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Photo taken in May 2021

Giant Tree Empowering the Community

Shii Tree of the Former Hosokawa Residence

(Hosokawa Clan of the Former Kumamoto Domain)
Prefecturally-designated natural monument of Tokyo (Takanawa 1-chome)

The giant Shii tree (Japanese chinquapin) on the hill behind the Takanawa Regional City Office is said to be over 400 years old. Before the opening of the subway line, owls used to live in the tree hollow. Previously, it was twice as tall as it is now. Approximately 60 years ago, lightning struck the Shii tree, and its trunk was burnt and nearly died. Fortunately, buds sprouted and its branches grew the following year. Later, a large hollow was found at the bottom of the trunk, and some of the tree was surgically removed. After that, the tree was completely rejuvenated and keeps empowering the community.

(Photo: Hirao / Text: Ando)



Key to the Success of Condominium Disaster Prevention Activities

~ Building Face-to-face Relationships in the Community ~



Disaster drill

■ Increasing number of condominium residents

Many people live in condominiums in the Takanawa district, and the number of condominium residents is expected to further increase in the future. On the other hand, amid growing interest in disaster prevention, some people say, "I am interested in disaster prevention in condominiums, but I don't know what to do".

In view of this, we conducted an interview with Ms. Chise Kuboi, the chairman of a condominium in Mita's disaster prevention committee.

■ "This condominium is in danger because there is no emergency stockpile".

What encouraged Ms. Kuboi to get involved in condominium disaster prevention activities was the above suggestion given by a security guard.

"As the security guard was quite familiar with the residents of the condominium and was supportive of both the board of directors and disaster drills, he was highly trusted by the residents. One of the board members who heard his suggestion and felt a sense of crisis convinced other board members to take action. Most of them agreed to do so, and then they started to move toward the establishment of a disaster prevention committee. They thought it was important to ensure 'disaster prevention measures conceived by all residents' and 'participation in disaster prevention by all residents as volunteers' in order to establish a disaster prevention committee, and they widely called on the whole community, regardless of whether they were owners or tenants, and particularly those who had participated more frequently in disaster prevention drills in the past. In response to the call, various people gathered, including 'those who were interested in disaster prevention', 'those whose workplace was near the condominium', 'mothers who were eager to protect their families', 'those who want to contribute to the community', and 'those who wanted to get acquainted with one another'. In March 2016, the Disaster Prevention Committee (consisting of 6 men and 6 women) started its activities. Since then, committee members have continued to be recruited via putting up posters".

■ Strength through diversity

"In the first year, we gathered and reviewed best practices adopted in other condominiums. We prepared safety confirmation cards, a list of people needing support, and manuals for residents and disaster prevention committee members. We also worked on enhancing an organization under the voluntary-based role sharing method in which participants voluntarily shared what duties they would like to assume. In addition, we promoted awareness-raising activities, including distribution of an easy-to-understand guidebook on how to take prompt action in the event of an earthquake and how to stockpile supplies at home. We found through those activities that there were various residents with expertise and skills in diverse fields, including medical treatment and nursing care, which seemed to be the strength of this condominium. For example, a resident who was good at English made an English-language disaster prevention leaflet".



Disaster drill

■ Building face-to-face relationships with neighbors

Although disaster drills had previously been conducted, they started to carry out workshop-style training that could be enjoyed by both children and adults, and hands-on training in which equipment such as generators and tents could be actually utilized. "Minna no Café (café for everyone)", an event held monthly in the assembly room, includes a sign language lecture given by residents, and a gathering to cook and eat emergency food. They are also promoting activities to deepen friendship among families through seasonal events, such as Tanabata (Star Festival).

"It has now become very natural for residents to exchange greetings". Not only do they see residents exchanging greetings with each other more often, but there are other favorable changes as well, such as the appearance of those who became a disaster prevention committee member, those who acquired the qualification of a disaster prevention expert, those who switched from rental to ownership because they thought condominiums had a well-developed and safe community, and an increase in asset value.



Children make friends with each other at the Christmas tree decoration event



Cotton candy making using a generator

■ Three persons who can achieve 30% each, rather than one person who can achieve 100%

We asked about the key to the success of activities that developed sufficiently to conduct joint disaster prevention drills with neighboring condominiums.

