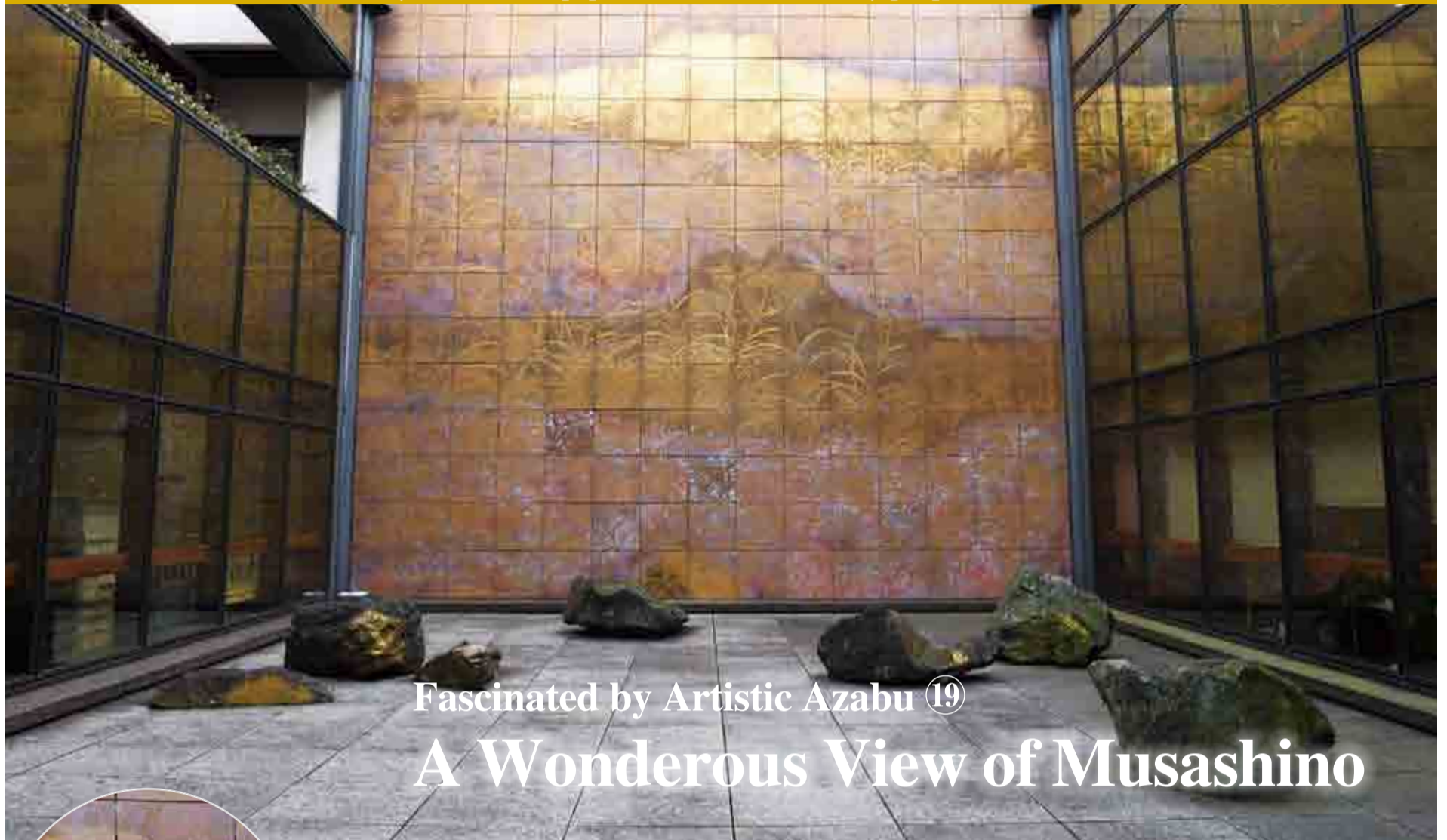


A community information paper created and edited by people who live in Azabu.



Fascinated by Artistic Azabu ①9 A Wonderous View of Musashino

An original landscape of Musashino spreads across the courtyard of the Azabu Regional City Office. The title of the artwork is “Musashino” by painter, Toshimitsu Imai (1928-2002), and is composed of ceramic murals and landscape stone. The illustration shows rows of golden autumn flowers and a bird’s-eye view of mountains and valleys from a distance. I wanted to introduce this to the readers again, although I’m sure that this is a place many already know about.

Perhaps Ceramic Murals Last Forever

The wall mural is divided into pieces of painted ceramic murals; in other words, a collection of painted ceramic tiles. The original painting is photographed first, then printed onto a silkscreen and created on a transfer sheet. After this process, it is a repetition of painting ⇒ printing” to create an overlap of the colors. Finally, at a relatively low temperature, the gold is painted and baked. This involves firing 210 pieces of ceramic plates for a total of four times. Halfway through the process, the painter himself, along with other craftsmen, would be present at the site to brush the work. As a result, the finished work is a creation of color and texture, and not just a mere extension of the replica of the original artwork. As it is created on ceramic tiles, the colors never fade. In addition, as the work is created in separate parts and fitted on the wall, it is possible to move the work in the future just as with the landscape stones. In two ways, this artwork can be stored permanently.

Toshimitsu Imai, who Initiated the Trend of Art Informel in Japan

The producer of this artwork, Toshimitsu Imai, was born in Kyoto. He grew up in a wealthy family, surrounded by calligraphy and antiques. He started showing his talent at painting from a young age. After graduating the former Musashi High School, a private school, he moved to Paris in 1952. This was where he became influenced by “art informel”, the most avant-garde art movement at the time. He became one of the leading artists and introduced this movement to Japan. It had a great influence on the Japanese art world of the time.

Art Informel: The term refers to many styles of abstract painting, and was used by the French critic Michel Tapié in 1952. It describes nonfigurative paintings and sculptures that often emphasize the artist’s emotional spontaneity. The movement spread mainly in France after the 2nd World War.



The changing expressions of the stone as the years pass. Incidentally, the Azabu Civic Center Hall is right below that.



People can observe the artwork through the glass at the back of the main entrance lobby of the Azabu Regional City Office.

This Artwork, Created During His “Nature-Loving” Days, and His Work Thereafter

This artwork, titled “Musashino,” was a part of Imai’s “Ka-Cho-Fu-Getsu” series (themes based on the beauty of nature) that he started painting during his days in Paris in 1983. This series was a considerable change from his abstract style of painting during the “art informel” era mentioned above. He explained in an interview (Yomiuri Shimbun, Jan. 15, 1987), “I realized, living abroad, that for Japanese paintings to be recognized as world-class means that we have to concentrate our work on the natural beauty of Japan.”

Imai continued to change his artistic style in his later years but remained very active throughout his life. He said, in his later years, “Japanese painters spend all their time copying artwork from abroad, or they end their careers by just replicating their own work. I do not want to live in one place during my lifetime, and will continue my journey, moving from path to path.” (Source: Yomiuri Shimbun, Dec. 11, 2000)

These are words that share a connection with the international city of Azabu, which does not stop changing even as it weaves the memories of history.

