



*Ame ni Kieru Isu (Chair that Disappears in the Rain)*  
 The entire chair has been made from a huge boulder-like clump of glass realized through a special technique using the same materials used to make an extremely large astronomical telescope lens.  
 Provided by: Mori Building



**Tokujin Yoshioka, Designer.**  
 Born in 1967, Mr. Yoshioka established Tokujin Yoshioka Inc. in 2000. He undertakes a diverse range of projects, ranging from design and art to architecture. Some of his works are in the permanent collections of art museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The recipient of numerous international design awards, Mr. Yoshioka has appeared on the TBS program *Jonetsu Tairiku (Passionate Continent)* and been selected by *Newsweek* magazine as "One of the 100 Most Respected Japanese People in the World."

## Fascinated by Artistic Azabu ⑥

### Transparent Glass Chair: the *Chair that Disappears in the Rain*

One of the street furniture pieces along Keyaki-zaka-dori Street inside Roppongi Hills is *Ame ni Kieru Isu* (the *Chair that Disappears in the Rain*). Just as when you put a piece of glass in water its shape gradually disappears, on rainy days the chair seems to completely disappear. Created from semi-permanent materials and glass, this transparent piece appears to invite passersby to "Please sit down" in a gentle voice. The work was created by designer Tokujin Yoshioka. Some 11 years after its installation, we asked him to talk about this work again.

●The name of the work is lovely. Why did you choose it?

—The name *Ame ni Kieru Isu* has a beautiful ring to it; it is filled with dreams. How did you come to choose it?  
 I wanted to create a work that would be easy for everyone to remember, something that people could use as a landmark when meeting friends at Roppongi Hills or Keyaki-zaka Slope, saying, "I'm in front of the glass chair!" I thought a name that was easy-to-comprehend, even over the telephone, would be good. Also, since the work is made of glass, I decided to include the feeling of "transparent" in the title.

●Why the focus on glass?

Through the Roppongi Think Zone project, there had been talk of installing street furniture pieces as part of the Roppongi Hills plan since 2001. When it was decided that I would be

taking part, I decided that I wanted to express the work in glass, which I was interested in using as a material. The transparency of glass, the light, sparkle, and color of transparency itself—these expanded within my mind as a single theme. I wanted to create something by combining this light and a physical object. When I am struck with an idea, that original idea never changes, and so at the time I received the street furniture request, the image for *Ame ni Kieru Isu* was already completed in my mind. Because it is a material that is strong like stone and also semi-permanent, glass is a very attractive medium for artists.

●What do you think of *Ame ni Kieru Isu* now, 11 years after its creation?

Whenever I pass through the Roppongi Hills area, I have a good look at it. Since it is outdoors, the piece changes as time

passes, but I am glad that I created it out of glass because the glass appears to melt into the surrounding environment, giving the materials a continual sense of freshness. I want passersby to sit on the chair any time they want.

●You have taken on various challenges as a designer; how did you become a designer in the first place?

There are actually many categories of design. I am interested in a diversity of things, and so I try many things while placing high importance on inspiration. When I was in elementary school, I decided I wanted to become an artist or designer in the future. I have been painting oil paintings since that age. I went to a high school with a design department, and after graduation, I attended a design college in Tokyo where I majored in product design. After this, I was blessed with the opportunity to create pieces using various materials at ISSEY MIYAKE. I learned how to make the most of a material's characteristics to create works exactly as you imagine them. I also created a silicon hat piece and used transparent materials such as acrylic.

After he went independent, this sphere expanded even further, and today he is continuing to present a truly diverse range of works from design to art to architecture. Some of his works are part of the permanent collections at art museums, such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

●Last, please say a message for young people who are aiming to become a designer like you.

I am sure that with training and practice, you can produce designs that express your own ideas. Ideas also develop through training and practice. For these reasons, I think it is important that you study the basics thoroughly. In addition, I want you to experience many things. By experiencing things, you become more emotionally moved by situations and occurrences, and from this, I believe ideas will blossom.

With the quiet and leisurely way in which he answered the interview questions, Mr. Yoshioka was a designer who matched the transparency of his work. He uses not only glass but also a truly diverse range of materials in creating his Yoshioka World. Insisting that his well of ideas is never exhausted, I thought I caught a glimpse of a passionate fighting spirit behind his gentle demeanor.

When you are next passing through Roppongi Hills, why not try sitting on the magically transparent *Chair that Disappears in the Rain*?

(Interviewed and written by Yoshinori Shibasaki, Yukiko Takayanagi)



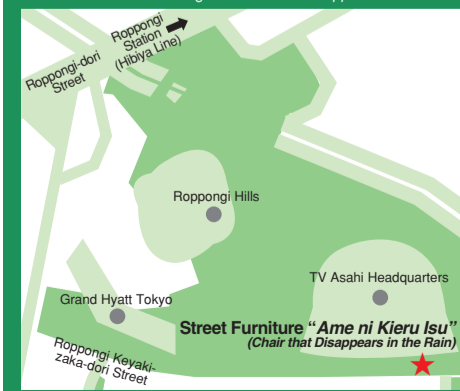
Installing the *Chair that Disappears in the Rain*.



A *Water Block* glass bench that was commissioned by and installed at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. A *Water Block* bench is also installed at Mr. Yoshioka's office.



At the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, Mr. Yoshioka participated in a renewal project for the Impressionists' gallery, and his *Water Block* piece is part of the museum's permanent exhibition, displayed alongside the works of Impressionist artists, such as Manet, Degas, Monet, Cézanne, and Renoir. Permanently installed in the gallery, this glass bench creates a space for beginning a beautiful dialogue between the past and present wrapped in the light depicted by the Impressionists.



# 麻布

"Azabu — A Human Story"



Norio Mizuhashi  
Mizuhashi Co., Ltd.



Mr. Mizuhashi talking about Roppongi



Store sign

## Chronicle of the Mizuhashi Family, Liquor Store Proprietors over Three Generations

Norio Mizuhashi (age 72) is a true Tokyo-ite—more precisely, a true Azabu-ite—who has lived in the same area as generations of his ancestors have for over 100 years. While contributing to the local community as president of the Roppongi 3-chome Ichibei-cho Neighborhood Association and chairman of the Roppongi 3-chome East District Town Planning Council, as well as various other activities, Mr. Mizuhashi is the proprietor of a liquor store selling Japanese sake, whisky, wine, shochu (distilled spirits), and other alcoholic beverages for both restaurant use and private consumption. He talked about Roppongi through his family history of operating a family business in this area for generations.

### History of Ichibei-cho

The street commonly known as Ichibei-cho-dori Street, which branches off from Roppongi Gaien-higashi-dori Street, connects with Fudo-zaka Slope, Tanbadani-zaka Slope, Yose-zaka Slope, Nadare-zaka Slope, Yuki-ai-zaka Slope, and Okumi-zaka Slope along a ridgeway known in the past as Imaidai-machi. Says Mr. Mizuhashi, "At the beginning of the Meiji era, you could go through to Kasumigaseki, the administrative district, and the downtown districts of Shimbashi, Tuskiji, and Ginza by going down Reinan-zaka Slope at the end of this street." The streets of Ichibei-cho 2-chome (now Roppongi 3-chome) were lined with shops with the residential area behind, and the streets of Ichibei-cho 1-chome (now Roppongi 1-chome) were lined left and right with huge mansions, such as the home of Prince Naruhiko Higashikuni and the Sumitomo Family residence.

