

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



The third-generation owner runs the photography business in a building rebuilt after the WWII

## Fascinating Artistic Azabu 29

Family Bonds, History, Smiling Faces seen through a Lens

# The Matsuo Photo Studio

There is an impressive building called the "Matsuo Photo Studio" in the classic Showa Era style on the Azabu-Juban Shopping District. It was established in 1923. In front of the shop there is a box full of pictures of people with bright happy smiles. This is a display of the store's work, and people walking by can stop and take a look. Taking a moment to see all the calm, happy expressions on the faces of families in the pictures is heartwarming.



The Photo Studio used to be located along the main street of Azabu-Juban Shopping District before the War.



The large antique camera manufactured by "Anthony", used since his grandfather's time



The design of picture mats has not changed since the establishment of the Photo Studio.

### Growing up in a Large Family

49-year-old Mr. MATSUO Teruaki is the third generation and current proprietor of Matsuo Photo Studio. When his grandfather Mr. MATSUO Yoshio established this photo studio here in Azabu-Juban, it was much closer to the main street of current Azabu-Juban Shopping District. The number of foreigners living in and around the district started growing from around that time, and the fashionable Matsuo Photo Studio was always crowded. Unfortunately, the original shop and all or their equipment was destroyed, like so much of Tokyo, in the firebombing of WWII. Immediately after the War, Yoshio constructed a townhouse type multipurpose building together with the friends in the Azabu-Juban Shopping District at the current location. Teruaki's grandfather Yoshio had seven children, including Kenichi, his second son and Teruaki's father. Post-war life in Tokyo was extremely challenging. In order to overcome these circumstances, Kenichi helped Yoshio along with his other brothers and sisters to run their photography business. Competition was also a challenge, as there were five to six photo studios around the Azabu-Juban Shopping District around 1955 to 1966. However, only the Matsuo Photo Studio survives to this day. This is testament to their warm-hearted service that has long been supported by the community.

"When I was a child, my grandparents and my uncle's family were living on the upper floor of the shop building, and the studio was a lively place practically every day", Teruaki said. Teruaki was Kenichi's only child, but he grew up just like he was in a large family. In the dining space on the 4th floor of the building, all the family members shared meals together that were prepared by his aunt and grandmother. Teruaki and his father lived in the neighborhood, but they only returned to their house to sleep. Everyday after school, he spent time in the Photo Studio and the home above it.

Teruaki entered Nanzan Elementary School, and then Jonan Junior High School (present day Roppongi Junior High School). There, he got a typical educational school course for that time provided for the children living in and around the Azabu-Juban Shopping District. After that, he entered the municipal Mita Senior High School. Whenever he went out, he always encountered some of his friends. "It is the same, even now!" he laughed.

### Working Closely with his Father to Support the Family Photography Business.

Before Teruaki entered university he asked himself, "Should I take over the family photography business?" However, after much handwringing he chose a university faculty that had nothing to do with photography, and after graduated he entered a food company. Later, he opened a restaurant and continued to ignore the world of photography. One day, he met a shop owner who sold used cameras. As he was talking with him about cameras, he suddenly realized "the importance of preserving a tangible, visual history of things", and to preserve the memories of the "blessed time with family members" cherished by his father and grandfather. This was a turning point for Teruaki, who finally understood the raison d'être of their Photo Studio for the first time. The second generation, his father (second son) and two uncles (first son and fourth son of his grandfather) were jointly managing the photo studio business. When his two uncles went into partial retirement, Teruaki became the third-generation manager, in close cooperation with his father.

### Respecting Tradition and Creating Something New

The Photo Studio room is overflowing with things made or collected by his father and grandfather. If you look closely at the drop curtain used as the background for photo shoots, you can see the unevenness in its color, which comes from the special coating that the three second-generation brothers applied to the curtain fabric to make it. "Anthony" is the name of a large antique camera that has been used since their grandfather's time. Although not used often now, it is still in perfect working order. There are also many other types of old cameras on the shelves. The design of the mat for important pictures has not changed since the establishment of the Photo Studio.

As Teruaki came to be entrusted with the management of the photography business, he has actively tried to bring something new while still maintaining the old traditions.

Teruaki was the first to take on an employee that was not a family member. "She is Ms. TAKAHASHI Yuzuha, and the age difference is almost that of a parent and child". Teruaki added, "The sensibility of youth is very important. She calmly points out a lot of things I don't notice on my own."

Family pictures are still the most important category of work they do. However, new categories such as "Students passing exams", "Pets and owners" and "Maternity" portraits have been introduced and are growing in popularity. Recently, this family business has changed to being run by just one generation, and their



Ms. TAKASHIMA, a very supportive staff member



The Photo Studio is cluttered with a large number of pictures. There are many three-generation families who have had their picture taken in the Studio.

product has become more mainstream. However, the passion to preserve family history and show familial bonds in pictures remains.

Over time, the three generations of their family have developed a sizable customer base. Their reputation has also spread by word of mouth among the many local foreign families, who like to have them take family pictures. This has been true since they established the Studio. Taking family pictures is common throughout the world.

Teruaki's two daughters are both elementary school students and are interested in cameras, which he is of course happy about. You can see in his face that he is a loving dad. He would like to entrust the future of the business to his daughters so that they can "Turn precious moments into timeless treasure!" We hope the Matsuo Photo Studio remains forever.

### Matsuo Photo Studio

2-1-11, Azabu-Juban, Minato City Tel: 03-3451-9436  
 HP <https://azabu-matsuo.com>



A treasured picture of Teruaki together with his father Kenichi, who passed away in September 2022



On the left side is the family of the founder, Teruaki's grandfather Yoshio. The baby in his mother's arms is Kenichi, Teruaki's father.



The many cameras regularly used by Teruaki's father and grandfather



# THE VOICE

The Current Voices of the Young People who Gather in the Roppongi and Azabu Areas

This corner of our publication is called “THE VOICE”, and introduces the honest voices and opinions of the young people who gather in the Roppongi and Azabu areas. This new program follows trends regarding they “live,” “work,” “play,” and “learn” in general. In this first installment, we will hear from two university students who have been working in a popular coffee shop at the foot of the Keyaki-zaka Slope since they were first year students.



**Mr. SENZAKI Tomoya**  
Tomoya does research on urban development in postgraduate school. On a map in his smartphone he has marked the locations of the many saunas he has visited.

### Many Charms Exist Only in Roppongi

**Tomoya:** Roppongi Hills is a multi-purpose commercial complex consisting of Roppongi Hills Mori Tower and Roppongi Hills Residence buildings, and this is where I have a part-time job. A variety of events including, Summer Festivals and Art Nights, are regularly held here. Whenever I visit, I find something new, and this is one of the most attractive points of the place. The regular opportunities to interact with sightseeing visitors and foreigners living there are inspiring.