- **Data Collection Support:** Otsuka Ohmi Ceramics Co. Ltd. Yukio Matoba, Tetsuo Saito, Minato City Director General of Land and Facility Utilization
- **Research Reference:** “Ka-Cho-Fu-Getsu” by Toshimitsu Imai (BIJUTSU SHUPPAN-SHA Co. Ltd. 1989), Hiroyuki Horikawa, ed., “The Truth of Toshimitsu Imai” (Geijutsu-shuppansha Co., Ltd. 2003, Supervised by Hideji Takahashi, “European Art” (BIJUTSU SHUPPAN-SHA Co. Ltd. 2002)

(Data Collected and Written by Kumiko Omura)



A palace and waves painted lightly in a part of the mural, based on ancient paintings.

Unveiled in 1987

This artwork was unveiled at the same time as the completion ceremony of the current Azabu Regional City Office. Incidentally, the economy was beginning to pick up in the first half of the 1980’s when Minato City embarked on the architectural design. It was also at a time when the practice of including 1% of the total cost for arts and culture in the construction of public facilities, a movement which started in the West, had also begun in Japan. Therefore, the installation of the artwork was built into the budget from the beginning of the design.



Autumn flowers such as pampas grass, chrysanthemum and yellow patrinia drawn in multiple layers.



麻布ひと

Azabu - A Human Story

Tokyo Garden Co. Ltd.

Second-Generation Owner,
Toru Kobayashi (70)

Third-Generation Owner,
Hiroshi Kobayashi (36)



The Gift of the Heart. Delivering the Silent Gift of **Flowers** for 72 Years



Sakurada-dori Street can be seen as one exits from Iikura to the Kamiyacho crossing. In one of the corners of the office buildings in this area, there is a florist where the air is fresh and lush. This florist was founded in 1946. The owner of the business is Mr. Kobayashi and his family. Mr Kobayashi, who is also the Chairperson of the Iikura Town Council, received an Administration Achievement Award from Minato City in March this year. Father and son, from the first generation to the third generation, are dyed-in-the-wool residents of Azabu with deep roots in the district. We interviewed Toru Kobayashi, the second-generation owner and Hiroshi Kobayashi, the third-generation owner of the shop.



The First-Generation Owner - A Man of Ideas

"My father was from Ojiya, Niigata prefecture. In those days, the second and third sons all had to leave the family to pursue their careers elsewhere, except for the first-born son. My father came to Tokyo and went to Tokyo Prefectural Gardening School¹. It was a school with a long history, and he was in the 24th graduating class. He studied general horticulture and botany under Prof. Makino², travelling around the world with him to help him collect seeds and later working on classifying them. Later, he went to mainland China as an employee of Manchuria Railway³ and was engaged in railroad construction for approximately 10 years. He returned to Japan after the war and started to live in Azabudai. This was because we had relatives who were running a hospital in Kamiyacho. This was postwar Japan and florists weren't busy during the summer season, so he would call the weather service to inquire about the temperature for the day and sold ice-cream as well, which in those days was quite unusual. He would purchase the ice-cream from Yukiirushi, pair up a boy from Keio University with a female college student, and have them sell the ice-cream around the Imperial Palace and Hibiya Park. Kuniko Mukoda⁴, who was working part-time at the florist at the time, wrote about those days in her essay titled 'Student Ice-Cream'. This only continued from around 1946 to 1952, until the major corporations entered the ice-cream sales line, but he started a business that no one had been engaged in with his classmate, and it thrived at the time. He also bought a 108-tsubo piece of land and opened his shop. He carried soil in his large hand-drawn cart, spread it across Shiba Park, and trimmed the land. That was how 'Tokyo Garden' started."

¹ The school was founded in 1908 and is the present-day Tokyo Metropolitan Engei High School.

² Tomitaro Makino (botanist), known as "Father of Japanese Botany".

³ The South Manchurian Railroad was also introduced in the 9th Edition of The AZABU "Phenomena of Azabu: From Azabu to Dalian The Railway Connecting the Lines" (Mar. 2009 Issue). The Tokyo Branch Office was located at Mamiana Cho, Azabu Ward (where the American Club is presently located at Azabudai 2 chome)

⁴ Playwright and novelist who is representative of the Showa era. In "Student Ice Cream", which is recorded in Chichi no Wabijo (Bungeishunju Ltd.), she writes about the summer of 1984 when she lived with her grandmother's family from her mother's side at Azabu Ichibeicho (present-day Roppongi 1 Chome), wittily describing the struggles and successes of the time when she was working part-time selling ice-cream.

Second-2nd Generation Owner, - A Sociable Man Well-Loved by Everyone

Toru, who is Chairperson of the Iikura Town Council, said he is from the Baby Boomer generation. He told us about taking down many notes when learning about trees from the first-generation owner, Masao, who was well versed in botany. However, his shop and the flower industry⁵ had changed, going through phases such as economic growth, the flower boom, the bursting of the bubble economy, and urban redevelopment. The townscape changed with the passing of time and the impact of the recession. "During my father's time when things were scarce, I did everything as the florist of the town, from caring for the customer's garden to changing the flowers for the altar. Remember that in the past when someone died, one would contact the florist. Now, one contacts the undertaker, who hires professionals to handle it. A florist's job has also been subdivided into finer categories, such as funeral flowers, bridal specialists, and gift specialists. We put in a lot of effort for gift flowers, especially the Phalaenopsis Orchid, which is top in quality. That's what I'm proud of." Toru, who is also the Director of the Metropolitan and National Florists Union, not only promotes local development but also busily engaged in a wide range of fields, using his personal connections to promote flowers. The third-generation owner, Hiroshi, sighs at his father who stresses on the importance of interpersonal ties and says, "He's such a soft-hearted person that he would lay aside his work and go to change lightbulbs if a customer should contact him to say that their lightbulb has blown." He told us that his father, Toru, would go out of his way to even arrange trips or buy tickets if someone asked for his help. One can see that Toru, the second-generation owner, is a true-born, warm-hearted "Edokko" (child of Edo).



⁵ Decorative plants such as cut flowers and potted flowers are called "ornamental flowers". "Ornamental flowers" are the same as perishable food, and storage temperature is important. The stress placed on the flowers affects their freshness when they are being transported. Similar to vegetables and fruits, the production volume and price changes depending on the climate or natural disasters.



a.



b.

a. Masao Kobayashi (deceased), the first-generation owner during his days at the Tokyo Prefectural Gardening School. Born in 1913.

b. There was a time when two businesses, a florist and a beauty salon, were established under the same roof based on the idea that women would probably be happy if a beauty salon were side-by-side with a florist.