The first head of the Mizuhashi family business, Tokichi, was born in Mizuhashi-cho, Toyama City. He received permission to set up a liquor store under the banner of Yamaya, a large store in Shibahamamatsu-cho, and anticipating the development of the aforementioned business area, he established Azabu Yamaya here around 1910. Surviving the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, during World War II Mr. Mizuhashi's father was drafted into military service, and he remained physically frail after his return from the war. Says Mr. Mizuhashi, "Our home was razed in the fires that raged in Azabu after the Great Tokyo Air Raids of March 1945, and during and after the war my mother—carrying an infant Mizuhashi on her back—worked terribly hard to rebuild and continue operating the family business; I am exceedingly grateful to her." He can still recall seeing as far as the National Diet Building in the distance over the charred ruins of the city and the twinkling starry night sky above.

After the war, American and other Allied Forces were stationed at the location of the former Defense Agency—now the site of Tokyo Midtown. During this period, there was a shortage of food and all kinds of goods; Japanese sake and other alcohol were in especially short supply, and inferior-quality products were in circulation. However, recalling the years around 1949, Mr. Mizuhashi says that, "Gradually some of the shops returned to Ichibei-cho-dori Street, and there were a lot of children too, with five classes of 50 or more students in each grade—250 students—from grades 1 through 6 at Azabu Elementary School." Subsequently, the residential areas gradually returned to their previous state; actress Mitsuko Mito lived in the neighborhood, and Kabuki actor

Kinnosuke (Yorozuya) Nakamura lived near what is now the Restaurant SERYNA. Film actress Nobuko Miyamoto also lived in the area during her days as a young theatrical company actress. Says Mr.

Mizuhashi, "In those days, liquor stores would take orders during the morning and make deliveries in the afternoon."

As the postwar economy gradually recovered, whisky became popular and was a prized possession; handling the flood of orders was very difficult. The Tokyo Olympic Games were held in 1964, and with the construction of expressways, Roppongi became an increasingly trendy town, and the number of foreigners also increased. The era between 1975 and 1985 saw the emergence of nightclubs, and during the era of the bubble economy, these became discos and entertainment districts. Entering the era of Western alcoholic beverages—gourmet dining, wines, etc.—the liquor store business boomed. However, at the same time, residential areas of Roppongi began to decrease, and when the bubble finally burst it became difficult to do business.

### Expansion of a Unique Business

For the liquor store to be able to respond to Roppongi's transformations and client changes, it became increasingly difficult for the business to handle only Japan-wide brands, and price-wise, discount selling also began. Thus, in addition to selling general alcoholic beverages, recently Mr. Mizuhashi has been formulating plans with his son Shinya and visiting local wineries and breweries nationwide. Said Mr. Mizuhashi confidently, "We need to differentiate ourselves operationally from our competitors by uncovering and handling wine, sake, shochu, and other products with unique characteristics that have been produced in these regions." For example, there is a non-filtered raw unprocessed sake that is made by extracting raw sake from fermenting mash produced from 100% Japanese rice, then separating the solid (white rice, malted rice, etc.) and liquid content. After oribiki (a process whereby the raw sake is left to settle for a while so that the gas dissipates and liquid sediment sinks to the bottom, then the clear-scooping off the clear liquid), the clear supernatant liquid is stored at 3°C without being heated at any point. This truly unique sake has a deliciously mellow flavor, excellent color, and a rich premium-sake aroma that maintains the aroma of yeast. Mr. Mizuhashi saw in this sake a business chance and is now trading in it.

Mr. Mizuhashi desires town planning here in Azabu that enables local people to continue to live here and carry on family businesses over generations. In terms of his trade, Mr. Mizuhashi is an Azabu-ite with a blandness like raw sake and a deeply warm and human personality.

Reference: Minato City Local History Museum (ed.). Map Collection of Geographical Transition in Modern Era Minato City: Enlarged Edition (Azabu and Roppongi)  
Article cooperation: Norio Mizuhashi, President, Mizuhashi Co., Ltd. (3-3-4 Roppongi, Minato-ku)



Horned sake casks brought out for roof-laying ceremonies



Storage room for Japanese sake and wines, etc.

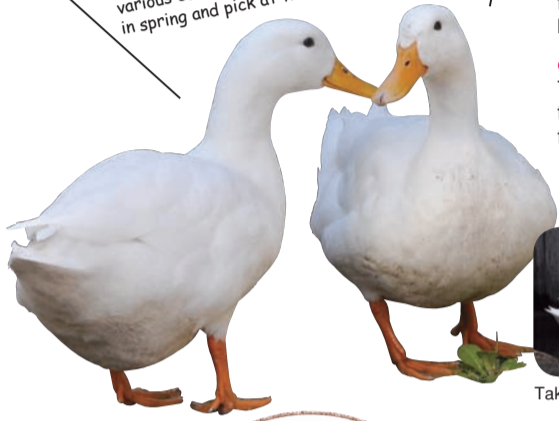
(Written by Akira Mori)

# ワタンも 麻布っ子

Call me Azabu-kko

We would like to introduce your dear "family" in this section.

Azabu Elementary School's geese, Aqua and Clover, are a little timid. Since the school is quiet during class time, we play in the pond or take a walk around the garden. We enjoy Azabu's various seasons, looking at the cherry blossoms in spring and pick at the snow in winter.



Taking a cozy rest together.

Next year, Minato Municipal Azabu Elementary School will be celebrating the 140th anniversary of its foundation. Actually, this school is also the home of turtles, fish and geese. Entering the schoolyard, directly before you rises Tokyo Tower, and on the artificial grass to the side of the schoolyard is a tank filled with turtles and fish! In the lushly green Seseragi Garden, there are geese taking a walk, and one is made to forget the hustle and bustle of the city.

We spoke with Mr. Tadashi Sano, the teacher in charge of caring for these animals.

●Wow, there are a lot of turtles, aren't there?

There are two turtle varieties—Kobu-chan, a Chinese pond turtle, and red-eared sliders—and eight turtles altogether.

●How many years have they been Azabu-kko? There are fish here too.

The school has been keeping turtles for more than 10 years, and they have grown to about 20 cm in length. When the weather is fine, they come out onto the edge of the tank and bask in the sun. They look as if they are really enjoying themselves; it's an interesting sight. In the Seseragi Garden pond, there are probably about 50 goldfish and tadpoles altogether. They multiply before you know it.

●The geese are so white and beautiful!

The entire school was asked to submit name suggestions, and their names—Aqua and Clover—were selected from these. The geese are our second male-female pair. We have been raising them since they hatched three years ago, and they've grown this big! They are hugely popular amongst the students, and the children from the neighboring Minato Municipal Azabu Kindergarten also came to see them at lunchtime. They are very timid, however, and so they will escape to their coop if you chase after them.

●Who takes care of all these animals?