**Fumiaki:** There are many interesting things to see and do here, including the Mori Museum on the top floor of the Roppongi Hills Mori Tower, and a theater with the latest films. The historical Mohri Garden is very nice, and there are a lot of public art works displayed around the interior of Roppongi Hills. In this fashionable and cross-cultural space there are many charming things you cannot find anywhere else.

### We work diligently for “Sa-Katsu” in this town.

**Fumiaki:** “Sa-Katsu” stands for all the various ways we can enjoy a sauna. When you hear the word “sauna”, you might just think of lying back and enduring the heat and sweating a lot. However, after a sauna, if you take a cold bath and relax with a fresh air bath, you can “organize your body and mind”. Feeling born in the open air bath, that is “TOTONOU”. When we enjoy experiences such as this, we can realize how extraordinary our ordinary neighborhood is. Having these experiences together with Tomoya is terrific.

**Tomoya:** I started going to a sauna regularly together with Fumiaki last year as a way of relieving stress. You might feel awkward in a sauna at first because there are a few strict rules. However, there are many guidebooks and so on about saunas, as well as a TV drama that takes place in them. I recommend referring to them if you are unsure.



**Mr. NISHIKAWA Fumiaki**  
Fumiaki really enjoys the comfortable and fashionable “Sa-Katsu” (actively enjoying saunas). He is a university student specializing in economics.

## A First Experience in Nishi-Azabu In-Depth Report on a Private Sauna



Jibun Sauna is completely made up of private rooms and is located at Nishi-Azabu 1-Chome. In front of Jibun Sauna, I am a bit excited as I begin “my first private-room sauna” experience, and also because it is rare for me to go to a sauna in the morning. (Fumiaki)



The towels dry quickly and absorb lots of water, which makes them great for saunas, and we each get a different color. (Fumiaki)



Three types of aroma oils are prepared, and we are enveloped in our favorite aromas during this time to put my mind and body in order. This time I chose blended oil with a refreshing herb scent. (Fumiaki)



A few drops of aroma oil can also be added to the water poured over the heated stones on the stove and steam is generated. We call this “iöyly”, and this hot vapor increases makes our bodies feel warmer and increases the steam’s effect on our bodies. (Tomoya)



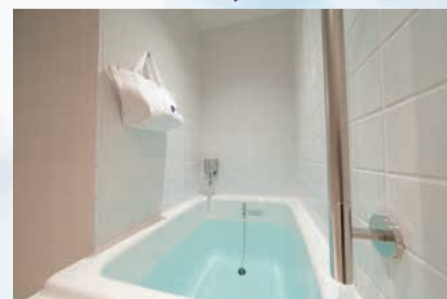
In Azabu-Juban there is also a regular “Sento” public bathhouse familiar to the people living in the area, as well as the private sauna shop in Nishi-Azabu and the members-only luxurious private-room style sauna. In addition, a new sauna facility is under construction along the Roppongi-dori Avenue. I am lucky to live here, and I continue to find more and more interesting things about it. (Tomoya)



After the sauna experience, we rehydrated in the lounge where the walls are lined with Japanese cypress wood. The same material is used in the sauna room. This 60-minute private sauna, in a space that has been fully customized to me preferences, let me perfectly “organize my mind and body.” (Tomoya)



I relax myself in the resting space to organize my body and mind. In general, I usually repeated this procedure two or three times. In addition to the aromas, there are also more things customers can do to customize their experience. Lights, sounds and music can be chosen as well, creating a truly unique experience for everyone. With my favorite comforting music and calm light set to “Night”, it was very relaxing indeed. (Fumiaki)



I wash myself and shampoo my hair in the shower before entering the sauna room. I take about 10 minutes in the sauna room to elevate my mood. I wash away my sweat in the shower and take a cold bath to relax myself. Then, I spend some time to organize my body and mind. (Tomoya)

地域社会  
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"The Local Community"

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# A Samurai Appeared on Zoushiki-dori Street!

One day while walking along Zoushiki-dori Street through the dismal morning drizzle, I encountered 93-year-old Mr. NISHIOKA Fusao. He had quite the earnest expression on his face as he marched along with a confident swagger. I noticed he was holding something long on his right hand. "What is it?!", I asked myself. I thought that as an editorial staff member of the AZABU, I should find out more about him. So, I caught up with him and introduced myself.



While we were walking, I asked Mr. NISHIOKA why he looked so young.

—"Please tell me the secret of your longevity".

**NISHIOKA:** "I talk a lot with others!"

—"Do you have any specific eating habits?"

**NISHIOKA:** "When I was young, I was a very picky eater. However, I was able to overcome this because of my daughter, who cooks for me everyday. I didn't like 'konyac', for example. But if I left it on the plate, she would just serve me the exact same thing next day! I was quite surprised by this".

—"What is your daily routine?"

**NISHIOKA:** "In addition to following along to a calisthenics program on the radio every day, I go to Iki-Iki PLAZA to attend courses. For example, every week I go to 'karaoke' on Monday, gymnastics on Wednesday and 'blowgun' on Thursday".

We crossed the road at the pedestrian crossing in front of Naniwaya Supermarket, walked towards Higashimachi Elementary School, and then arrived at Minami-Azabu Iki-Iki Plaza. Yes, Mr. NISHIOKA really is taking the Sport Wellness Blowgun course every Thursday! What he was carrying when we first met was a tube for a blowgun.



The course is organized and instructed mainly by Ms. ARAI Kazuko, Chairman of the Minato City Sport Wellness Fukiya (Blowgun) Association, and her husband, Mr. ARAI Tokishiro. Anyone who is living or working in Minato City and over 60 years old and over can participate in this course. The blowguns used in the Sport Wellness course shoot arrows at a target 6 to 10m away. The blowgun tubes, like the one Mr. NISHIOKA was carrying, are 120cm long. This sport involves what is essentially a breathing exercise, breathing both from the upper chest and from the abdomen. This is believed to be an effective prevention for aspiration pneumonia, help stabilize blood pressure and help you have beautiful skin. They do of course note that effects on different individuals vary. During each 3-minute round, the atmosphere is tense as the five arrows are shot. However, when a round is finished, they all congratulate each other with comments such as "Good job!" etc. with broad smiles. The target is divided into three sections: A 7-point section, a 5-point section and a 3-point section from the center. Whenever a single round is finished, the player's total points are reported. I was very impressed by the passion of Mr. and Mrs. ARAI, and the sincere attitude they all expressed. I wished I had more time to spend on this research!



"It has been 24 years since I started the blowgun sport in Minato City. I thought that this activity would prevent frailty\* among the elderly. Thanks to the Minato City local government for creating a positive environment, we were able to continue the course even during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Minami-Azabu Iki-Iki Plaza, they measure your temperature and provide alcohol disinfection at the entrance. The disinfection equipment uses a photocatalyst coating and a CO<sub>2</sub> densitometer. We also disinfect everything with alcohol each time after use, and pick up the arrows on the floor using a stick with magnet. In this way, we have been taking all possible measures to prevent infection. For the course, I think that it is important for us all to have friends that take care of each other, especially as the number of elderly people who live alone is increasing. It is a great pleasure to see their smiling faces."