"It is key to condominium disaster prevention to increase the number of residents who play a role of 'more than members but less than board members'" who are ready to support condominium management and condominium disaster prevention. When it comes to disaster prevention, it is easier to think that we need 'people who can participate in everything and can do everything = people who can achieve 100%', but there are few such people. But if there are three people who can achieve 30% each and make up for each other's deficiencies, I think that the total results will be more than 100%. It would be desirable to conduct disaster prevention activities with the participation of a large number of people who have some knowledge in a wide range of areas rather than a small number of people who have great knowledge in a small range of areas, because more people might be able to help each other in an emergency. In addition, it is a shortcut to success to make up for deficiencies in your condominium by imitating and arranging others' success cases. It's also very important to have tolerance to accept diverse values, regardless of ages, genders and experiences".



Training awareness-raising of mobile toilet stockpiling

What is the Minato BOUSAI Women's Association?

This is an organization engaged in planning and doing preparatory activities which encourage female disaster prevention experts to have the confidence to participate in community activities within 3 years after acquiring qualifications.

It aims to contribute to disaster prevention in Minato-ku by empowering female experts to make them feel that "I may be able to do it to".



Ms. Chise Kuboi

Chairman, Mita City House Disaster Prevention Committee
Leader of the Minato BOUSAI Women's Association
Disaster Prevention Experts

Prominent Person in Our Community

Violinist

Ms. Mayu Kishima



Happoen, Shirokanedai

To keep moving forward in a world where there is no goal

■ As a violinist

How old were you when you started playing the violin? And why did you choose the violin as a musical instrument?

Three and a half years old. As my mother was a pianist, I learned piano, violin, solfège, classical ballet, painting, etc. Because I liked playing the violin very much, I wanted to be a violinist.

Are there any tips to improve violin skills?

When I was little, it was a challenge for me to hit the right note with the development of perfect pitch, and my mother sat at the piano and checked each note with me every day. I have been fortunate enough to take lessons from good teachers, and to receive support from not only my mother but my other family members as well. When I was in the fourth grade of elementary school, I participated in a summer camp organized by the Juilliard School in the United States. I was inspired by my peers who were learning freely at a high level, and I strongly felt that I wanted to study music overseas. I consulted with my parents about the idea of studying overseas, but they objected to that idea, saying that I should study in Japan until I finished compulsory education, and should build a personality not solely based on music.

How did you feel when you won first prize at an international competition in Poland at the age of thirteen?

I was happy to think that I might be recognized on the world stage and might be able to obtain permission for studying overseas from my parents. I decided to study in Cologne because I wanted to take lessons from Professor Zahar Bron whom I respected. Then, I made a promise with my parents to finish compulsory education in Japan while going back and forth between Japan and Germany when I was in junior high school, and I finally obtained consent from them.

How was life in Cologne, Germany? Did you stay there alone?

When I was 14 years old, I moved to Cologne in order to study. My mother also came to Germany and we lived together. I couldn't speak German, so I practiced violin and studied German until late at night. It was a pretty hard life, but I enjoyed the experience of studying abroad so much that I didn't focus on the tough things.

How were Professor Bron's lessons?

Professor Bron's class attracted excellent students from all over the world. The lessons were difficult and we were given daily assignments to be completed until the following day. If we didn't

complete our assignments, we could not take the lesson on the following day. It was a tough environment in which only a few people were able to cope with this style of teaching every day.

You were noticed by the world-famous cellist Mr. Rostropovich, weren't you?

Professor Bron introduced me to the world-renowned musician Mr. Rostropovich, and took me to the Viennese Music Association to participate in the audition. On the following day after I played in the audition, I received an offer to join a world tour of the orchestra conducted by Mr. Rostropovich. Partly thanks to that tour, I was able to learn how to speak German, English, Russian, and French to some extent. The pronunciation of words, language, and music are deeply linked.

What do you think is most important as a violinist?