Members of the *Shiiku linkai* (Animal Upkeep Committee), comprising 13 students in grades 4 through 6, take turns to look after the animals in pairs. Azabu Elementary School has six student committees and the students are involved in a variety of activities. However, the Animal Upkeep Committee is responsible for caring for living creatures, and so it is a tough job. The work involves feeding the animals before and after school as well as cleaning the geese's coop. The geese eat mainly grain feed and vegetable scraps leftover from making students' lunches. The kitchen staff cut the scraps into small pieces for the geese. In the early morning and in the evening, the school principal also comes to check on the animals, and the school supervisor and I also help out. On weekends and during the summer holidays, the children sometimes take turns caring for the animals. Through these activities, we hope that the children are learning from an early age to care for and value living creatures.



Mr. Sano, the teacher in charge of caring for the animals. The geese are happy after kind Mr. Sano gently rubs their heads.



The geese's coop and the Seseragi Garden and at the far end of the schoolyard.



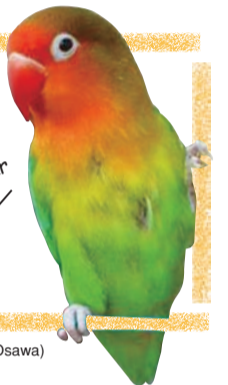
The tank filled with turtles and goldfish. You can see the goldfish and turtles through the wire mesh covering.

Please introduce the animals which are popular in your town

Please enclose a picture along with your story to the address below. It can be a story written by the owner as well. If we should get many applications, we may have to hold an editor's meeting to decide which story to introduce. Please note that we will not be able to reply to any inquiries about whether your story was chosen or not. If we decide to cover your story, we will be in touch with you regarding the scheduling of the interview. We look forward to receiving your application. Thank you.

"Call me Azabu-kko" Application Desk, Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office  
5-16-45 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106-8515

We're waiting to hear from you



(Interviewed by Yoshie Osawa, Aki Tanaka, Written by Yoshie Osawa)



**Tomoyuki Kunishige**  
CEO, Kunishige Kuukan Sekkei Co., Ltd.

Mr. Kunishige says he has long loved the word "space," and he decided to become a space designer after seriously considering his future while still a high school student.

<http://kunikuukan.com/>

There are many types of work in the world  
**Interior designer**

To give children power for life

Reading material for parents and children

# KIDS' Hello Work

## Giving form to client's wishes through space design

The theme for this issue is the job of interior designer. Two grade 3 students from Minato Municipal Roppongi Junior High School spoke with interior designer Tomoyuki Kunishige.

◎What kind of job is it?

If a building is a container, the job of an interior designer is to design the space within the container. In the case of a shop, the designer designs all of the shop's interior, beginning with the sign on the entrance, which is the store's face. After deciding how to divide the space into zones using the floor plan, the designer makes sketches and perspective drawings (cubic diagrams). Display shelves, lighting, furniture, etc.—everything is drawn in so as to make the overall atmosphere easy to understand and then the drawings are presented to the client (the ordering party, such as the store owner). It is important to also convey the color and materials to be used, and sometimes the designer creates original lighting fixtures and/or furniture such as chairs in order to achieve a sense of unity.

◎What aspects of the job are difficult?

Design is a "place where there is more than one answer." Even if I present a proposal with conviction, there are cases where you can be very disappointed, such as when the client prefers another idea or decides to use a rival's proposal.

◎On what occasions do you think, "I'm glad I do this job?"

That would of course be when a client is pleased with my work. In order to create a store, we are given a large amount of money to give form to the client's wishes, and so I am truly happy when a client says, "I'm so glad I asked you to do the job."



Trying our hands at zoning the interior of a room using a floor plan.

◎With what aspects of your work do you usually take particular care?

Since I have various projects going on simultaneously, I try to waste as little time as possible and do what has to be done by the shortest route possible. Of course, it's also necessary to waste time occasionally (laughs).

◎What kind of person is suited for this job?

Someone who is service-minded and can make other people happy. I think that people who are able to communicate well with others receive more work in this business than those who can simply draw pictures well.



Mr. Kunishige kindly taught us some basic interior design terminology.



Exterior of a wine shop for which Mr. Kunishige did the overall space design.



Tools indispensable for making sketches and drawings.



Example of a sketch used to convey the special design image of restaurants, etc.

(Interviewed and written by Yoshinobu Ochiai (Year 3, Roppongi Junior High School) and Kengo Hashimoto (Year 3, Roppongi Junior High School) Interview support Kyoko Ideishi and Kumiko Omura)



**Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

Area: 912,050 m<sup>2</sup> (approx. 2.4 times the area of Japan)  
 Population: 29.9 million (as of 2012, World Bank)  
 Capital City: Caracas (population: 4.5 million)  
 Official language: Spanish  
 Religion: the majority of the population are Catholic  
 Head of State: President Nicolás Maduro Moros  
 Legislature: National Assembly  
 (164 legislative seats; five-year term, consecutive re-election possible)

From the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:  
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/venezuela/index.html>

His Excellency Seiko Luis Ishikawa Kobayashi,  
 Ambassador of Venezuela to Japan



Article cooperation: Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

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From the "World" of Azabu

# VENEZUELA



The Venezuelan national flag. Yellow represents the country's rich natural resources; blue represents the Caribbean Sea, and red represents the blood that flowed at the time the country gained independence. The stars in the center represent the number of states at the time of independence. Until 2006 there were seven stars, but the design was changed in 2006 to add an eighth star representing the Guayana Province War, fulfilling the 1817 decree of War of Independence hero Simón Bolívar that the province also be included.



The Venezuelan national emblem, which was displayed on the door

## I want to further strengthen relations between Venezuela and Japan

Around 14 years ago, a young man newly returned to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereinafter referred to as "Venezuela") from studying in the United States sent an impassioned letter to his nation's government. Because of this letter, the young man would later come to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and become a bridge between Venezuela and Japan. This young man is none other than His Excellency Seiko Luis Ishikawa Kobayashi, Ambassador of Venezuela to Japan.

### An ambassador linking Venezuela and Japan

Venezuela is a South American country bordering the Caribbean Sea blessed with rich nature and oil resources and a cheerful Latin culture. Approximately 2.4 times the size of Japan in area, the country has a population of approximately 30 million. Venezuela has interactions with Japan on many fronts, and many readers can no doubt recall hearing that Venezuela is the home country of Japanese baseball players Alex Ramirez, Alex Cabrera, and Roberto Petagine.

Ambassador Ishikawa was raised here as a so-called second-generation Japanese-Venezuelan by his Okinawan-born father and Yamanashi Prefecture-born mother. After graduating from the Universidad Simón Bolívar (majoring in Metallurgical Engineering) in 1998, Ambassador Ishikawa undertook postgraduate studies at Harvard University in the United States, receiving a Graduate Certificate for Special Studies in business strategy, marketing and finance in 2000. After working for a consulting firm in Boston, he wrote the above-mentioned letter to the Venezuelan government. The letter is said to have contained a proposal for strengthening relations between Venezuela and Japan from three standpoints: "Effective utilization of the existing relationship between Venezuela and Japan," "Cooperation in the energy field;" and "Cooperation on various products." This proposal was one of the factors in Ambassador Ishikawa being appointed as the Economic and Trade Attaché at the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Japan in 2001 and coming to Japan. Subsequently, after also serving in Spain, he was appointed as the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Venezuela in Japan in 2005, at the age of 32.