\* Frailty: The condition where, because of aging, one's body becomes weak due to the health problems caused by function change or decrease of functional reserves. (From "The Significance of Frailty" on page 498 of No. 6, Vol. 51 in "Geriatrics and Gerontology, Japan" from The Japan Geriatrics Society; written by Mr. ARAI Hidenori)

**Ms. ARAI Kazuko**  
Chairwoman of the Minato City Sport Wellness Fukiya (blowgun) Association and Minato City Long-term Care Leader



## A Connected and Expanding Circle of Friends

In March this year (2022), "The 4th Minato City Iki-Iki Plaza Sport Wellness Blowgun Course Friendly Match" was held. In the Minato City Sports Center Sub-Arena, a total of 49 players who regularly go to one of the 10 blowgun courses in Minato City demonstrated their abilities. Of course, strict measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were also taken.

※The name in parenthesis indicates the Iki-Iki Plaza each person is affiliated with.

After I started practicing the blowgun, I had better voice control in my choir due to the abdominal breathing routine.

Ms. TAMARU Harumi (Shirokane)



"Blowgun" is called a "Static Sport". In complete silence, where even the sound of a camera's shutter would be distracting, the sound of the arrow hitting the target echoes throughout the hall.

Seeing all the players standing straight and tall on the starting line energizes me. I also would like to share my energy with them.

Mr. WATANABE Hideaki, Chief Referee (Minami-Azabu)



Mr. WATANABE, the Chief Referee, with his trademark Regent style, is the darling of the town.

My victory made all the practice worthwhile, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic when we had to always keep safety and security in mind.

Mr. ISEKI Shoichi, Winner of Individual 8m Class Competition (Arisu)



Winner Arisu Iki-Iki Plaza in Course-Matches Class

The atmosphere at Arisu Iki-Iki Plaza is friendly, so many people come regularly to the blowgun course for a long time.

Ms. SAWAMURA Yasuko, Second Place in the Individual 8m Class Competition (Arisu)

I have been going to the course regularly with my mother for 8 years. Thanks to the course, my mother has come to really enjoy practicing the blowgun and I am happy about it.

Ms. TOMITA Yukiko (Seinan)



Yukiko (second person from the left in the photo) watches her 91-year-old mother Hanako (center in the photo), from behind.

Ms. ARAI, our instructor, is a very nice person. One of my friends, who is a year younger than me, is also in the course, and it's so much fun talking with them.

Mr. DAITA Waichi (Minami-Azabu)



Mr. DAITA is 94 years old, and the eldest person in the competition. In the ceremony after the competition, a memento was given to him by Mr. SAKURABA Yasuyuki, Deputy Director of Azabu Regional City Office.

"This is the definition of cool."

This is the caption written on the Japanese poster for the animated film "Porco Rosso," directed by MIYAZAKI Hayao. While I was selecting photos for the report, these words popped up in my mind. I am thinking about joining the blowgun course when I become 60 years old. It will be exciting for me to become older in this place called Azabu.

### ● Minami-Azabu Iki-Iki Plaza

Morning Course: From 9:30 to 11:45  
Afternoon Course: From 13:30 to 16:30 Every Thursday  
Address: 1-5-26, Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku 106-0047  
Tel: 03-5232-9671 Fax: 03-5232-0568  
HP: <https://www.central.co.jp/plaza/minamiazabu/index.html>

### ● Arisu Iki-Iki Plaza

From 13:30 to 15:30 Every Wednesday  
Address: 4-6-7, Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku 106-0047  
Tel: 03-3444-3656 Fax: 03-3444-3298  
HP: <https://www.central.co.jp/plaza/alice/index.html>



**The Republic of Costa Rica**

Area: 51,100 km<sup>2</sup>  
 (Roughly the same as Kyushu and Shikoku Islands combined)  
 Population: About 5.09 million people (sourced from the World Bank 2020)  
 Capital City: San Jose (at an altitude of 1,200m)  
 Language: Spanish  
 Head of State: President Rodrigo Chaves Robles  
 (four-year term, from May 2022 to May 2026. Re-election is allowed after an interval of 8 years or more).  
 Legislature: Unicameral System (57 seats)  
 (four-year term; consecutive re-election is not allowed).

The Republic of Costa Rica

From the website of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/costarica/index.html>  
 Interview Support: Embassy of the Republic of Costa Rica

Visiting Ambassadors  
 From the "World"  
 of Azabu



A traditional carrier for coffee beans



(Left) Traditional Food "Tamal" (Right) "Tamal" being stewed in a pan

# COSTA RICA

The Republic of Costa Rica has a rich natural environment, and their local culture genuinely values peace and harmony. In the "Happy Planet Index" (\*1) as researched by the "New Economics Foundation" every four years, Costa Rica came out on top in 2009, 2012 and 2016 consecutively. This country has consistently drawn the attention of the world as one of the "Happiest Countries" on the planet. (In contrast, Japan only ranked 58th in 2016). However, His Excellency the Ambassador Alexander SALAS, who was inaugurated in 2019, has an extensive knowledge of Japan, and this is his second time in the post. For our interview, his wife Mrs. Evelyn Quesada was also in attendance, and talked about the wonderful natural environment and food of Costa Rica.

**I Learned Japanese by Putting it into Practice.**

The Ambassador first came to Japan as a trainee of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 1987.

"At that time, I had a strong interest in Europe and the US, so what I knew about Japan was limited to only "Samurai", "Geisha", "Ninja" and "Astro Boy". When it was decided that I was to go to Japan, I received a Walkman and a textbook about the Japanese language. The only Japanese word I knew then was "Sayonara"! On the plane on the way over I listened to the tapes and read textbook to learn Japanese language. When I started living in Japan, I was very surprised by the city of Shinjuku. There were many high-rise buildings, and many people were dressed in black. I was also surprised by the prevalence of automatic doors, cash cards and telephone cards".

He mastered basic Japanese language in daily life by doing things such as singing at "Karaoke" and attending the "Bon Festival Dance".

Through training organized by JICA, he visited Hiroshima, Aichi, Kyoto and Nara to see small and medium-sized enterprises. The more he studied Japanese culture, the more he became involved in life in Japan, and he then realized that becoming Ambassador to Japan would be a dream job.

That dream came true and he was appointed as the Ambassador to Japan for the first time from 2005 to 2006. Then, from 2019, he was appointed as Ambassador again. On October 22, 2019, he attended the enthronement ceremony for the current Emperor (\*2) in the Matsu-no-ma chamber in the Seiden main hall of the Imperial Palace together with Ms. Claudia Dobles Camargo, the Costa Rican first lady. His Excellency Mr. SALAS is the Ambassador to Japan who presented his credentials to the Emperor (\*3) twice, both in the Heisei and the Reiwa eras.



