekiyo Memorial Park		
46 Akasaka Post Office	46 Akasaka Post Office		
47 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.	47 Aoyama 1-chome Sta.		
48 Minami-Aoyama 1-chome	48 Minami-Aoyama 1-chome		
49 Akasaka 8-chome	49 Akasaka 8-chome		
50 Sanno Hospital	50 Sanno Hospital		
51 Nogi Park	51 Nogi Park		
52 Akasaka Elementary School	52 Akasaka Elementary School		
133-2 Minami-Aoyama 6-chome	133-2 Minami-Aoyama 6-chome		
134 Minami-Aoyama 7-chome	134 Minami-Aoyama 7-chome		
135 Nishi-Azabu	135 Nishi-Azabu		
135-2 Nishi-Azabu 1-chome	135-2 Nishi-Azabu 1-chome		

Fun spots to visit

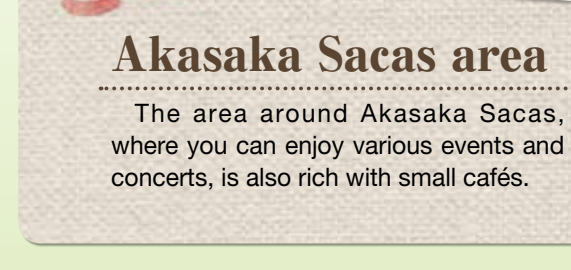
Miyuki-dori Street

Between Seinan Elementary School and Omote-sando Station lies a fashionable street with many name-brand shops called Miyuki-dori Street.



Akasaka Sacas area

The area around Akasaka Sacas, where you can enjoy various events and concerts, is also rich with small cafés.



The Akasaka/Aoyama *Chii-Bus* route crisscrosses central Tokyo via Aoyama-dori Street and other streets. Look out the window at the scenery. Areas full of greenery and stylish streets where you will find interesting spots in the heart of Tokyo.



Between Omote-sando and Gaiemmae

This is a street lined with shops filled with sundries, small items and interior goods. These small shops are great for window shopping.