▼Venezuelan cacao is famous for its delicious aroma. Although cocoa powder processed from Venezuelan cacao is not sold in Japan, it is apparently used in many European and American luxury chocolates.



▲Venezuelan Rum. This high quality rum has a rich cask aroma and is also available in Japan.



▲A four-string Venezuelan bandola. This instrument is combined with maracas (either Venezuelan or African in origin) and harps (European in origin) to produce uniquely Venezuelan music.



▲Beautiful wooden box painstakingly crafted with a mosaic pattern.

### Venezuela's appeal naturally lies in its people and culture

When asked about Venezuela's appeal, Ambassador Ishikawa replied with a radiant smile, saying, "Venezuelan people are very cheerful and friendly. Even strangers can fit in really quickly. Tolerance is extremely high. The fact that I, a second-generation Japanese-Venezuelan, was appointed ambassador to represent the country is also possible due to the underlying tolerance of Venezuelans."

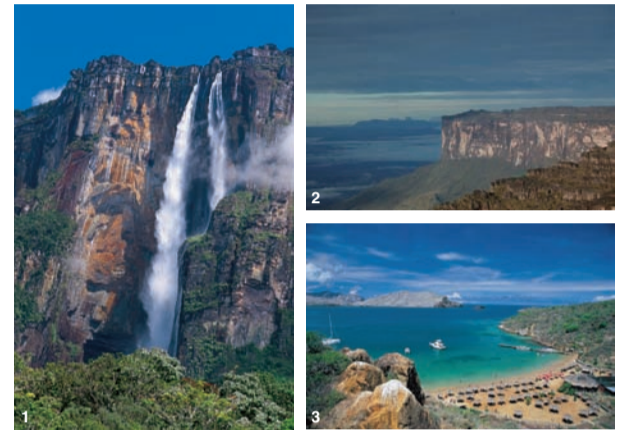
With regard to culture, Ambassador Ishikawa says that music is especially popular in Venezuela, making particular mention of a program commonly known as "el Sistema." Officially entitled the Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar (FMSB), the program operates orchestras and choirs for children and young people that are active throughout Venezuela. Established in 1975, the program aims to assist young people to acquire cooperativeness and sociability in addition to learning music through participation in musical activities. These activities have elicited a tremendous response worldwide, and in Japan, too, El Sistema Japan was established in 2012. Working with Soma City, El Sistema Japan held concerts in 2013 in the hope of helping children in Fukushima Prefecture living in difficult circumstances due to the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake to recover their dignity and have dreams and hope for the future. Ambassador Ishikawa also visits Soma City frequently, and notes that Venezuelan culture seems to be spreading in Japan through el Sistema.

In addition, Venezuela is a country known for its many beautiful women. According to Ambassador Ishikawa, this is probably the fact that, in addition to many of the Venezuelans already having clearly defined facial features, there is a strong awareness of beauty, so that little girls are raised watching the Miss Universe beauty pageant from infancy. In recent years, nail salons for children have also emerged. Moreover, "Girls are taught to make themselves beautiful not only on the outside, but also on the inside and to have pride in themselves," says Ambassador Ishikawa.

Furthermore, many aspects of Japanese culture also appear to be spreading widely in Venezuela, such as Ikebana flower arrangement, bonsai, anime (animated films) and manga (comics), and Japanese cuisine, in addition to sumo wrestling, a sport in which Venezuela is showing increasing strength at international tournaments.

### Japan and the Azabu District through the Ambassador's eyes

Married in 2010, Ambassador Ishikawa lives with his wife and two children. On his days off, he frequently spends time at Arisugawa-no-miya Memorial Park and other places. The wedding took place in the chapel of his wife's alma mater, University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo, and so his ties with Japan run very deep.



1. Angel Falls. Boasting the world's longest drop (978 m), these falls are said to have no plunge pool as the water turns to mist as it falls.
2. Monte Roraima. This kind of geological formation—called a "tepui" (table-top mountain), meaning "mountain Caribbean Sea" in the Pemón language—is said to have been formed 2-3 billion years ago, and even today many plants and animals unique to this region can be observed.
3. Many tourists visit the Caribbean Sea for its breath-taking scenery.
4. An el Sistema performance; the matching uniforms are designed based on the Venezuelan national flag.



Says Ambassador Ishikawa, "Azabujuban and Roppongi have really changed over these past few years, haven't they?" With his long history of residing in Azabu, the Ambassador has nothing but rich anecdotes about the Azabu District. He talks animatedly about the interesting aspects of Azabu, mentioning pea and bean snack shops and long-established toy stores. In his words, "The contrast of the old mixed with the new is fascinating." I could sense his affection for the Azabu District.



Last but not least, I asked Ambassador Ishikawa about Japanese anime (animated film), which he has enjoyed since he was a young child. When he was small he was apparently a huge fan of the romance-filled *Gundam* series, but recently he has been watching Hayao Miyazaki's *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Spirited Away*.

"I discover something new every time I watch an animated film directed by Hayao Miyazaki," he says. "There is no simple conflict between good and bad; rather, the films magnificently depict the depth of human nature, where there is bad within good and good within bad. I think that perhaps this is a perspective that is particular to Japanese culture." Ambassador Ishikawa's comments about Japanese animated film already exceed the category of anime and identify the quintessence of Japanese culture; his is a deeply insightful perspective.

"I like the fact that Miyazaki's animated films don't include any violence," he says with a gentle smile. The Ambassador exudes a warm personality, and it seemed that at any moment now we would hear the lively sound of Venezuelan music.

# The Azabu Future Photo Studio

This sloping road runs from the former Azabu Miyashita-cho (now Azabujuban 1-chome) to the former Ipponmatsu-cho (now Moto-azabu 1-chome and 3-chome).

What is the stone wall visible on the left-hand side of the photograph the remains of? Doing some research, we discovered that this was the place where the Zojoji Temple Hermitage (Azabu Ipponmatsu Zojoji Temple Hermitage) was built in 1659 by order of the Shogunate. Going back even further in time, we also found that this was where the Azabu Hikawa Shrine was originally built in 942. This is therefore an ancient slope whose history can be traced back more than 1,000 years. For a while after WWII ended, the slope was said to have been a somewhat lonely place, frequented by robbers and perverts, and so women and children never used the slope, especially at night. In 2012, the building on the left was partially dismantled, expanding the sky.



1975: From the top of Kurayami-zaka Slope  
Photographed by: Masanori Taguchi  
Photograph provided by: Shigehisa Taguchi



2012  
On the right side at the top of the slope is the Austrian Embassy. On the left side is a continuous stone wall, and the street is extremely dark because of the dense overhang of trees.

## - A history dating back more than 1,000 years - Kurayami-zaka Slope



2012  
Looking up from the base of the slope, the stone wall on the right is the same as it was 30 years ago. One can imagine how dense the trees must have been.