**Coexisting with Nature: No Need for Zoos!**

The climate of Costa Rica has a rainy season from May to November and a dry season from December to April. The topography is quite varied, and there are seas on both sides of this long country. Because of this, the amount of rainfall varies greatly depending on the region. They say that about 6% of all species of animals on the Earth inhabit Costa Rica, and about 25% of the land is protected as a National Park.

There are about 100 active volcanoes, and the Arenal Volcano in the Arenal Volcano National Park is the most active. A hot spring is located along the neighboring Tabaco River, and you can view the volcano while bathing in it. He said that when it erupts it is like watching beautiful fireworks.

On the beach, on the Caribbean Sea side, you can see turtles all laying their eggs at the same time. In the Tortuguero National Park in the northeast part and the Gandoka Manzanillo Wildlife Sanctuary in the southeast part of the country is inhabited by leatherback turtles, hawksbill turtles and olive ridley turtles. On the Pacific Ocean side, mostly in the Las Paulas National Marine Park and Ostional Wildlife Sanctuary, leatherback turtles predominate. During egg laying season, sometimes the whole beach is covered with sea turtles. The sight can be overwhelming and is one of many mysterious natural phenomena of the world. When a GPS was attached to one of the sea turtles for research, it was found that the turtles migrate all the way to Australia and then back to Costa Rica.

It can be said that the collective consciousness of our people is inextricably intertwined with our natural environment. To have a much more sustainable world for the future is obvious to us. As such it is no surprise we are a "country with a high level of happiness".

**Traditional Food "Tamal", especially for Christmas**

The staple food in Costa Rica is indica rice mixed with beans, and this is what they generally have for breakfast. It is just like Japanese "sekihan" red rice and beans. There are also many popular recipes that fuse Spanish cuisine with Indian cuisine.

On Christmas day, family members gather together to make "Tamal", and every family has their own version. The standard way of making "Tamal" is to mix corn flour with other ingredients, wrap it in a banana leaf, and then stew it for about 7 hours.

We had also got to sample "Tamal" from the Ambassador's wife, Mrs. Quesada, which was made with her own recipe. It had a moist texture and was easy to eat with just a fork. It was really delicious because each individual ingredient could be tasted, a sure sign of great cuisine. It was accompanied by a cup of coffee that perfectly matched our "Tamal".

**Ingredients**

- Corn flour
- Chicken
- Carrot
- Green pepper
- Boiled egg
- Banana leaf (for wrapping)
- Lizano (seasoning)

"Lizano" is a kind of seasoning popular in Costa Rica. It tastes something like a combination of soy sauce and chicken stock, but is not available in Japan at the moment. With "Lizano", the taste of "Tamal" changes and becomes even more delicious. It is spicy, but not too hot, and I thought that Japanese people in general would really like this.

**FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022**

The Ambassador was very pleased that, as one of the representatives of Central America, the Costa Rican national soccer team made it into the FIFA World Cup in Qatar for 2022. This is their third consecutive time in the World Cup and sixth time overall. Soccer is of course the most popular sport in Costa Rica. Costa Rica was in Group E as Japan, the same as Japan, as were the Spanish and German teams! The Ambassador told me that he had mixed feelings about Costa Rica going against Japan. The Costa Rica vs Japan game kicked off on November 27 at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium!!

(This interview was conducted in September 2022).



The Hot Spring on the Tabaco River  
 Photo provided by the Embassy of Costa Rica



Arenal Volcano  
 Photo provided by the Embassy of Costa Rica

\*1 Happy Planet Index: Based on national satisfaction and environmental impact, "Level of Happiness of the Country" is measured using this index.  
 \*2 This ceremony is held to announce the Emperor's enthronement in Japan around the world.  
 \*3 This ceremony is held for a foreign representative of state to present a signed letter of intent to the Emperor for approval, allowing them to become an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

# The Azabu Future Photo Studio

Trying to Solve the Mystery of a Raccoon Dog that Once Dwelled in Azabu

## Mamiana-zaka Slope



In 1970, looking up toward the hilltop from halfway up the Mamiana-zaka Slope  
\* The building in front in the photo is the Azabu Post Office. Photo collected by Minato Local History Museum



In September 2022, looking up the hill from halfway up Mamiana-zaka Slope. The building in front in the photo is Japan's highest building, with a height of 330m, higher than "Abeno Harukasu" which is 300m. This building was built as part of the "Toranomon Azabu-Dai Project" by the Mori Building Co., Ltd.

Mamiana-zaka Slope is the third slope with an animal name in Azabu that has been introduced in "the Azabu" Community Information Paper. The first was Ushi-zaka (Cow) Slope in No. 42, and the second was Nezumi-zaka (Mouse) Slope in No. 52. Around this slope you can find the Russian Embassy, the Tokyo American Club (introduced in No. 59) and the Japan Geodetic Datum (No. 4). It's not too much to say that the area around the slope is truly representative of Azabu. Around this legendary "Mamiana," or Raccoon Dog burrow, are there any new stories to be found?



In 1959 Photo collected by Minato Local History Museum

### The Origin of the Slope Name, and its Current Appearance

The Azabu-Mamiana Cho town and Azabu-Nagasaka Cho town (introduced in "Iigura and Nagasaka" in No. 30) are "Residential Address Non-Indication Areas," and they are only two locations like this in Minato City.

There are a variety of theories about the origin of the slope's name. On the signpost put up by Minato City it says, "Mami means a kind of female raccoon dog, or a giant flying squirrel or a badger, and there was a burrow for an animal like this at the foot of the slope. There is also a theory that it might have been a vestige of an old mine." The name itself seems to be clear, and it surely originated from the fact that "long ago, there used to be a raccoon dog burrow at the foot of the slope." Presently, this area looks to be a quiet residential area, and the slope is long and relatively steep.



In 2009 Sourced from "Azabu Future Photo Studio 2009 Activity Report"



In 2022 Viewing from the foot of the slope

### Uesugi Danjo Dai Hitsu

Let's change the subject. When you go up the top of the slope, you will reach Gaien-Higashi-Dori Avenue. The area Azabu-Dai 1-Chome on the other side of Gaien-Higashi-Dori Avenue is now in the midst of redevelopment. The Azabu Post Office (introduced in No. 16) was located there a while ago. Presently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iikura Guest House (introduced in No. 12) is still located there. According to the old map entitled "Gofunai Basue Okan Sonohoka Enkaku Zusho Bunkyu 2-nen" (The History of People in the Poorer Quarters of the Edo Period in the 2nd year of the Bunkyu Era (in 1862)), this area was described as "Uesugi Danjo Dai Hitsu". This means that a "Nakayashiki," secondary residence in Edo for the Uesugi Family, a feudal lord of the "Yonezawa Han (Domain)" was located there in the Edo period. As many of you know about the Uesugi Family in Yonezawa Han, Yonezawa Han was established by Uesugi Kagekatsu, the adopted son of Uesugi Kenshin who was a daimyo during the Sengoku Warring States Period, as the first feudal lord. "Danjo Dai Hitsu" is a governmental position name, but it seems to have become a byword for the Yonezawa Han Uesugi Family. In truth, this family has a very long history, with many twists and turns.