I think that a true musician is a person who not only acquires musical skills but also interacts with music in their long musical life from childhood to the end of life, because the accumulation of life experience makes their music deeper and wider. Such a musician always has an inquisitive mind without stagnating and compromising, and can move forward with all their strength in a world where there is no goal.

What are you aiming for in the future?

I would like to compose a piece of music, and I also would like to try collaborating with artists from various musical genres. The COVID-19 crisis has made me reconsider the meaning of my existence as a musician. On March 11, 2021, I performed a charity concert online and donated all proceeds from the sale to an organization supporting the self-dependence of children affected by the disaster. Taking the opportunity to establish the Mayu Kishima Fund, I would like to be engaged in activities to help people and communities affected by global pandemics like COVID-19, earthquakes, and other disasters. Since I have been supported by many people up until now, I would like to continue those activities as my lifework apart from concert activities.

■ About the Takanawa District

How do you feel about living in the Takanawa district?

It has been two years since I moved to the

Takanawa district, but I lived in Minato City for more than 10 years. Although I spent my childhood in the Kansai region and lived in some other countries, such as Germany and France, I think the Takanawa district is the best place to live. It has a beautiful streetscape and is surrounded by rich greenery, and it is very convenient because it is close to the Shinagawa district and Haneda Airport. I hope to continue living there.

Has your lifestyle changed after you got married?

My husband and I go jogging together in the morning. We sometimes go near Sengakuji Temple, and feel refreshed and comfortable. The way in which I spend time with my husband are different from when I lived alone. We often go to nearby restaurants together.

Have your musical activities changed during the COVID-19 crisis?

I couldn't perform a concert for about six months last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and during that time I recorded Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons" for a new CD. I think I was able to record a sound that could only be created in the COVID-19 crisis. Thanks to the efforts of the people concerned, we can now hold a concert by taking measures against the pandemic, including reducing the number of seats. I would like to take this pandemic as a good opportunity to review my role as a musician, my vision for the future and how I face music from scratch, and to start over again.

You are actively engaged in activities other than musical activities, such as TV appearances, aren't you?

I have met people in TV programs who are active in various fields, and have learned many new things as I had only been in the world of music until then. I hope it will be an opportunity for people who hardly listen to classical music to become interested in it. Furthermore, it is a pleasure to receive messages online from many people, such as "I went to a classical concert for the first time".



[Profile] Ms. Mayu Kishima

Won a prize in the 8th International Competition for Young Violinists in Honor of Karol Lipinski and Henryk Wieniawski as the youngest and highest-placing Japanese person ever, in 2000. Won first prize in the violin category of the International Music Competition Cologne in 2011. Graduated from the Cologne University of Music with a first-class honors degree in the spring of 2012. Finished the graduate school of the university with a first-class honors degree, and obtained a German national qualification for professional musicians. Received the Kobe City Cultural Encouragement Award from Kobe City in the autumn of 2016. Won first prize in the 1st Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition in 2016. Participated in the recording of "Tsigane" performed by the Ashkenazi & NHK Symphony Orchestra.

Released a new CD entitled "seasons" from King Records in December 2020.

Currently based in Japan and Europe, and engaged in a wide range of activities, including recitals, performance with an orchestra, and chamber music concerts.

Also actively engaged in media activities, appearing on many fashion magazines and TV programs such as Jonetsu Tairiku (documentary), Shabekuri 007 (variety show), NHK Taiga Drama (year-long historical drama), Taira-no-Kiyomori Kiko (historical episodes of the setting of Taiga Drama Taira-no-Kiyomori), and NHK Kohaku Utagassen (New Year's Eve musical show).

Official website: http://www.japanarts.co.jp/artist/Mayu_KISHIMA

Takanawa-Chikutei Remains and Shinagawa Development Project

Regional Historical Sites

~ From the Past to the Future ~

Takanawa Chikutei was a railway embankment built to lay a railway track on the sea, which extended 2.7 km from Honshiba through the Takanawa Coast to Shinagawa Station in 1872 when Japan's first railway opened between Shimbashi and Yokohama. Because it was built by making full use of the state-of-the-art civil engineering work of that time, it is considered a valuable architectural remains symbolizing Meiji era modernity in Japan. The East Japan Railway Company (JR East) has decided to promote a large-scale Shinagawa development project, while preserving and making open to the public a part of Takanawa-Chikutei Remains as a valuable historical heritage. This page introduces the history of the construction of Takanawa-Chikutei in the past, the preservation and public opening of the Takanawa-Chikutei Remains, and future Shinagawa development projects.