1975: From the top of Kurayami-zaka Slope  
Photographed by: Masanori Taguchi  
Photograph provided by: Shigehisa Taguchi

The stone wall itself is believed to have probably been erected at the time the Zojoji Temple Hermitage was built; at any rate, without a doubt it has been standing here since ancient times. The slope may have gained the name Kurayami-zaka Slope ("dark slope") because the verdant, wildly overgrown trees made it precisely that.

Although no vestiges of 1,000 years ago remain today, the roads steep pitch, twists, and seclusion make it appear that the many episodes of history asleep within the slope have been enclosed within the darkness. Seeing the slope today, with light piercing the darkness after 1,000 years, it is impossible not to have expectations that many entombed blossoms of history will open their petals and bloom.

Walking slowly along Kurayami-zaka Slope, which now received the light of today, it just may be possible to catch a glimpse of a history that was once closed.

Minato City Local History Museum (ed.). "Map Collection of Geographical Transition in Modern Era Minato City (Azabu and Roppongi)": Published March 15, 1977.

### About the Azabu Future Photo Studio?

The Azabu Regional City Office started collaborating with residents and corporations since fiscal year 2009 to collect old photographs of the Azabu area, as well as to take fixed point photographs and use them to document the changes of Azabu. This is the Azabu Future Photo Studio project.

The aim of this project is to have the people living in the Azabu area to feel an affinity to its history and culture, which can be preserved and inherited through the collection and storing of this data of the Azabu area; and furthermore, to aim at actively utilizing these photographs. At the same time, we would like for our people to further understand more about the history and culture of the "town," and further if it could be of help to deepen the people's attachment towards the Azabu area.

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

If you have any old photographs of the Azabu area which you think are worth passing down in the future, please send them to the Azabu Regional City Office. It can be any picture. Please contact the Community Policy Subsection, Collaboration Project Section, of the Azabu Regional City Office if you are interested in our projects or would like to join us as part of the editorial staff.  
Tel.: 03-5114-8812

(Interviewed and written by Yasuhiro Tanaka)

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"The Local Community"

## More than 700 patrols in 17 years! Activities of the Roppongi-o Kirei-ni Suru Kai ("Keep Roppongi Beautiful Association")

Because we love the local community

On a Friday night, have you ever seen a group of people wearing matching jackets near the Roppongi Crossing, all intently cleaning up the area? On the back of the jackets, *Roppongi-o Kirei-ni Suru Kai* ("Keep Roppongi Beautiful Association") is written in white against the blue background. Comprising local residents, these groups carry out volunteer clean-up activities on a weekly basis. Launched in January 1997, this spring the number of patrols exceeded 700.

### We want to dispel the image of Roppongi as a scary town

We spoke with the association's founder and president, Mr. Masahiro Minagawa. The reason he decided to set up the Association was apparently a comment by the daughter of an acquaintance, who said that, "Walking around Roppongi by myself at night is scary." Mr. Minagawa consulted with the local Azabu police about what could be done to dispel the image of Roppongi as a scary neighborhood.

### Learning from New York

The police told him about measures implemented by New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani. Broken windows and discarded garbage left unattended caused a chain of neglect, creating a hotbed for crime.

New York City undertook serious efforts to clean up the city environment and was successful in reducing the crime rate significantly. Mr. Miyagawa approached members of the youth division of the local merchants association and started regular



A foreign-resident volunteer recruited through the Regional City Office even goes onto the roadway to pick up discarded cigarette butts.



Clean-up activities near the Roppongi Intersection



On the second morning of the Roppongi Art Night festival, the volunteers jointly carry out clean-up activities with the Roppongi Hills Neighborhood Association. This year 170 volunteers participated in the clean-up.

clean-up patrols of the Roppongi area.

### Widening circle of activity

Saying that, "If we're going to do this, it would be better for us to be conspicuous," it was decided to carry out the patrols on "party-night" Friday nights, when there are a lot of people about. Except when it rains, patrols were conducted every week without fail, and as the clean-up activities continued, not only local residents but also employees of shops and businesses in the area, local parents and their children, and foreign residents joined in, widening the circle of activity. Altogether, approx. 20,000 people have participated in the clean-up patrols thus far. The clean-up patrols begin at 20:00 and are an hour long. With brooms and dustpans in hand, the patrol breaks into two groups at Mikawadai Park, working their way along Roppongi-dori and Gaien-Higashi-dori streets carefully picking up garbage on the sidewalks and amongst the shrubbery. At the time the clean-up activities began, there were apparently hard-hearted people who actually discarded lit cigarette butts before the volunteers' eyes, but gradually



Mr. Masahiro Minagawa, President of the Roppongi-o Kirei-ni Suru Kai (Keep Roppongi Beautiful Association)

people's awareness increased, so that now some passersby say thank you and express their appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. The amount of garbage along the road has also significantly decreased.

Says Mr. Minagawa, "By making the streets clean, it maybe makes it more difficult mentally for people to litter." According to the Azabu police, the street crime rate has also clearly decreased since the clean-up activities began.

### Continuity is our strength

Although the amount of garbage that can be picked up in a single clean-up patrol is limited, the hope of Mr. Minagawa and his band of volunteers to "make Roppongi a town where one can walk with a sense of safety and security, even at night" seems to be gradually becoming a reality through the association's steady efforts over the past 17 years.



During the Christmas season, the volunteers transform into clean-up Santas with these costumes.

\*For applications or inquiries about participation in the clean-up activities, please see the Roppongi-o Kirei-ni Suru Kai website: <http://www6.ocn.ne.jp/~ro38/>

(Interviewed by Kyoko Ideishi, Akira Mori, Written by Kyoko Ideishi)



The House at Azabu, Tokyo, where Sir Edwin Arnold Lived

Source: Sir Edwin Arnold / Translation: Masayuki Okabe, *Japonica—First Paper—Japan, The Country*. Scribner's Magazine Volume 0008 Issue 6 (December 1890)



The Ameya (1893), by Robert Frederick Blum; Wiki Gallery.org

## The House at Azabu (1) An American Artist Comes to Japan

Robert Blum (1857–1903), an American artist famous for his pastel and oil paintings, came to Japan in 1890 and, during his time here, painted many pictures of people living in Zojoji, Enoshima, and on the street. Beginning with his famous *The Ameya*, his works include the magazine illustration *The House at Azabu* and *The Small Inner Garden*. Furthermore, the famous English poet Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904), who came to Japan early that same year, resided in *The House at Azabu*. Why did Robert Blum and Sir Edwin Arnold come to Japan? Where was *The House at Azabu* located? Who was the landlord?

### Robert Blum

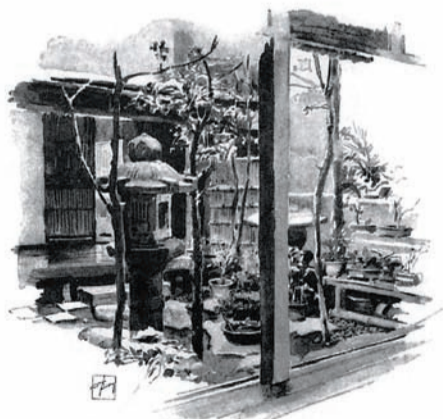
Born in Ohio, Robert Blum studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts before traveling to Venice. At that time, Japonism was also gaining popularity in the United States, and Robert Blum was apparently interested in Japanese art. His purpose in coming to Japan was to draw illustrations for an article written by the famous English poet Sir Edwin Arnold for Scribner's Magazine entitled *Japonica*. Sir Edwin Arnold had come to Japan on November 5, 1889 with his daughter. Robert Blum arrived somewhat later, on June 6, 1890; and he returned to the United States on a ship bound for San Francisco that departed Japan on August 30, 1892. Over the two years and three months of his stay in Japan, Blum came to love the Ginza District and was captivated by the colors of nature and people's everyday lives, and these experiences made him feel glad to be an artist. Later he wrote an article for Scribner's Magazine entitled *An Artist in Japan*, accompanied by many illustrations, in which he introduces Meiji Era Japan to Americans.