### In Echigo Province (currently Niigata Prefecture) and Yamanouchi, the Nagao Family and the Uesugi Family

Uesugi Kenshin was a famous Sengoku Daimyo warlord. He came from the Nagao Family in Echigo, one of Eight Heishi (Taira) Families in Bando (Kanto Region) and their mission generation to generation was to support the Uesugi Family that were the Shugodai (Governors) of Echigo Province. In 1561, he inherited the family estate of the Yamanouchi Uesugi Family (Uesugi Family founder) and the post of Kanto Kanrei (Shogunal Deputy for the Kanto Region). The history of the Yamanouchi Uesugi Family itself was even longer and this family took over the post of Kanto Kanrei by succession from the Muromachi Period (1333 to 1467). This family was one of the highest ranking in Kanto and was named after their residence built in Yamanouchi in Kamakura. Echigo Shugo (Governor of Echigo Province) Uesugi Family and the Yamanouchi Uesugi Family have a common ancestry (Even the Uesugi Family has a complicated and tangled family tree, and there are many branch families). The Yamanouchi Uesugi Family was at the top of all the Uesugi families, and it was not surprising that a relative from a branch family inherited as was the custom of Gekokujo (retainer supplanting his lord) in the Sengoku Period. However, it was a highly unusual exception that Kenshin (whose name at the time was Nagao Kagetora), who came from a branch family that was under the Yamanouchi Uesugi Family, became a successor. After the succession, he changed his name to Uesugi Masatora and took over estates and posts in the Yamanouchi Uesugi Family.

### The Azabu Uesugi Family

After Kenshin passed away, Uesugi Kagekatsu took over the family estate, and

took charge of the Kanto and Tohoku Regions (According to one theory, he took charge by restraining Tokugawa Ieyasu and Date Masamune) immediately after the civil wars, as one of the Gotaiko Five Chief Ministers of the Toyotomi Administration at the end of Sengoku Period. He received the Aizu Domain, which yielded 1.2 million goku of rice annually. He took the side of the Seigun-Gun Western Lords Group in the Battle of Sekigahara against Tokugawa Ieyasu, and having lost, they were left with the much smaller Yonezawa Domain, which yielded only 300,000 goku of rice. Due to these circumstances, they established the Yonezawa Han. After that, when the third head Tsunakatsu suddenly passed away, the Yonezawa Uesugi Family almost died out. Hoshina Masayuki, (introduced in No. 47), the father-in-law of Tsunakatsu, made every effort to avoid this crisis. Thanks to his efforts, the Family were allowed to adopt Tsunanori, the first son of Kira Yoshihisa, who came from an aristocratic family (Koke). He later became the 4th head of the Family and feudal lord of the Yonezawa Domain. At that time, the Domain had been reduced to an area yielding only 150,000 goku of rice.

Yonezawa-Shinden Han was a Branch Han of the Yonezawa Han. This Branch Han yielded 10,000 goku of rice, and was established by Katsuchika, the fourth son of Tsunanori. Their Kamiyashiki (main residence in Edo) was located in Azabu. The Yonezawa Han Uesugi Family (the head family of the Yonezawa Han) gave part of the Nakayashiki secondary residence in Edo to their branch Yonezawa-Shinden Han as their main residence. This is the origin of the Azabu Uesugi Family.

Azabu has a connection with the Uesugi Family because of a curious coincidence. One of the prefixes of the prestigious Uesugi Family was "Azabu"! It might be a slight exaggeration, but they are the "Lords of Azabu," a fact which is a bit amazing for us.

This is a true story, and not a deception conceived by a raccoon dog or fox that were believed to bewitch humans in Japanese folktales.

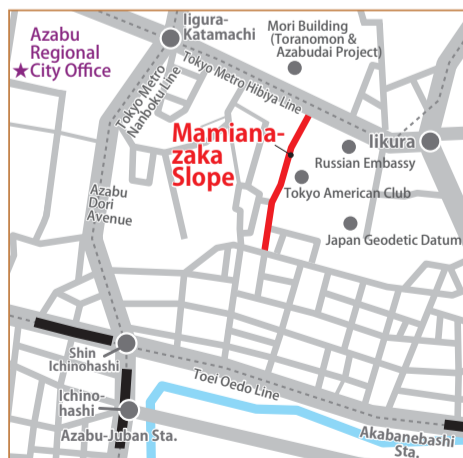
The Uesugi Family and Yonezawa Han retained their names until the Meiji Revolution, overcoming various challenges in their long history. The Yonezawa Han history is full of fascinating episodes and adventures.

I am quite sure that the Mamiana-zaka Slope has seen a lot of interesting historical happenings.

Why don't you take a walk along Mamiana-zaka Slope! You might encounter an interesting "raccoon dog" during your walk.



Picture of Uesugi Kagekatsu Collected by Yonezawa City Uesugi Museum



The Nakayashiki of Yonezawa Han (Uesugi Danjo Daihitsu) and the Mamiana-zaka Slope are circled in red. Processing is added on the "Additional Minato Modern History Map Azabu and Roppongi" in 1862

### About the Azabu Future Photo Studio

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

The Azabu Future Photo Studio Association primarily consists of local residents, businesses and students in Minato City who take photographs at fixed-point locations of the Azabu Area and collect old photographs, etc. The photographs collected are introduced as panels on the Minato City homepage and through exhibitions, with the aim of making the history and culture of the town known to even more people.

### The Azabu Future Photo Studio is looking for old photographs.

If you have any old photographs of buildings, landscapes and festivals in the Azabu region in the Meiji Period to Showa Period, 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



# Walking the periphery of the Azabu area ③

This project involves going and walking along the perimeter of the Azabu Area, to follow and explore its borders. In this third session, we start from Ichinohashi Bridge and end at Nishikubo Hachiman Shrine. The Furukawa River is an obvious physical border of Minato City up to Akabanebashi Bridge. After that, where does the border begin and end, and how was this chosen? We will do the research. (1.6km)



## Walking the border road along the Furukawa River from the Ichinohashi Bridge to the Akabanebashi Bridge

The Furukawa River used to be much narrower. However, in 1675 during the fourth Shogunate of Tokugawa Ietsuna, the width of the river was expanded to allow for larger boats all the way from around the Ichinohashi Bridge to the mouth of the river that flows into Tokyo Bay. The construction area was divided from the mouth of the river as "Ichiban Gumi" (the first zone) to the last section at Ichinohashi Bridge as "Juban Gumi" (the tenth zone). They say that this is the origin of the name "Azabu-Juban". At the beginning of the Meiji Period the current Higashi-Azabu 2-Chome area (old Morimoto Cho town, and Kitashinmonzen Cho town) was part of Shiba-ku. In 1880 the Furukawa River was chosen to be the border between Azabu-ku and Shiba-ku as it is today.