The Third-Generation Owner - A Great Catcher

Hiroshi told us, "My father enrolled me in a private elementary school, so I didn't attend Azabu Elementary School, which my father went to." Hiroshi didn't want to take over the family business since he grew up watching his father working from the early hours of the morning until late at night handling flowers, which have to be kept fresh. Hence, he joined a major corporation after graduating from university. After he started working as an adult, he gradually became interested in the business of the shop and felt a sense of responsibility as the oldest son in the family. He resigned from the company he had been working for and started working in the market. After learning through this work at the market, he finally succeeded the family business. Eight years have passed since then. "For us, the most important motto is the ability to respond. I only carry products that I feel I can be confident about. Of course, you have to be aware of whether the quality is good or bad, but above all, I think that a relationship with the customers based on trust is of the greatest importance, so they can come to us with peace of mind. Speed is also important, and we're always prepared to respond to our customers. It takes 7 years for the Phalaenopsis Orchid to grow to this point, and it is expensive. These days, there are farmers who use cloning technology to accelerate the growth of flowers so that they can be ready in time for the shipping period. Flowers do not last long when you grow them that way. One can also bid for products over the website at home now, but I think that business is based on interpersonal relationships, so I think that it is important for me to go to the market, check the flowers with my own eyes, and feel confident about purchasing them. This is because we are delivering the customer's feelings and heart in the form of a flower." This attitude of the third-generation owner was reflected in each of the flowers lining the storefront radiantly.



The third-generation owner constantly paying attention to prevent the the wealth of topics being discussed from getting sidetracked.

The shop looks so new that one can't tell that it has been 72 years since it was founded. It is a testament to the saying, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." This is a true Azabu Human Story that symbolizes the new and old of the town.

(Graphic resources designed by Freepik.com)



The second-generation owner, Toru Kobayashi, who is also a representative of the local Nishikubo Hachiman Shrine, has left the business to the third-generation owner, and is now actively traveling around Japan. His transportation is the Super Cub, which is a flexible vehicle for getting around with. He has even gone on a 18-night, 19-day trip on his bike from Tokyo to Hokkaido, Aomori to the side of the Japan Sea.



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Republic of Lithuania

Area: 65,000 km²
 Population: 2.81 million people (As of Jan. 2018, Lithuania Bureau of Statistics)
 Capital City: Vilnius
 Language: Lithuanian
 Head of State: President Dalia Grybauskaitė
 Legislature: Unicameral System
 (Number of seats: 141, four-year term)

Reference: Ministry of Foreign Affairs website
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/lithuania/index.html>

Republic of Lithuania

Gediminas Varvuolis,
 Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
 the Republic of Lithuania to Japan

Interview Support:
 Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Japan

Lithuania

Visiting Ambassadors 45

From the "World"
 of Azabu



It is still fresh in everyone's memory that Lithuania, which is one of the Baltic countries, regained its independence in 1990. However, 2018 marked its centennial since it became an independent republic from Czarist Russia in 1918.

We interviewed Gediminas Varvuolis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as "Ambassador"), who was appointed to Japan in April 2018, coinciding with a milestone year for the Embassy.

Impressions of Japan

The Moto-azabu area is a quiet residential area. The Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Japan is located at the top of Tanuki-zaka Slope. We asked the Ambassador about his impression of Japan and Azabu. "I was only here for one week when I first visited Japan in 2013 and I liked it very much, so I am very happy to be posted to Japan. Tokyo is a big city where you look down on the city from the high-rise buildings. However, one notices many small houses in Azabu when walking around, giving it a very warm, homely feeling that is easy to live in. The embassy is a short walk from my residence. There are a lot of slopes so it is good exercise." He has also seen the "mikoshi" (portable shrine) at the Azabujuban Autumn Festival.

He told us that he likes all Japanese food, but his favorite is sushi. "I can eat any sushi. I think Lithuanian people like sushi." The Japanese food that has left an impression on him is ramen, and he said with a smile that it is a soothing dish to eat after a long trip back from Lithuania. These days, he often goes to his favorite shop in the Azabujuban Shopping Arcade. We also asked him what was hard for him to eat. After saying it is difficult to find such a food, he thought hard and replied, "The raw eggs you eat with sukiyaki."

Craft Beer, a Secret Specialty?

The Ambassador comes from Pasvalys, which is close to the northern part of the border. It is a small town with a population of 10,000 people,



(Top) Lithuania specialty, vividly-colored beet soup
 (Bottom) Craft beer, which is gaining popularity these days
 © www.vilnius-tourism.lt

and the soil is rich and thrives with agriculture. It is also famous for its craft beer, and in olden times, the beer would also be brewed at home in each house. The town of Biržai is renowned in Lithuania for its beer breweries with their traditional breweries. This history goes back to the 11th century and the mineral-rich hard water creates unique beer. Perhaps because there is a lot of delicious beer, the average beer consumption of a Lithuanian is double that of a Japanese and Lithuania is ranked among the top ten in the world. Import of Lithuanian beer started from July 2018, and there is a restaurant in Tokyo where one can enjoy Lithuanian beer as well. If you are interested, why not drop by and try it out?

When we asked the Ambassador about home cooking, he introduced us to "balandeliai". This is a Lithuanian stuffed cabbage dish made with ground meat and served with locally-produced potatoes. Looking happy, he said, "My mother's



balandeliai is the best in the world!" Pink-colored beet soup is a national dish that is served throughout the year, cold in summer and warm during the winter. Although we don't get to see Lithuanian dishes very often, the Lithuanian Embassy actively participates in local events such as the Minato Citizens' Festival and Azabujuban Summer Festi-



Curonian Spit © Gintaras Vitulskis

val, so do drop by and try these out if you get the opportunity.

The Invisible Bond that Connects Both Countries

We asked the Ambassador about the common points between Lithuania and Japan.

Lithuania was the last country in Europe to be converted to Christianity, and he told us that he felt the similarity between Japan and Lithuania lies in the fact that before Christianity, both cultures had worshiped nature such as spirits and trees. Another unexpected fact was that Lithuanians also have the custom of taking off their shoes before going indoors. He told us, "Although I'm in a faraway country, I feel a sense of nostalgia in Japan."

Everyone knows that the diplomat, Chiune Sugihara, saved the lives of 6,000 Jews during wartime in Lithuania. There is a street in Lithuania's capital of Vilnius named "Sugihara Street", as well as "Sugihara House" at the consulate in Kaunas, which was the capital at that time. When we asked the Ambassador about Mr. Sugihara, he said, "That is a very good question." He went on passionately, "Mr. Sugihara is a hero of Lithuania and is also the bridge linking Japan and Lithuania. He taught us that even in adverse situations, just one person can have the power to change things. Kaunas celebrates Sugihara Week and even today, acknowledges his achievements. As a diplomat, I have utmost respect as for his actions, and words cannot describe it all. I cherish the relationship between the two countries based on the ties that he created."

The Future Relationship Between the Two Countries

More and more Japanese tourists are visiting Lithuania, and this number has doubled in the past five years. We asked him some spots he would recommend for visitors, and he told us Trakai Island



A World Heritage site. The old town of Vilnius, founded in the 13th century © www.vilnius-tourism.lt



Chiune Sugihara, known as the "Schindler of Japan"
 His achievements have been featured in "The AZABU 34th Issue"

Castle, an island located on the lake, as well as the streets of the old towns of Vilnius, the capital, and Kaunas that he had mentioned earlier. He also mentioned the Curonian Spit, a unique place with its beautiful sand dunes and forest. He told us that it is a spot with a lovely fragrance, and that smoked fish caught here is also a specialty. It is also a place where one can enjoy Lithuania with their all of their five senses.