1872



Takanawa-Chikutei in the Meiji era. Stone masonry can be seen. (Source: Shiba Ward Newsletter)



Ukiyo-e (Japanese woodblock print) in the early Meiji era entitled "Takanawa-Tetsudo-no-Zu (Landscape of Takanawa Railway)" (from the Museum of Logistics) It depicts a steam locomotive exhaling smoke and running on an embankment built in the sea.

History of Construction of Takanawa-Chikutei

The New Meiji Government decided to construct a British-style railway track following the advice of British Envoy Harry Parkes, when the government was promoting the policy of increasing wealth and military power, and was planning to open railway lines. Although some government officials, who were the so-called railway advocates, including Shigenobu Okuma and Hirobumi Ito, insisted on active promotion of railway construction, the old guards who belonged to the Danjodai (Ministry of Justice) and Hyobusho (Ministry of Military Affairs) expressed their opposition. The spearhead of such old-guard officials were the three great nobles of the Restoration, Takamori Saigo, Toshimichi Okubo, and Takayoshi Kido. They insisted that it was most urgent to build up a sufficient military force to compete with other countries. They believed not only that railways would play no role in promoting trade, but also that they would make it easier for foreign countries to invade Japan.

Okuma and Ito made a plan to lay a railroad track in an urban area from Shiodome along the Tokaido. But it was found that the track was going to pass across the Satsuma clan warehouse residence in Shibatamachi, and Saigo and others strongly opposed the plan. In addition, Hyobusho was the owner of land in Yatsuyamashita, so the Ministry not only refused to hand over the land but also hindered surveys and other preparatory work.

Then, Okuma and his colleagues decided to run a train on an embankment built on the sea. The embankment is a valuable railway structure where you can see the blending of conventional Japanese and modern Western technologies.

1869	December:	Railway construction was decided.
1870	April:	British Chief Engineer Edmund Morel came to Japan.
	November:	Yajuro Hirano undertook the work of cutting a passage for a railroad through the hills of Yatsuyama and Gotenyama, and landfilling in Takanawa. Yajuro Hirano (1823-1889)
1871	Summer:	Ten steam locomotives arrived from the United Kingdom.
	November 5:	British engineer Morel died of tuberculosis at the age of 30.
1872	February:	Yatsuyama Bridge was completed as a Western-style wooden bridge.
	June:	A railway running between Shinagawa and Yokohama started temporarily (fare: 1.50 yen for upper class, 1 yen for medium class, 0.50 yen for lower class).
	September:	Takanawa-Chikutei was completed. Coastal fishing had been popular in Tokyo Bay, and fishing ships would not be able to come and go if an embankment was built. Therefore, the embankment was cut at four points so that ships could pass through it.
	October 14:	The opening ceremony was held in the presence of Emperor Meiji.

References:
Yoshinobu Oikawa, "History of Japanese Railways in the Bakumatsu and Meiji Eras"
Keisuke Imao, "The History of Railway Development in Tokyo"
Ishii Mitsuru, "Historical Episodes of the Establishment of Railways in Japan"
Japan Railway Contractors Association, "History of Railway Contracting Companies in Japan"

*The Gregorian calendar is used for dates.

2021



Signal base*



Stone wall on the sea side*



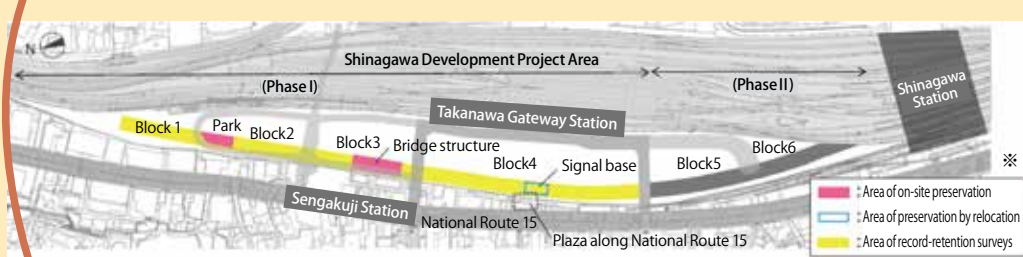
Stone wall on the mountain side (provided by the Minato City Board of Education)