Just as in our previous installation of walking around the periphery of the Azabu area (from Tengenji Bridge to Ichinohashi Bridge), the river runs in parallel with and under the elevated Metropolitan Expressway. There are lots of buildings, parks and bridges under the Expressway. The Azabu Fire Station Iikura Branch (introduced in the Azabu No. 56) and the Minato Flood Prevention Storehouse (for materials and equipment required for floods disasters) are located under the elevated structure. ①

The main pillar of the Nakanohashi Bridge adjacent to the Fire Station is an imitation fire watchtower ②. The original one ③ was most likely located on the premises of the Arima Family House, and the owner was a feudal lord of the Kurume Domain. In the picture before the expressway was constructed you can see the watchtower of the Fire Station ④. This place has a long history with local firefighting efforts. In 1923 the Fire Station opened on the corner lot at the northwest part of Akabanebashi Crossing and two years later, it was relocated to close to where it is now. After many years of reconstruction after the war etc., it found itself nestled below the elevated Expressway in 1968, after the expressway was finally completed.



Akabanebashi Bridge and Fire Watchtower drawn in Ukiyo-e "Edo Meisho Akabane Suitengu" (Collected by Minato Local History Museum)



Looking at the Akabanebashi Crossing from the Shiba Park side (in 1967)



Minato Flood Prevention Storehouse located on the left side of the Fire Station



## Going North along Sakurada Dori Avenue from the Akabanebashi Bridge

From Akabanebashi Bridge, the border goes north almost vertically from the river. When you turn right before the Higashi-Azabu 1-chome Crossing you can see a road parallel with Sakurada Dori Avenue. This road is the border. Soon after, you can see a slope ⑤ on your right-hand side. The Higashiazabu Children's Amusement Park, Shinkoin Temple and Rurikoji Temple along this slope, are part of the Azabu Area and Tokyo Tower at the top of the hill is in the Shiba Area. When you look down at Shinkoin Temple from the foot of Tokyo Tower, you can see that the premises is separated by a high cliff, about 6 to 7m. The view shows that it must be the true "topographical" border. The front gate of Shinkoin Temple is one of the local Nationally Registered Tangible Cultural Properties. This gate was constructed in 1743 when it was on the premises of a branch temple of the Zojoji Temple. It was relocated twice, \* finally to where it is presently.

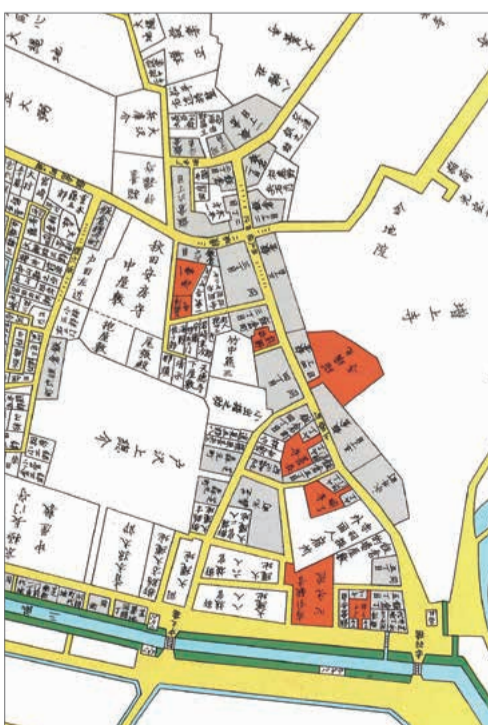
\* The gate was moved to near Akabanebashi Bridge (presently around Iigura Park) in 1761 and again moved to the present location due to the land rearrangement project for war damage reconstruction in 1950.

## A Cliff Represents the Border

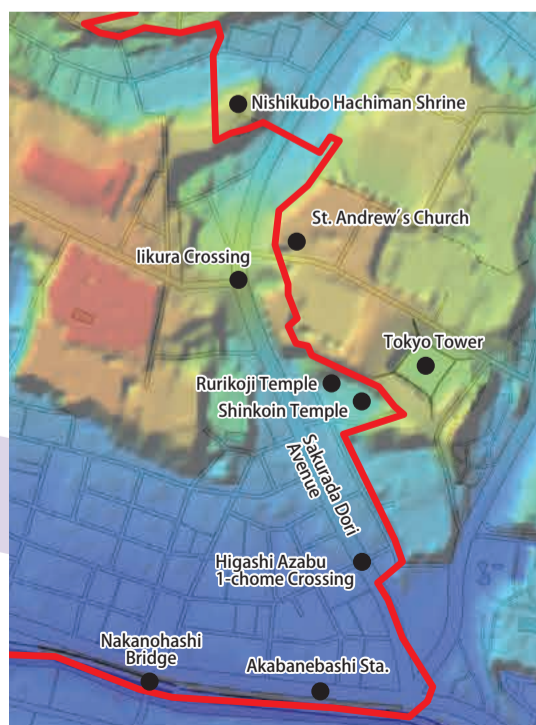
On the north side of Rurikoji Temple there is no road along the border. I went north along Sakurada Dori Avenue thinking, "The border might be behind the building on my right-hand side". According to the map in Edo Period, there was the townsmen district and Rurikoji Temple on the west side of what is now Sakurada Dori Avenue. Further west, there is Zojoji Temple. The current border is almost the same as the old border at that time. The old Zojoji Temple premises are in the Shiba Area, and the townsmen district and Rurikoji Temple are in the Azabu Area. Why was this chosen to be the border? According to the colored elevation map, it's all about the topography. Currently, the number of places where the border can actually be seen is limited. From St. Andrew's Church ⑥ and Nishikubo Hachiman Shrine ⑦ (both of them are located in Shiba Area and adjacent to the Azabu Area border), a cliff like the one between Shinkoin Temple and Tokyo Tower can be seen. It seems that roads, waterways and significant changes in elevation were the key factors used to designate the borders between the two adjacent areas.



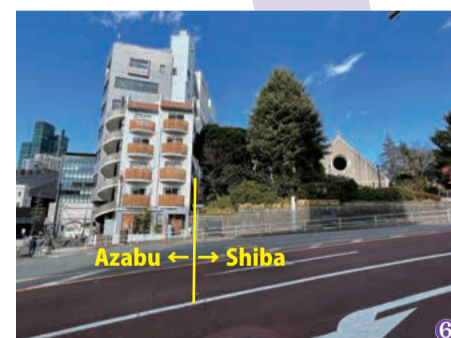
Shinkoin Temple is located adjacent to Tokyo Tower. Tokyo Tower is on a cliff top, while the Temple is below the cliff.