Women have been playing an active role in Lithuanian society starting from the first female president in its history, who entered office in 2009. Female employees account for half of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and are posted to the United Nations and other countries. The Ambassador said, "Both men and women leverage their performance and experience, and cooperate with each other to produce good results. I would like for women to continue to be active in diplomacy, politics and business in the future." This is something we need to learn from Lithuania. On the other hand, he said that one of the things he would like to learn from Japan is its efforts to maintain health. The Ambassador said, "Senior citizens in Japan are working energetically with vitality, so I would like to learn about the country's measures." This might help in providing hints to resolving the issues faced by both countries.

Although Lithuania is far away, it shares many things in common with Japan, and the more we heard about the country, the more we wanted to learn about it. There is also a bond that has been fostered by our predecessors, and we have heard that many of its people feel a sense of affinity towards Japan. We would also like to forge closer ties with this country.

Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania
<https://jp.mfa.lt/jp/jp>
 Moto Azabu 3-7-18, Minato City

➔ Refer to p. 5 for the map

The Tree Moved! With Human Power!

Moving the Large Camphor Tree Inside Arisugawa-no-Miya Park in Minami-azabu

Executed on July 26, 2018

Those living in the vicinity probably already know. This summer, the camphor tree near the south-east side entrance on the hill of the park was implanted approximately 10 meters inwards. This was executed under the traditional Japanese method of the “standing stringing method” which had no precedent in Minato City. I wanted to record all the details of this exceptional work by observing the work on site and interviewing those related to the project from Minato City and the landscaping company.



Sept. 16, Approximately a month and a half from the transplantation. It will be necessary to monitor the tree's condition carefully for at least five years.

The Transplantation Method Was Considered Carefully

Minato City started construction on widening the road from the Nanbu-zaka Slope to Sendai-zaka Slope (, City Planning Road No. 9, to be precise) from 2016. The need to move some of the camphor trees inside Arisugawa-no-Miya Park arose with this project. The plan was to preserve as many of the trees as possible by transplanting them if they were in a good condition. One of the trees chosen for this project was the giant camphor tree in the park. This giant tree had a trunk with a diameter of close to 3m and was 18m tall. Fortunately, there was no bacterial damage to the tree and it did not have to be cut down.

Cranes are typically used to transplant trees. However, quite some space is required in order to horizontally lift the tree and it was determined that it would be difficult to use a crane for the camphor. Another method involves putting the tree on a trailer truck, however, this would have damaged the surrounding environment quite a lot. Therefore, the last resort considered was the “standing stringing method”. This method is literally done by using wooden tools and moving the whole tree in a standing position, which minimizes the damage to the tree. This is a traditional method which was used at the end of the Edo period and a method that takes time and a lot of manpower. Numerous tools have to be used and not many workers have the skills to store the tools properly. It is not a method that can be easily implemented in the modern days. The task was entrusted to a landscaping company founded in 1849 that has passed this technique down through the generations.

“Digging Around the Root” of the Tree and “Root Wrapping” in Advance

Preparation of the transplantation began in April, 2017. The ground around the tree needed to be dug up, then the thick roots were cut, tree medicines and fertilizers were applied and then it had to be backfilled. The work of “digging around the root” is done so that the fine roots grow smoothly after the transplantation. The word “nemawashi” (which shares the same pronunciation) means laying the groundwork before a conversation. However, this is only an expression. The true meaning of the word relates to the transplantation work. That was an interesting discovery.

“Root wrapping” took place six months prior to the transplantation. The work consisted of digging up the ground again and the covering entire root clump was to be covered with a non-woven fabric. A paper braid is threaded at 15 cm intervals in order to protect the fine roots that have grown in the past year. In addition, a knot is tied at each part where it intersects to prevent unraveling. A neighbor living close by watched the work on the camphor tree from over his fence every day and said he was surprised at the 6m (in diameter) root clump which appeared. He said it has a compelling and delicate geometric pattern and resembled like a piece of traditional art.

A Huge Spectacular Show!

On July 26th, when the long heat wave abated a little, the big day came. There must have been a total of 30-40 people who gathered on the day. I was also there with a helmet to watch and report on this work.

All the equipment for the transplantation was ready. That alone was impressive. A deep groove is dug in the direction that the tree will be moved in and the landing place mounted with soil 10m away is visible. Rollers and loading ramps are set along the way to the tree's destination. The tree mounted on a grid like device is wrapped with wires. These wires, via a pillar, are connected to a winding machine, the “hand winch.” *The hand winch is operated manually, the wire is pulled and the tree slides onto the loading ramp and moves. This mechanism, applying the principle of a pulley, allows the estimated 80ton camphor tree to be moved with only about eight people, each person with a force of 6.2 kg.

At 10 o'clock, the workers start shouting “yoisho, yoisho” and turning the hand winch. However, the tree does not move far immediately. Parts of the hand winch that float upwards and the wire do not wind smoothly. A mallet is used to reduce the “floating.” Then, the tree starts moving, slowly and smoothly. I do not remember how many times this was repeated. In the end, at 10:50 it had moved 1m 50 cms, 3m at 11:10, and 6m at 11:38, finally, it arrived safely at the landing point at 12 o'clock. Passers-by also were watching this work intently from the other side of the fence. Each time the camphor moved, you could hear the sighs of everyone there.

It felt this was a golden opportunity to witness the transplantation of this giant tree by using only tools from the past, manually, when today everything is controlled by equipment and computers.

The camphor is now standing there as if nothing had happened, surrounded by a bamboo fence. The tree must have gone through a difficult time, having its roots cut and being pulled by wires. My dear wish is that it takes firm root and shows us its soft young leaves.



The afternoon of the day the transplantation started. The tree finally arrives at the landing platform. The trajectory is adjusted with the koro in front and michiita. After this, the part inserted below the grid-like table is detached and the soil is backfilled the next day.



The root clump I saw witnessed on July 17, the day before the transplantation.

Standing stringing method

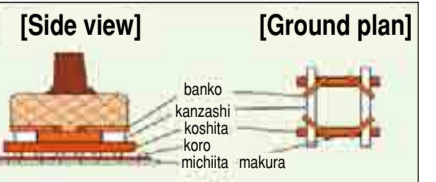
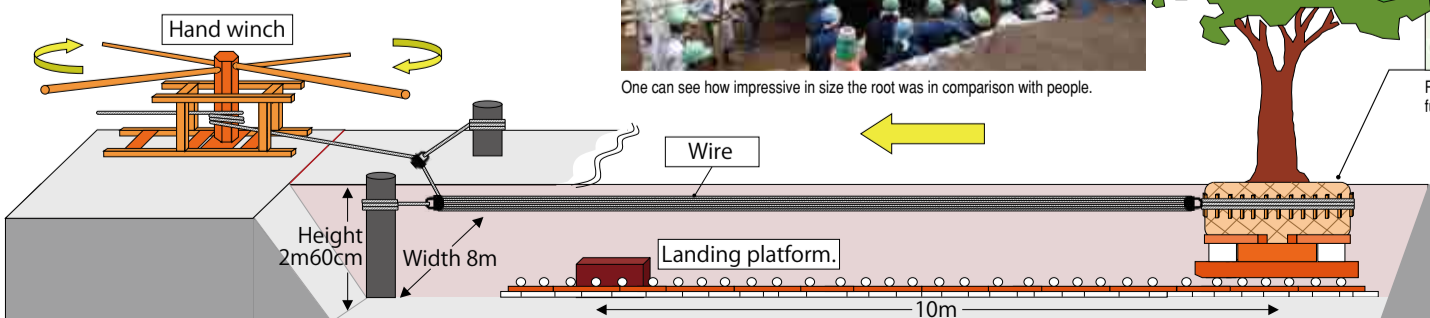


Female staff also turns the hand winch to move the giant tree. It doesn't look that difficult.