### The House at Azabu

In *Japonica*, Sir Edwin Arnold writes, "Yet there are three scenes of all the many familiar in Japan which will always come first, I think, to my memory. One is Enoshima, the next my own delightful little garden at Azabu, in the heart of the green and busy capital of Tokyo, and the third the peerless Mt. Fuji, with all of that district from which rises her stately sacred peak." Moreover, in describing the surroundings of the House at Azabu he mentions a "shrine on the opposite side of the road to the House at Azabu along a street lined with cherry trees" and "trees planted around the shrine near the Torii gate where children play in the sun and people gather to chat and gossip," but there is no mention of the house's address.

In addition, the *Japonica's* Japanese edition mentions in the commentary under the picture of *The House at Azabu* that "the landlord is Mr. Aso, who works at the Metropolitan Police Department, and the grand mansion next door had a pond and garden." With this limited information, identifying the landlord is quite difficult. However, the prelude to the *Japonica* article states that when he said his final goodbye to Sir Edwin Arnold, the landlord presented him with a waka poem written on an elegant strip of Japanese paper: "What was your secret / To grow so near, / So dear, and brotherly? / To seem so kindred, / Come from that far-off Land?" The name of the poem's author is given as Takehei Aso. Sir Edwin Arnold lived in the house at Azabu, and Robert Blum drew *The House at Azabu*, using this drawing as an illustration for the *Japonica* article.

Until its abolition in 1899, foreigners in the area were unable to live anywhere but the Tsukiji Concession according to treaty. The only exceptions were foreign nationals who became teachers or government officials. Thus, in order to live in the house at Azabu, Sir Edwin Arnold applied for permission to live outside the concession, giving as his reason the fact that he would be paying rent to the landlord, Mr. Aso, who was a government official and "inspector", but permission was refused. He then became the English tutor for the three Aso family members and edited the English language edition of the book on Japanese history that Mr. Aso was writing. For his teaching services, he is said to have been promised an annual payment of 100 pounds (6 yen), and he was able to live in Azabu.



The Small Inner Garden

Source: Sir Edwin Arnold/ Translation: Masayuki Okabe, *Arnold Japonica—Yushodo Japonica—Shin Ikoku Sosho Vol.4 Arnold Japonica Yushodo*

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*Letters Arnold to Blum 1890: 5 Letters*. New York Public Library  
 Takehei Aso. *Nihon Rekishi Zukai Kamiseiki Dainikan (Early 20th Century Japanese History Illustrations Volumes 1 & 2)*. Maruzen Shoten

### Landlord of "The House at Azabu"

From this description, it is believed that Mr. Aso was a government official, and as someone who wrote a book about Japanese history in English in the Meiji era, a very rare individual.

Takehei Aso (1835–1907) entered Keio Gijuku (Keio University) in 1865, where he studied under Yukichi Fukuzawa. In 1870, he began teaching English and researching English textbooks at the Naval Training Center; he was a professor at the Junior Naval Academy before becoming a Sixth Rank officer at the Ministry of the Navy, later becoming a naval engineering taikan (navy captain). He passed away on April 27, 1907.

We know that Takehei Aso was a navy man who was also a translator—translating *Kigaku Yogo* (Engineering Terms), published by the Naval Academy, and various other works—and whose name also appears as the author of *Nihon Rekishi Zukai Kamiseiki Dainikan (Early 20th Century Japanese History Illustrations Volumes 1 & 2)*.

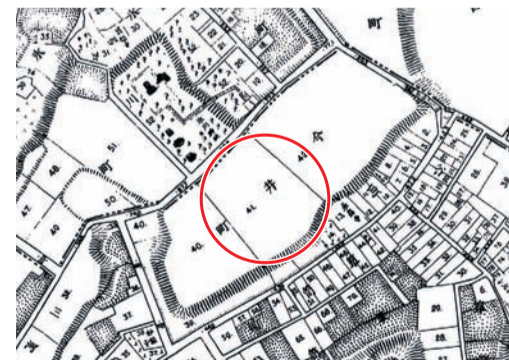
Examining the *Nihon Rekishi Zukai Kamiseiki*, the book's prologue states that, "Lately I have been writing a history of Japan, and having met an English gentleman, Sir Edwin Arnold, who is visiting Japan, I translated this history book and requested him to correct the translation..." On the following page is Sir Edwin Arnold's poem "The Emperor's Breakfast." The Japanese and English editions of *Nihon Rekishi Zukai* were published in two volumes beginning in June 1890. Takehei Aso is listed as the editor, and his address as 41 Azabu Imai-cho, Azabu-ku, Tokyo (now 2-1 Roppongi). This proves the relationship between Sir Edwin Arnold and Takehei Aso, as well as identifies the address of *The House at Azabu*.

Robert Blum's magazine illustration, *The House at Azabu*, was located at 41 Azabu Imai-cho. From the current address, the house was located across the street from the Akasaka Hikawa Shrine, and scenes such as that depicted in *Japonica* can still be seen at the shrine today.

Sir Edwin Arnold lived in the house at Azabu, but according to the *Japan Directory* (a listing of the names of foreign residents and organizations in Japan during the late Edo and Meiji eras), former British Major General Henry Spencer Palmer lived here in 1890. (To be continued in Issue 29: The House at Azabu (2).)



Takehei Aso, the landlord of the "House at Azabu." Portrait published in *Kaigun Kikan Gakko Seikatsu (Naval Engineering College Life)*; part of the National Diet Library collection



The area around what is Roppongi 2-chome today, circa 1887. From the Map Collection of Geographical Transition in Modern Era Minato City: Enlarged Edition (Azabu and Roppongi)

Naval Engineering College. *Kaigun Kikan Gakko Ichiran (The Naval Engineering College at a Glance)* (February 1907). National Diet Library Modern Digital Library

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 Kazuo Tatewaki (ed.) *Japan Directory* Volume 12. Yumani Shobo.

Jiro Higuchi. Sofu Palmer (Grandfather Palmer). Yurin Shinsho.

**Everyone Uphold the Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind, independent rules for the Roppongi District –Towards a Bustling and Beautiful Town–**

On July 23, 2013, the Roppongi Council for the Promotion of Urban Development for Safety and Peace of Mind (hereinafter referred to as “the Promotion Council”) established the Roppongi Charter for Safety and Peace of Mind (hereinafter referred to as “the Charter”). This charter comprises independent rules for the Roppongi District to be symbols for achieving safety and peace of mind in the town. In addition to declaring the town image that

Roppongi aspires to, the charter also specifies rules that all people in the town of Roppongi should follow. It also prescribes countermeasures to the five major issues for the Roppongi District: Crime, Environmental Aesthetics, Smoking on Streets, Roadway Usage, and Operating Activities.