The current Sakurada Dori Avenue is on the upper left of Akabanebashi Bridge (lower right). The gray area shows the townsmen district. Referenced from "Additional Minato Modern History Map Azabu and Roppongi" from 1862



The border has been added to the colored elevation map. The border on the west side of Sakurada Dori Avenue follows the shape of the land. (Added to the map issued by Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)

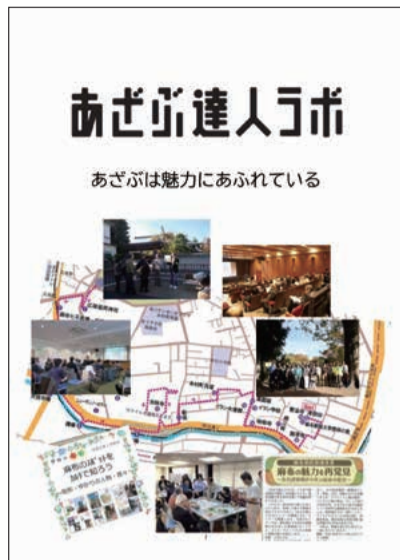


- References:
  - "Edo Tokyo no Kawa to Mizube no Jiten" (Dictionary of Rivers in Edo and Tokyo and Waterfront) written by SUZUKI Masao in 2003, published by Kashiwa Shobo
  - "History of the Tokyo Fire Department, Local Government System Edition" edited by the Tokyo Fire Department History Compilation Committee in 1968, published by General Affairs Div., General Affairs Dept., Tokyo Fire Department
  - "Azabu Fire Station: 50 years of History" issued by the 50th Anniversary of Azabu Fire Station Establishment Special Commemorative Project Executive Promotion Committee in 1975
  - "Investigation Report on Historic Monuments, etc., in Zojoji Temple Old Premises" edited by ISAKA Michiko in 2003, published by the Premises Research Executive Office



# あざぶ達人ラボ Azabu Experts LABO

Why don't you join us as a new member!!



We are actively recruiting new members who want to work with us to find the charms of Azabu we still don't know about!

The regional operations team "Azabu Experts LABO" (originally called the "Azabu Experts Club") began their mission to explore and spread the word about the charms of Azabu in FY2008. They are divided into three sections, and each carries out activities to promote the attractions of Azabu from their respective points of view.

The "Planning Section" was established to exchange ideas, to make more people aware of their activities and to inspire younger people to join them.

## The three sections of Azabu Experts LABO

### Research Section

This section analyzes Azabu's architecture, topography, history, and culture, etc. from their unique point of view.

### Cooperation Section with Local People

Members go to the regional operations "Local Saloon Chokotto Tachiyori Café," etc. and hold mini-events. This section created the "Azabu Cards" game, so people can learn the charms and history of Azabu while playing cards.

### Town Walking Section

This section has prepared a Walking Map so people can go around the town to find the charms of Azabu, either on their own or on a guided tour.

For leading the meeting and all documents, Japanese language is used.



Their brochure can be obtained in the Collaboration Project Section of Azabu Regional City Office. **Inquiries: Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office Tel: 03-5114-8812**



## Azabu Future Photo Studio

We welcome people who are interested in our activities!

The Azabu Regional City Office has been working with the residents of Minato City to collect old photographs of the Azabu region and to take photographs of the current cityscape.

We have been walking around the town to take these pictures in the hope that they will deepen people's love of the area. The images are collected and displayed in the form of panels to spread information about the past and present of the Azabu area.

We always welcome photo lovers, people interested in the history of Azabu, and people who want to deepen their affection for the region. Please don't hesitate to contact us.



Minato City website



People walking and taking pictures around the town



For leading the meeting and all documents, Japanese language is used.

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

## Full of Neighborhood Information not found in any guidebook! The Community SNS App "PIAZZA"



### Connect with other Azabu Lovers!

This app gathers local information useful for your daily life in the Azabu area from users, such as: "We are holding a festival in Azabujuban," "I'm thinking of giving my electric fan away to someone in the area," and "Please recommend a dentist for children in or around the Roppongi and Higashi-azabu area." These concerns are collected from application users.

New information from the government such as crime or disaster prevention information, local government news, and event news, will be posted when relevant.

If you want to find out more about the area, but don't want to go and search yourself, or you want to address your concerns about taking care of children, then why not give PIAZZA a try?



### Three-step registration procedure

- Step 1** Download the PIAZZA application
- Step 2** Register your name through your mail address or Facebook account
- Step 3** Input your name and birthplace and select "Azabu/Roppongi area"



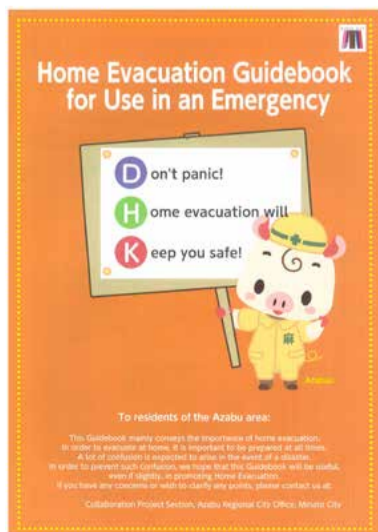
Your information will help somebody! If you want to enjoy living in Azabu more, please join in!

Download the application from here



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

## We have created a "Home Evacuation Guidebook for Use in an Emergency"!



### Evacuation shelters are no longer the only option in an emergency!

Minato City has reduced the number of evacuees that can be accepted at Evacuation Shelters in order to control infections. So, we all need to recognize the importance of "home evacuation," or sheltering at home during an emergency.

For this reason, the Azabu area has created the "Home Evacuation Guidebook for Use in an Emergency" to recommend home evacuation in emergencies, based on measures to control infections. This guidebook outlines important details regarding safety at home during a disaster, telling us exactly what home evacuation means, what we should prepare, etc.

This guidebook is being distributed to each household in the Azabu area, and you can also pick one up at the Collaboration Project Section counter at the Azabu Regional City Office.

More details about the guidebook can be found on the Minato City website.

"Evacuation shelters can become overcrowded."



"Aza-Buu"

Access our website using this QR code to read the "Home Evacuation Guidebook for Use in an Emergency."



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

## Information from the Azabu Regional City Office



### Have you signed up for Bicycle Liability Insurance?

People in Tokyo who use a bicycle are obliged to sign up for bicycle liability insurance, etc. To protect yourself and victims, sign up for bicycle liability insurance in case you cause an accident.

#### Minato City Traffic Casualty Insurance (Applications accepted by Minato City)

Minato City Traffic Casualty Insurance System can and must be taken out for a small premium. Should it become necessary in the event of a vehicular accident or injury, the insurance money will be paid according to the number of days of treatment (both inpatient and outpatient), and the total treatment period.