*The origin of the hand winch has its roots in a pulley that was used to pull up whales by whalers in Nagasaki Prefecture at the end of the Edo period and the movements are said to resemble the Kagura Mai (sacred music and dancing performed at shrines). This device was used in the landscape industry.



One can see how impressive in size the root was in comparison with people.



Rather than lifting the tree and putting it on the grid-like table, the soil is further dug up further under the root clump and parts are inserted.

● Data Provided by: FUJI UEKI Co., Ltd. Figure uses to correct some of the things that were created by Ise Landscape Contractors (Ltd.) The illustration shows the device which was created by Ise Landscape Contractors (Ltd.) which was adjusted.

● Refer to P5 for the map

(Data Collected by: Misaho Kasho, Aki Tanaka Written by: Aki Tanaka)



- ① Arisugawa-no-Miya Memorial Park is on the right side and on the left is the German Embassy is on left. The wall of the embassy did not exist then.
- ② Currently, the street lights have been reformed and although they are surrounded by the wall, one can see a far.
- ③ The National Supermarket on the right hand side is under renovation.
- ④ Although you can't see it in this picture, the National Supermarket existed from those days. The signage by the parking entrance brings back fond memories.

and far from the fact. However, what is interesting is the presence of the ancestors evolving around "centipede extermination," and Princess (Otake).

Tawara no Tota

The ancestor of these two was Hidesato Fujiwara (Fujiwara no Hidesato). He was a war lord of the Kanto region during the mid-Heian era, and it was he who struck Taironomasakado. Hidesato became a legend was born because of his heroic exploits and his virtuosity with the bow and arrow. He was called "centipede mountain." One day when Hidesato was going to cross the bridge over to Seta of the Omi country, he came across a giant serpent. He just trampled the serpent without any hesitation and crossed the bridge. That night, a girl came to him told him that she was the incarnation of the serpent and that she was the daughter of the Dragon King of Lake Biwa". She said she came to ask for his help as she was suffering off a large centipede that was winding itself seven and a half times around Mount Mikami. Hidesato readily agreed to help her and exterminated the giant centipede. There was "bottomless" a bag of rice among the goods she brought as a reward to him. It was through this legend that his name became "Tawara no Toda." Tota represents Taro of Fujiwara, and the family is known to have produced a line of master samurais along with Genji and Heishi. ,

Tota no En

Legend was born after legend because of Otake and Ujisato Gam because they were from the Fujiwara no Hidesato family. It is very mysterious because Kuranosuke Oishi mentioned earlier is also an ancestor of the Hidesato family. "Chushingura" is a story (fictional story) based on facts. However, it is hard to believe that Fujiwara no Hidesato would have been in the center of the story of "Nanbuzaka Yuki no Wakare." The "relative replacement" of the Nanbu Family was the Asano Family, and that 2 Nanbuzaka slopes did not yet exist. Is it only me that feels this "tota no en"? In other words, it was meant to be? By the way, although Otake who is said to have been the incarnation of the centipede princess and also cursed" lived to the ripe age of 91. It is said that there was an uproar when her tomb was being built and that the chief priest of the temple settled this by holding a memorial service. Incidentally, the Nanbu Family which received the "arrowhead" soon after attained status and the Nanbu Family kept their family lineage even after the Meiji era.



* ①, ⑥ photographed by: Masanori Taguchi Provided by: Shigehisa Taguchi

The Azabu Future Photo Studio

— Fate with the Past-Nanbu-zaka Slope —

Nanbu-zaka Slope

The season is nearing the mid-winter. I just remembered that December 14 was the raid by the Ako warriors. The Gishi Festival is held every year at the Sen-gakuji Temple in Takanawa. One might think that this has nothing to do with Azabu. Yet we might learn otherwise after some research. I would like to pursue this "fate."

The 2 Nanbu-zaka Slopes

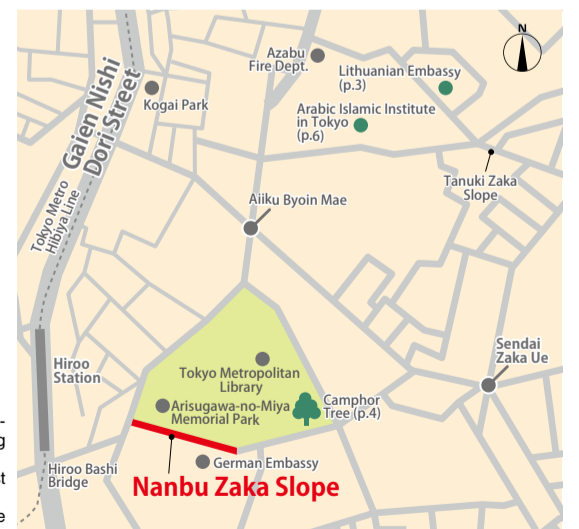
This slope is one of the relatively steep slopes in the Azabu district. The name derives from the fact that the residence of the Nanbu Morioka clan stood where Arisugawa-no-Miya Memorial Park is today. The kanji for "slope" forms part of the place name Akasaka for the same reason. It is the slope where one of the scenes of Chushingura known as "Nanbuzaka Yuki no Wakare" (the parting in the snow at Nanbuzaka) takes place. That is the scene in which Oishi goes to bid farewell to Asano Takumi no Kami's wife, Yozeiin. That farewell is due to a "relative replacement," some forced movements of family members (which the Tokugawa shogunate used as a means of controlling the nobles) between the emergency refuge (Nanbu Family) of the Morioka Clan and the suburban residence (Asano Family). In short, Nanbu Zaka Slope in Azabu is newer and the Ako clan suburban residence was located there before Arisugawa-no-Miya Memorial Park.