**● Promotion of the Roppongi Charter for Safety & Peace of Mind**  
**Roppongi Charter for Safety & Peace of Mind Logo**

In order to uphold and advertise the Charter, a contest was held for Charter logo designs; the winning designs were presented and an awards ceremony was held at the first anniversary of the Roppongi Charter for Safety & Peace of Mind on July 31, 2014.



The logo will be used in the future for signs, educational materials, and other promotional activities to increase awareness of the Charter.



**Notification of the Introduction of an Ordinance Regarding Minato City Smoking Rule**

**In order to further promote Minato City Smoking Rule, the Ordinance on the Promotion of Environmental Beautification in Minato City and the Prevention of Nuisances Due to Smoking is to be implemented.**

Minato City enacted the Ordinance to Make Minato City Clean and Beautiful in 1997 and has been undertaking measures to ensure a comfortable living environment. However, in recent years, with the increasing prevalence of bans on smoking in buildings, many instances of people smoking on the street or discarding cigarette butts on the ground have come to be seen. Accordingly, the name Ordinance to Make Minato City Clean and Beautiful will be changed to Ordinance on the Promotion of Environmental Beautification in Minato City and the Prevention of Nuisances Due to Smoking, and the content of the Minato City Smoking Rule that the city has been promoting will be clearly prescribed in the ordinance with the aim of ensuring a more comfortable living environment.

\* The Ordinance on the Promotion of Environmental Beautification in Minato City and the Prevention of Nuisances Due to Smoking was enacted on July 1, 2014.

**Minato City Smoking Rule Content to Be Prescribed in the Ordinance**

**Everyone who lives or works in Minato City or visits Minato City should comply with these rules**

1. Cigarette butts cannot be discarded carelessly in public places.
2. Smoking in public places (with the exception of designated smoking areas) is prohibited.
3. When smoking in areas other than public places, care must be taken to ensure that cigarette smoke is not inhaled by people in a public place.

\*\*Public places\* refers to roadways, parks, children’s playgrounds, public spaces, and other places for public use (limited to outdoors).

**Business operators carrying out business activities in Minato City should comply with these rules**

4. Even in the case that business operators permit smoking on their business premises, they must improve the environment by moving or removing ashtrays, providing smoking areas, etc., to ensure that cigarette smoke is not inhaled by people in a public place outside the business premises.
5. Business operators must endeavor to ensure that employees and others involved in the business’s activities comply with 1-3 above.

**Inquiries: Environmental Policy Subsection, Environmental Section**  
**Tel: 03-3578-2487**

**Notification Regarding Metropolitan Tax**

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government currently is accepting electronic filing using eLTAX (electronic local tax portal system) for corporate enterprise tax/special local corporation tax/corporate metropolitan tax, business office tax on business premises within the 23 wards of Tokyo, and fixed property tax on properties (tangible business assets) within the 23 wards of Tokyo. The procedures currently available for use in Tokyo are listed in the table below.

	Corporate enterprise tax/ special local corporation tax/corporate metropolitan tax	Business office tax (Tokyo 23 wards)	Fixed property tax (tangible business assets) (within Tokyo 23 wards)
<b>Electronic filing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provisional declaration</li> <li>• Interim return</li> <li>• Final income tax return</li> <li>• Declaration of taxation on per capita basis</li> <li>• Liquidation final return</li> <li>• Amended tax return etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment declaration</li> <li>• Amended tax return</li> <li>• Filing for the taxable minimum or less</li> <li>• Filing for business office premises loan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible business asset declaration</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic submission/ notification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification of corporation establishment/installation</li> <li>• Notification of transfer</li> <li>• Application for tax exemption under tax incentive measures to promote energy conservation by small and medium business operators</li> <li>• Notification/application for approval of extension of tax return filing</li> <li>• Notification of approval of consolidated corporate tax etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment/abolishment of business office</li> <li>• Application for business office tax exemption</li> <li>• Itemization of deemed joint operations</li> </ul>	
<b>Electronic tax filing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of principal tax</li> <li>• Payment of overdue tax</li> <li>• Payment of additional charges</li> <li>• Estimated tax payment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment of principal tax</li> <li>• Payment of overdue tax</li> <li>• Payment of additional charges</li> </ul>	

**Please Use the Convenient E-Filing and E-Tax Filing Services!**

**eLTAX hours of availability**

**Hours of availability for each procedure:** Weekdays 8:30-21:00\*1 (Excluding Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays, and year end/new year holiday December 29-January 3)

\*1 Hours of availability are to be expanded from September 2014 to Weekdays 8:30–24:00

**Inquiries regarding usage procedures**

**eLTAX website:** <http://www.eltax>  
**eLTAX Help Desk:** 0570-081459 (045-759-3931 when calling from a PHS/IP telephone)  
 Weekdays 8:30-21:00 \*2

(Excluding Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays, and year end/new year holiday December 29-January 3)

\*2 From September 2014, the Help Desk opening hours will change. The new opening hours will be Weekdays 9:00–17:00. For details, please see the eLTAX website.



**Inquiries regarding filing details, screening, and tax payment:**

**Electronic filing, submission, notification:** relevant tax sub-sections of metropolitan taxation offices.

**Electronic tax payment:** Collection management subsections of metropolitan taxation offices.  
**Minato Metropolitan Taxation Office Tel: 03-5549-3800**

**Message from the Azabu Fire Station**

**STOP HEAT STROKE!**

- ★Days during the rainy season when the temperature rises suddenly
- ★Hot and humid days following the rainy season

It is easy to develop heat stroke when your body is not accustomed to the heat.

- One cause of heat stroke is high temperatures combined with high humidity. Avoid strong sunlight outdoors and be sure to ventilate rooms well when indoors so that you are not exposed to a high-temperature environment for an extended period of time.
- Drink water frequently
- Rather than drinking water when you feel thirsty, be conscious of consuming fluids at regular intervals, such as by setting a time for drinking water or drinking water before you leave the house.
- Adjust room temperatures with an air-conditioner, etc.

**Inquiries: Disaster Prevention and Safety Section, Fire Defense Division, Azabu Fire Station Tel:03-3470-0119**

# 2014 Minato Disaster Preparedness Drills (AZABU site) —Everyone is welcome to participate—



**Date and time:** Sunday, October 5, 2014; 9:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m. (will still proceed in light rain)  
**Site:** Minato Municipal Roppongi Junior High School grounds and gymnasium  
 \*Participants on the day will receive a commemorative disaster-preparedness-related gift (limited number).

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

**New Activities Introduced this Year**

## Disaster Preparedness Drill Tour for Foreign Residents

Because of the large number of foreign nationals living in the Azabu District, English-language interpreters will be provided to guide people with limited Japanese language ability through the drills.

## Disaster Preparedness Advisor System Corner

Business operators registered in Azabu as disaster preparedness advisors will be invited, and there will be explanations of the system and a display of disaster prevention goods.