The "Bicycle Liability Insurance Plan" insurance course plan has been designed for the compensation of damages or costs when legal liability for damages arises in accidents caused by the insured when operating a bicycle. This plan meets the requirements for insurance plans in which sign-up is obligatory, and is based on regulations to promote the safe and proper use of bicycles in Tokyo.

\* You cannot enroll only in the "Bicycle Liability Insurance Plan."

#### Eligibility:

Persons living, working, or studying in Minato City at the start of the insurance period

#### Insurance Period

From 00:00 AM on April 1, 2023 to 24:00 PM on March 31, 2024

#### Enrollment Procedures

##### Individual Entry

1. Fill out the insurance enrollment application form that is distributed at financial institutes in Minato City (banks, credit unions, credit association, Japan Post Bank, or post offices) and apply with a premium.
2. Application through website

Access the following website to apply. <https://dantai.sompo-japan.co.jp/lp/minatoku/index.html>

By reading the 2D barcode with a smartphone you can access the Minato City Traffic Casualty Insurance website.

Application for insurance after April 1, 2023, after the insured period has started, can be accepted through website.

\* However, in this case, the insurance period will begin from the first day of the month following the acceptance of the application.



##### Group Enrollment (10 or more individuals from a Neighborhood Association or Residents' Association, etc.)

Fill out the group enrollment application form at the Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, in each Regional City Office, and apply with a premium for all the people who will enroll

##### Application Period

From February 1 (Wed) to March 31 (Fri), 2023

##### Courses and Premium Amount

Select one of the seven courses from the following table. Select only one of the courses.

Course	Compensation (Maximum Insurance Amount)	(Reference) Yearly premium amount
XJ	Traffic Personal Injury (350,000 yen) added to Bicycle Liability (100 million yen)	1,400 yen
AJ	Traffic Personal Injury (1.5 million yen) added to Bicycle Liability (100 million yen)	1,900 yen
BJ	Traffic Personal Injury (3.5 million yen) added to Bicycle Liability (100 million yen)	2,500 yen
CJ	Traffic Personal Injury (6 million yen) added to Bicycle Liability (100 million yen)	3,500 yen
A	Traffic Personal Injury (1.5 million yen)	900 yen
B	Traffic Personal Injury (3.5 million yen)	1,500 yen
C	Traffic Personal Injury (6 million yen)	2,500 yen

\* Accident Victim Compensation (maximum insurance amount of 6 million yen) is added to all the courses.

##### Insurance Underwriter: Sompo Japan Insurance Inc.

This information guide only describes the insurance generally. For more information, contact the Business Development Div., Tokyo Public Business Development Dept., Sompo Japan Insurance Inc. (1-26-1, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku)

Tel: 03-3349-9666 (Weekdays: from 9:00am to 17:00pm)

Authorization No. SJ22-12379 Authorized Date: Dec. 19, 2022

◆ Sometimes personal liability insurance coverage is included in the insurance you've already signed up for. Carefully check the details of your contract.

Inquiries: Collaboration Project Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office

Tel: 03-5114-8802

## Information from the Metropolitan Taxation Office

### Energy-Saving Promotion Tax System for Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Operators Exemption for Corporate Enterprise Tax or Individual Enterprise Tax

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government reduces and exempts the corporate enterprise tax or individual enterprise tax for small and medium sized enterprise operators to support their investment in energy-saving facilities, etc.



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

#### Inquiries:

For Energy-Saving Promotion Tax System for Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Operators:

Minato Metropolitan Tax Office Tel: 03-5549-3800 (Rep.)

Tax Department (for Corporations), Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation

Tel: 03-5388-2963

Tax Department (for Individuals), Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation

Tel: 03-5388-2969

For Global Warming Countermeasures Report System and Introduction-Recommended Equipment: Cool Net Tokyo Tel: 03-5990-5091

### Real Estate Acquisition Tax for newly-built Tokyo Zero-Emission Housing will be reduced/exempted (Tokyo 23 Wards).

Eligibility and rates for the tax reduction/exemption are as follows:

**Eligible for Tax Reduction/Exemption** : Newly-built Tokyo Zero-Emission housing that meets certain requirements, such as the installation of solar power systems, etc.

**Tax Reduction/Exemption Rate** : Max 100% of Real Estate Acquisition Tax for housing

For this tax reduction/exemption, an application must be submitted.

In addition, when new housing etc. is built, tax might be mitigated based on the Earthquake Resistance Promotion Tax System. For details, refer to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation website or contact the following office.



Tokyo Zero-Emission Housing

Inquiries: For properties in Minato City Minato Metropolitan Tax Office

Tel: 03-5549-3800 (Rep.)

### The procedures can be completed without visiting our office.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation has a system where taxpayers easily can go through the procedure by mail or through the Internet etc. without visiting our office. Reports, applications or notifications are accepted by mail or through electronic devices. A cashless system for paying tax is also available. For details, refer to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website.



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

<https://www.tax.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/english/index.html>

### City taxes can be paid through mobile payment apps.

Life has become more convenient because the number of mobile payment apps that can be used to pay taxes from your smartphone have increased. Using an appropriate app., the barcode on the payment slip can be read and the city tax can be paid anywhere and anytime. For details, access the website for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation.



Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Taxation Website

[https://www.tax.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/common/tozei\\_nouzei.html#L16](https://www.tax.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/common/tozei_nouzei.html#L16)

**Going shopping?  
Visit our local  
shopping  
streets.**

Please send us your  
comments or requests  
regarding

**The Azabu**



Please write your address, name, occupation (school name), telephone number, comment and/or request (in Japanese or English, no word/character limit or specific format required), and deliver it directly, or mail or fax it to the Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office, 5-16-45, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo (106-8515).

● Tel: 03-5114-8812 ● Fax: 03-3583-3782

You can also access this  
community information paper  
from the  
Minato City  
website.



## AZABU

● Locations of the Newsletter: Roppongi 1-chome, Roppongi, Hiroo, Azabujuban and Akabanebashi subway stations, The Chi 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.

● Reproduction of articles, illustrations, and photographs from this newsletter is prohibited without permission.

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#### Editor's Note

I feel very grateful for the kind hospitality of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Costa Rica and his wife. Also, I pray that the soul of Mr. MATSUO Kenichi, the second-generation head of the Matsuo Photo Studio, may rest in peace. I retired my job last spring. After that, I joined the editorial board of this paper, and I feel very motivated to encounter the old and the new, both the things in this town that have changed and that remain unchanged. For example, group activities and enjoying sauna in this paper give us sustainable self-improvement. I will continue to keep my eyes and ears open, and will strive to deliver a newsletter that is full of curiosity and inquisitiveness.

(HIGUCHI Masanori)

The original article is written in Japanese.

"Minato Call" information service answers your questions about everyday life! Feel free to ask about services provided by City Hall, facility guides, event information, and more. Available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day.

\* This service is also available in English.

#### Minato Call

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

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