Princess Centipede

Allow me to get sidetracked a little further sidetracked. There is an eerie, yet an interesting episode about the Nanbu Family. One day it is decided that the founding lord of the Morioka Nanbu clan, Toshinao Nanbu should get a wife. The candidate was Princess Otake (about whom there is also a theory she was the sister-in law) of Ujisato Gamo who also appeared in our 44th edition. The gift that she brought for her wedding was the "catfish ax tail helmet" (swallowtail-shaped helmet). It is said that the Nanbu Family was taken aback to receive such a gift. It is also said that the princess's father, Ujisato, wanted to prove that they were a venerable pedigree by having her take an arrowhead that was used by their ancestor's to exterminate centipedes. This is because the bride's marriage gift was a helmet and arrowhead! This may have been the reason from the beginning. However, when she died, a pattern of a centipede crawling around appeared. It was said that the people were scared. They said that it was the "curse of the centipede." The lord arranged to create a moat to fend off the centipedes (because centipedes dislike water) and built the tomb with a bridge to cross over the moat. However, the bridge was destroyed overnight and no matter how many times it was rebuilt, centipedes would appear and destroy it. Finally, centipedes of all sizes appeared which would appear around the tomb and Otake's hair turned into a one-eyed snake, which would crawl out from the gaps in the stone wall. Of course, this is a story, that was an oral tradition



The Nanbu Family cherished Ujisato's parental love of handing over his precious "helmet". It's proof that the "ties" of the past still exists in our current days. Photograph provided by: Iwate Prefectural Museum



About the Azabu Future Photo Studio

The Azabu Regional City Office conducts activities that endeavor to capture the changes to the cityscape of Azabu, preserving and passing down its history, in order to contribute to strengthening the affection of the town among residents.

The Azabu Regional City Office has been organizing activities, working together with local residents and businesses to collect old photographs of the Azabu region, as well as taking photographs at fixed-point locations with the Azabu Future Photo Studio Association. At the same time, the project aims to make the history and culture of the town known to even more people, contributing to strengthening their affection for the town. The photographs collected are introduced as panels in the Minato City homepage and through exhibitions.

The Azabu Future Photo Studio is looking for old photographs.

If you have any old photographs of the Azabu region that you feel should be preserved and passed on with a view to the future, please contact the Azabu Regional City Office. For details, please contact the Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration, Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office.

Inquiries: Tel: 03-5114-8812



Chef Azig Lahsan who has lived in Japan for 23 years is from Morocco. He speaks good Japanese. On the right is Yuichi Sato.



Halal Cuisine with Relish

Have you heard of the word “halal”? When you drop by the supermarkets in the Azabu area where they have many foreign customers, food which has received halal certification for Muslim people can be found in the halal food corner. I decided to attend the “Seminar on Islamic Food Culture” held at Arabic Islamic Institute in Tokyo (AIIT) while exploring the meaning of halal.



Arabic Islamic Institute in Tokyo, which towers over a corner of the Moto Azabu residential area.



1

Learning about “Halal” and “Haram”

AIIT is run by the Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and was established in 1982 to strengthen relations between Japan and the Arabic Islamic world. There are over 200 million people in the world who speak Arabic and it is one of the United Nations official languages.

One of the intensive courses held several times a year is the “Arabic Cooking Class,” a 5- day course that anyone can participate in. The course, in which the participants get to actually take cooking lessons, is mostly held by female teachers in Arabic, sometimes mixing in some Japanese and English. There are other diverse courses as well, such as Arabic calligraphy, and learning about the Arabic script. The course schedule is available on the AIIT’s website and one can easily apply (<http://www.aii-t.org>).

On the other hand, what I am going to introduce this time is a seminar on Islamic food culture and actually tasting the dishes without doing any cooking practice. Dr. Nasser Mohammed S. Al-Omaim also accepts applications from nonprofit organizations, institutes who are active in Minato City, as well as from the History Guide Club of the Minato Senior Citizens' Employment Center, given his intention to prioritize interaction with the local community. Mr. Yuichi Sato, a fellow researcher of AIIT who has resided in Saudi Arabia for many years, was the lecturer. Allow me to summarize the lecture I received.

Although it is generally known that there are many Muslims in the Middle East, there are also many followers of Islam in Asia in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Bangladesh and in African countries. Islamic food culture is found all over the world, however, there is a common teaching, which is that “meals are considered a part of the religion” and consequently foods (among other things) are divided into the “halal” and the “haram.” Halal and haram are universal terms that apply to all facets of life. Halal means lawful or permitted and haram means unlawful or prohibited. Pork and alcohol are considered as haram and so are not consumed.

Pork and alcohol are considered as “haram” so it is not eaten nor drank.

Muslims must pray five times per day. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and the month is spent by Muslims fasting during the daylight hours from dawn to sunset. Meals are taken late at night during this period. Our solar calendar consists of 365 days a year and the Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar consisting of 12 months in a year of 354 days. The reason why the period of Ramadan falls on different dates every year is because it's based on the Islamic calendar. By the way, in 2019, Ramadan will fall from May 5 to June 3.

The Islamic food culture prohibits pork and alcohol, because these are deemed not to be halal. Beef, chicken and sheep are typically eaten; however, strictly speaking, the animal must be slaughtered by a Muslim. Participants were surprised at this unexpected rule for preparing food.

The participants were surprised at this unexpected rule of preparing the food.

When Mr. Sato’s lecture was drawing to a close, he said, “I think you now understand the difference between the meaning of the word halal and haram so, I would like to give you a quiz. Is this food halal or haram?”

What appeared on the screen was a snack that we all knew. I thought that it did not contain either pork or alcohol. However, the ingredient panel printed on the back mentioned that some

pork extract was used in the ingredients. So it was actually haram.

“What about this?” and Mr. Sato showed us a can of plum wine. A participant said, “haram” because it looked like alcohol. Yet when I looked at it carefully it was labelled “0.00% alcohol.” Hence, because it was not actually alcohol it could be consumed—it was a halal food product.

Today’s Main Meal

We went on a tour of AIIT after the seminar. Men and women have separate prayer spaces; we went to the library where the Quran is translated into languages of the world; and then to an area where people wash their faces, hands and feet before praying. Chef Lahsan had prepared with pride some halal cuisine for us in the dining room. It was a buffet style meal with a simple explanation of the recipe for each dish.

People tend to have an image that, because the Arabic Islamic world encompasses several hot countries, the Arab halal meal is likely to be spicy. There were 14 large plates prepared with the menu consisting of hummus (chickpea-based paste), moussaka (deep fried eggplants and minced meat), grilled lamb Saudi style “kharoof mashwi” as the main dish, and many more dishes. Rice is eaten in Saudi Arabia; since it can’t be harvested, however, indica rice is imported. Couscous, which is known in Japan, was served with plenty of vegetables. For dessert, everyone’s favorite, custard pudding and dough made into a thin noodle like pastry called kunafah was served.

Traditionally, one sits on the floor and uses his or her right hand to eat with. But this time we sat at a table and enjoyed the meals with a fork and spoon. The food was very popular and I could hear people saying things such as “I’m surprised there were no spicy dishes,” “everything is so easy to eat and mild in taste,” “this is my first experience of this kind of food and everything is delicious.”

The “Seminar on Islamic Food Culture” started with “have you heard of the word “halal”?” The event was one I could feel an affinity with, through the lecture and the meals served. It was an enjoyable and delicious assignment that made me feel it would be so nice if halal food culture were more widely known in Japan through understanding the Muslim religion and various halal cuisines.