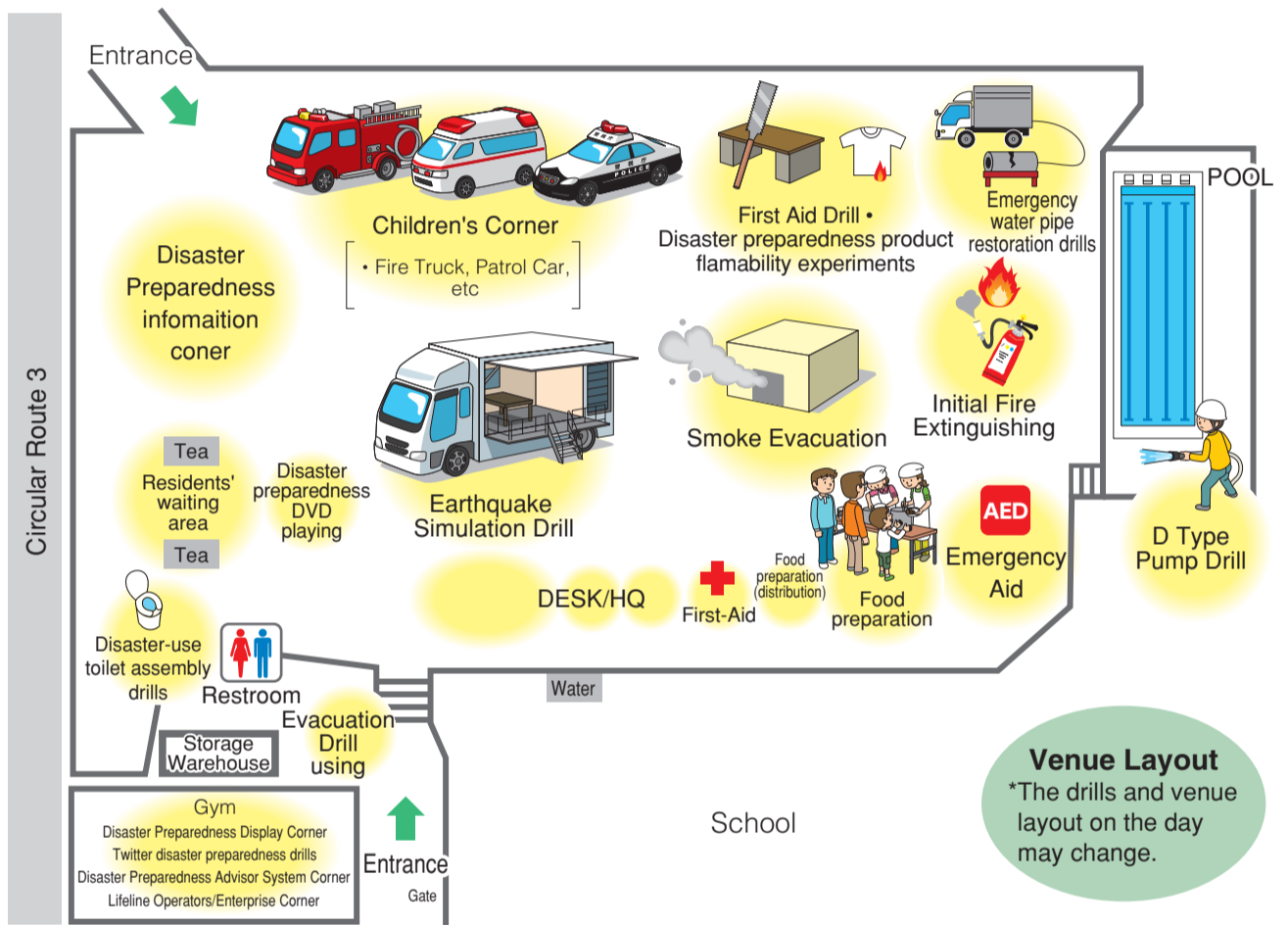
**Many other drills will also be carried out!**

## Let's Aim to Raise Self-Help Awareness!

**When disaster strikes, in addition to community cooperation, individuals need to help themselves**

Compared to other countries in the world, Japan is prone to earthquakes, typhoons, and other natural disasters and, in the past, has been struck repeatedly by calamitous disasters. The greater the damage caused by a disaster, the more public assistance functions will diminish. Under such circumstances, it is important that individual residents obtain correct knowledge regarding disaster preparedness for themselves and take appropriate action.

At this year's General Disaster Preparedness Drill, various drills will be carried out based on the scenario of a M7 class earthquake striking directly underneath the Tokyo metropolitan area (which is said to have a 70% chance of a major earthquake within the next 30 years) causing tremendous damage to property and loss of human life. Participating in these drills provides residents with an excellent opportunity to enhance individual disaster preparedness awareness and to think about the correct action to take in a disaster or in an emergency. For the sake of protecting yourself and the lives of family members in a major disaster, as well as to protect the community, please participate in the Minato City General Disaster Preparedness Drill (Azabu Site).



**Venue Layout**  
 \*The drills and venue layout on the day may change.

**Call for Foreign Residents to Participate, Too!**

There are many foreign nationals residing in the Azabu District, and we aim to create a community where everyone can live in safety with peace of mind. English-language interpreters will be available on the day to guide you through the various drills. Foreign nationals are invited to come and share information and knowledge about disaster preparedness with other Azabu residents so that everyone can be prepared for an emergency.

**Application method:** Please call or fax, providing the following information: (1) your name; (2) your address; (3) your telephone number (4) Japanese level; and (5) any other special notes.

**Tel:** Minato Call 03-5472-3710 (9:00–17:00) **From September 2 (Tues.) to 30 (Tues.), 2014**  
**Fax:** Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office 03-3583-3782

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: Collaboration Project Section, Azabu Regional City Office, 5-16-45 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo (106-8515).  
 ● Tel: 03-5114-8802 ● Fax: 03-3583-3782

We Are Looking For **Editorial Staff**

You can access The Azabu Newsletter from the homepage as well.



**AZABU**  
 ● Location of the newsletter: Roppongi 1 chome, Roppongi, Hiroo, Azabu Juban subway station, Minato Library, Azabu Library, Appy Azabu, Azabu Regional City Office etc.  
 ● Usage of articles, illustrations and photographs in this newsletter is prohibited.

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### Editor's Note

This is my first issue of The Azabu since joining the editorial team, and there are certainly a lot of fascinating places in the Azabu and Roppongi districts, aren't there? Many of the stops on the Minato City Shichifukujin-meguri (visit to seven dieties of good fortune) route are in the Azabu District, and there are places known as "power spots." In addition, there are numerous sloping roads, many with intriguing names, such as Udonzaka and Kurayamizaka. The area also has businesses that were established over 100 years ago as well as trendy downtown cityscapes. The coming season offers an excellent opportunity for city walks—discover aspects of Azabu you never knew!

(Yoshinori Shibasaki)

The original article is written in Japanese.

**"Minato Call" information service.**  
 Minato call is a new city information service, available in English every day from 7 a.m. – 11 p.m.  
 \*English speakers are also available  
**Minato Call :**  
**Tel: 03-5472-3710 Fax: 03-5777-8752**  
**E-mail: info@minato.call-center.jp**