Cooperation with:
Arabic Islamic Institute in Tokyo
3-4-18 Moto Azabu, Minato City Tel: 03-3404-6622

➡ Refer to P5 for the map



2



3

1 Dr. Nasser Alomaim, Director of AIIT.

2 Mr. Sato lectured in an easy-to-understand way using slides.

3 A dynamic dish made from grilled lamb “kharoof mashwi,” pita bread and salad.

4 Hummus, which is made from mashed chickpeas, delicious with bread.

5 Couscous is a representative Moroccan dish. Steamed durum wheat served with stewed vegetables.

6 Moussaka is also a Greek dish made from eggplants and minced meat. Japanese people love this dish.

7 A very appealing cream caramel “custard pudding.”



4



6



5



7



A very hearty buffet of dishes.



The mosque has separate entrances for men and women.



Community Businesses Recorded in the Minato City Basic Plan / Azabu District Basic Plan

The Minato City Basic Plan/Azabu District Basic Plan established in March 2017 was revised by the Azabu Regional City Office in March this year based on changes in the district and verification of progress towards the plan's measures.

Three projects from the nine recorded in the Azabu District Basic Plan will be introduced.

* The planning period is for six years from 2015, and covers the last three-year period from 2018 to 2020.

For the Azabu District Basic Plan, access here:
Minato City website:
<http://www.city.minato.tokyo.jp/>



About district projects

This is a project to progress a three-year plan focusing on priorities that reflect the state of affairs of and unique issues facing Azabu and providing measures to resolve those issues.

Town Improvements: The "Minayoku" Project



The project will target people mainly in their 20s and 40s and involve holding a seminar ("Mina-Yoku") to gain knowledge (learning how to generate ideas), emotion (understanding the actual conditions of the district and listening to discussions), create (thinking about how to make the district better) and bring everyone together (creating excitement together with people of the district).

The City will continue to support cooperation between the project participants and the district for work in the local community toward realizing the ideas generated.

Azabu Future Photo Studio: Memories of Azabu Passed Down to the Next Generation

The "Azabu Future Photo Studio Sub-Committee-To Talk About Azabu" is a group of residents leading activities around collecting old photographs of the Azabu district, shooting fixed point photographs and preserving images of the changes in the area.

A display of photo panels will be open to the public with panel exhibits provided in association with corporations, universities and other regional businesses and ICT (information communication technology).

Inquiries: Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office
 Tel.: 03-5114-8812

AZABU WORLD FESTA

AZABU WORLD FESTA, taking advantage of the cosmopolitan features of the area, will create opportunities for people of all nationalities, from children to the elderly, to interact and enjoy tours of cultural and historical assets with the cooperation of shopping malls, embassies, corporations and the local administration to promote interest in Azabu.



Regional Activities: Minami Azabu Fujimicho Town Council Festival

The Minami Azabu Fujimicho Town Council Festival was held on Saturday, Sept. 15 and Sunday, Sept. 16, 2018.

The Minami Azabu Fujimicho Town Council has maintained exchanges with the French Embassy, the local foreign diplomatic mission, and the New Sanno U.S. Forces Center through festivals, and this year the portable shrine visited the Ambassador's residence.



This year marked the resumption of visits by the portable shrine to the Ambassador's residence (after a three-year break) thanks to the efforts of Ambassador Laurent Pic of the Embassy of France, Embassy Minister Jean-Baptiste Lesecq and Motosuke Kiiyohara, Chairperson of the Minami Azabu Fujimicho Town Council. A grand reception was held with approximately 400 town council members gathered to enjoy the delicious wine and food that the Embassy prepared. There was a statement from the Embassy that they would like to continue the cooperative relationship as a member of the local community.

Why Not Come and Enjoy Japanese Folk Songs? - AZABU WORLD FESTA -

Japanese folk songs, an ancient Japanese traditional culture familiar to many people, continue to be sung even today. Why not come and enjoy the soothing, beautiful tunes played by the Minato Folk Song Association? We welcome the participation of foreign nationals. (English interpretation will be available)

Date: Mar. 31, 2019 (Sun.) 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Place: Azabu Civic Hall on B1 of the Azabu Regional City Office (5-16-45 Roppongi)
Capacity: 100 people
 * Child care will be available (4 months to pre-schoolers. Please apply at the time of registration.)
Applications: Minato Call (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) Deadline is Mar. 28 (Thurs.)
 TEL: 5472-3710

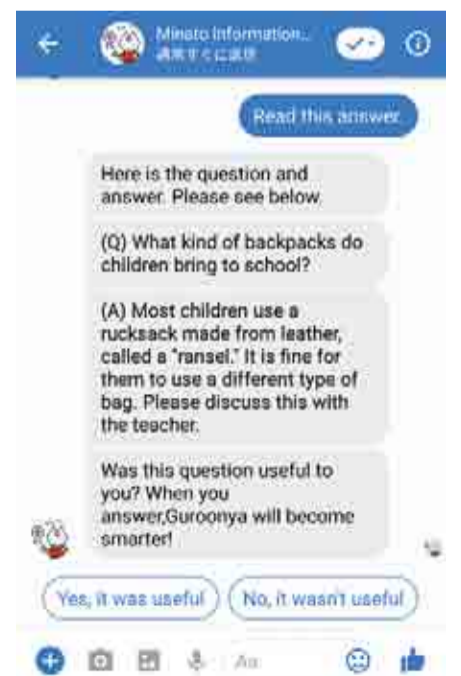
Inquiries: Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office
 TEL: 5114-8812

Daily life information guidance utilizing AI chat

In Minato City, the service was started utilizes AI (artificial intelligence) to automatically reply in a chat style with the pre-registered FAQ to inquiries on administrative information regarding daily life. AI chooses the appropriate response from within the pre-registered FAQ and replies.

The contents available for inquiries are "Disaster preparedness," "Waste disposal rules," "Public schools," "Childrearing," "International/culture events," "Health/Medical institutions," "Pension/Insurance/Tax," "Tourism," and "Neighborhood associations."

The more questions users ask AI, the smarter AI gets. AI will be able to answer the questions it could not answer in the past. Please ask AI as many questions as you can.



Language English and easy Japanese

How to use Users will be able to access any information they want by directly entering the keyword of the information they want to know through Facebook Messenger, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Facebook Messenger is free of charge. Access "Minato Information Board" which is the Facebook page on internationalization, culture and art. Inquiries can be made by "send message". The question is asked to the "Guroonya" icon. AI will select the appropriate answer from the FAQ's which have been registered in advance and respond in the form of a chat. The user will then select whether the information was useful or not.

How to access "Minato Information Board" Facebook page

- Access will be possible by the following 3 methods:
- Enter URL (<https://facebook.com/city.minato.mib/>)
- Search "Minato Information Board" on Facebook
- Scan the QR code

Inquiries: Global Community Planning Subsection, Community Promotion Section, Minato City

Information from Azabu Regional City Office



Fifth Anniversary of the Enactment of the "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind" —Further Efforts "Towards a Roppongi with Zero Violations"

Roppongi is transmitting the rules of the town

The "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind" was enacted on July 23, 2013 with rules for the district to provide safety and peace of mind in Roppongi through the cooperation of neighborhood associations, residents' associations, store associations, businesses, and concerned administrative organizations.

* "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind" is a unique code to position Roppongi district as a symbol of safety and peace of mind and, along with the declaration of what Roppongi aims to be, provide rules for everyone in the town to observe.



ルール違反 ゼロの六本木へ。
 合い言葉は、ZERO ROPPONGI
 Toward a Roppongi with ZERO violations.
 Our slogan is ZERO ROPPONGI

The "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind" is celebrating its fifth anniversary since enactment.

The "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind" celebrated its fifth anniversary since enactment in July, 2018. Various projects would be implemented under the slogan of "Further Efforts Towards a Roppongi with Zero Violations" capitalizing on this opportunity to bolster the place of rules and promote the bustle of the town.

Main Plans

Collaborative Plans with Stores and Businesses

We would have stores and businesses in Roppongi display introductory posters on ZERO-ROPPONGI, POPS and coasters. Shops and businesses of the district would work as a united team to make visitors to Roppongi aware of the "Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind."



Flags on the Roppongi Street Lights

A flag with a logo mark commemorating the fifth anniversary would be placed on the street lights of Roppongi mainly around the Roppongi crossing from Dec. 1 – 30.

Posting on Ground Transformers

The ZERO-ROPPONGI image sticker would be placed on 10 ground transformers owned by TEPCO mainly around the Roppongi crossing from Dec. 1.



* The photo is only an image

Shops and businesses that support the Charter are being recruited.

Shops and businesses who have agreed to the Charter and applied will have their business names disclosed publicly on the Minato City website. Please access the QR code link below for inquiries or refer to the information on recruitment available at the Azabu Regional City Office.



Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind QR code

Why not participate?

Campaign activities with neighborhood associations, residents' associations, store associations, businesses, and concerned administrative organizations are conducted once a month with the main themes "Cleaning and Enlightenment Activities" and "Patrol for Prevention of Touting."

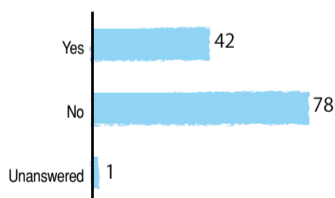
If you are interested in our activities, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Inquiries: Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office.
Tel: 03-5114-8802

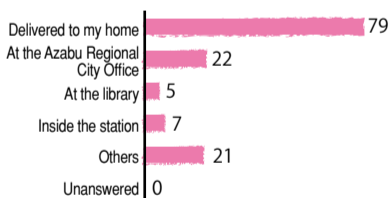
"The Azabu" 42nd Edition Survey Results

Thank you very much for cooperating in the survey. Please see below for the survey results and feedback we received.

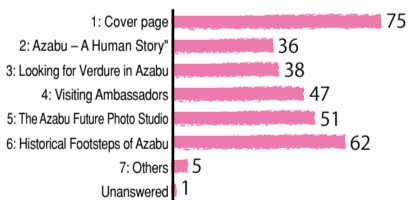
Did you know that the articles introduced in "The Azabu" were interviews and editing work conducted by recruited residents?



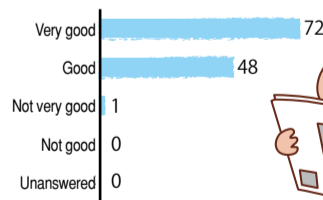
How do you rate the "The Azabu"?



What was the article that interested you in the 42nd Edition? Which articles did you find moving?



What was the article that interested you in the 42nd Edition? Which articles did you find moving?



The following are some of the feedback we received.

- I always enjoy reading The Azabu. I look forward to the future editions!
- I would like to know what kind of shop or area within Minato City the foreign people who live in Minato City enjoy going to. I would also like to know where the children play.
- Please introduce articles featuring Disaster Preparedness.
- It's been over 10 years since I started living in this area and I have been able to learn through the articles that there are many precious historical assets in the area. I feel that Azabu will continue to experience change (redevelopment etc.). However, I would like you to continue to pass down precious historical stories to the next generation. I also enjoy seeing the old photographs that provide me with chances to see things I don't normally get to see.
- I always look forward to the next edition. I've lived in Roppongi for 70 years, but there are still so many things I don't know about and the articles present me with a pleasant surprise. I appreciate the young people on the staff collecting information by walking around everywhere. I am a graduate of Toyo Eiwa Gakuin and I sometimes send the articles to my classmates who don't live in Azabu anymore and they say they enjoy reading it. I continue to look forward to reading The Azabu.
- Historical footsteps. You have already introduced quite a lot and I look forward to knowing more. I want to become a resident who knows about the area, to enjoy and love living in this area. I look forward to going on walks with my friends when they visit me. The information introduced on "The Azabu" is very helpful and my friends also enjoy the walk.



From The Azabu's editing committee

Thank you very much for reading The Azabu. We would like to effectively use the comments we have received from everyone to create a more interesting community information paper. We look forward to your further support!

Going shopping? Visit our local shopping streets.

Please send us your comments or requests regarding **The Azabu**

Please send your application with your address, name, occupation (school name), telephone number, and the reason why you are interested (in Japanese or English, format and number of letters have no limit), and deliver directly, mail, or fax to the following:
 Community Policy Subsection Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office, 5-16-45, Roppongi, Minato City, Tokyo (106-8515).
 ● Tel: 03-5114-8812 ● Fax: 03-3583-3782

We are looking for **Editorial Staff**

You can also access this newsletter from the Minato City website.



AZABU

● Locations of the Newsletter: Roppongi 1-chome, Roppongi, Hiroo, Azabujuban and Akabanebashi subway stations, The Chii Bus, Minato Library, Azabu Library, Minami-azabu Iki-Iki Plaza, Nishi-azabu, Iki-Iki Plaza, Iigura Iki-Iki Plaza, Azabu Civic Center, Azabu Regional City Office, etc.
 ● Usage of articles, illustrations, and photographs from this newsletter is prohibited.

Chief Aki Tanaka
 Sub Chief Yukiko Takayanagi
 Staff Kyoko Ideishi, Marika Oba, Takehide Kasho, Misaho Kasho, Mimi S Koike, Emi Taoka

Editor's Note

In this edition's "The Azabu Future Photo Studio" we were able to introduce you to an actual fact about the Nambu Family residence which was located in the past where the Akasaka Hiei Shrine (before the Asano Family residence was built) is located; and the fact that the suburban residence of the Asano Family used to be where the Arisugawa-no-miya Memorial Park is located. Sengakuji Temple is in Takanawa, a monument on the "land that Asanotakuminokami met his death" is erected alongside Hibiya Street in Shiba and the history of the Asano Family remains not only in Akasaka but also in Azabu. I felt that many "unseen powers that pull us" of Chushingura made Minato City, which is a consolidation of three areas: Shiba, Akasaka and Azabu.

(Takehide Kasho)

The original article is written in Japanese.

"Minato Call" information service.

Minato call is a city information service about services provided by City Hall, facility guide, event information, etc., available from 7:00am to 11:00pm everyday.

* English speakers are also available.

Minato Call :

Tel: 03-5472-3710 Fax: 03-5777-8752

E-mail: info@minato.call-center.jp

Inquiry submission form: <https://www.city.minato.tokyo.jp/kouchou/kuse/kocho/iken/form-inquiry.html>