Bridge structure*



Area adjacent to the park*



Preservation of Takanawa Chikutei

Sections of the embankment extending over 1 kilometer were intermittently found from the site of railroad tracks on which the Yamanote Line and Keihin Tohoku Line had been running until November 2019. A policy of preservation was agreed as follows regarding the excavated remains extending about 800 meters.

● On-site preservation

The 40-meter-long section in the area adjacent to the park in Block 2 and the 80-meter-long section containing the bridge structure in Block 3, both of which were found in good condition, will be preserved at the same location.

● Preservation by relocation

The 30-meter-long section in Block 4 containing the signal base will be relocated and preserved, and the relocation destination is still being finalized based on the idea of relocating to the plaza along National Route 15 in front of Takanawa Gateway Station.

● Record-retention surveys

In addition to the above, sections other than those which can be preserved at the same location, such as those buried in the soil under the road, are subject to record-retention surveys, and the target sections will be carefully surveyed in detail.

In order to preserve and utilize the embankment remains in the course of town planning, some events to be held after the opening of the town are also currently under consideration, including an exhibition that provides three-dimensional experiences of the embankment of the time using VR (virtual reality) technology any other means.

2024



Image of the area adjacent to the park preserved on the site*



Image of the signal base preserved by relocation in the plaza along National Route 15*

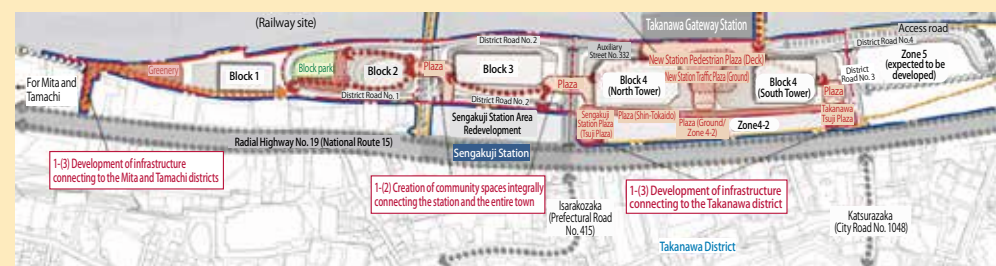


Image of the bridge structure preserved on the site in Block 3*



Plaza in front of Takanawa Gateway Station*



Image seen from Shibaura Central Park*

Shinagawa Development Project (Phase I) - Town Development around the Takanawa Gateway Station

● Overall plan and completion time for Phase I

The whole project area is composed of four blocks, and the main uses of buildings in each block are as follows:
In Block 1, there will be a high-rise apartment building and an international school.
In Block 2, there will be a cultural creation center.
In Block 3, there will be a high-rise commercial and business building.
In Block 4, there will be a building consisting of two higher parts, the north tower and the south tower, and a shared lower part facing the plaza. The lower part will have commercial and convention facilities, the northern higher part will have commercial and business facilities, and the southern higher part will have business and accommodation facilities. The town area developed in Phase I is scheduled to be open by the end of 2024.

● Design concept of the whole town area

The design guidelines for the overall town area are as follows:
- Create the "Archipelago", using the buildings of each block to resemble the "Islands of the Japanese Archipelago".
- Construct a pedestrian network like a smooth "stream" that recalls memories of the place that was once a coastline
- In the lower space, the rich greenery of each building overlaps to create a green hill in the urban area, while in the higher space, buildings which have the upper part designed in a unified pattern and the segment emphasized, stand individually facing plazas and linkage spaces in front of Takanawa Gateway Station. The aim is to create a connection between buildings, and express a "sense of unity as a group" with each building maintaining its individuality.
- In front of Takanawa Gateway Station, a "360° view open space" as a symbol of "town planning integrating a station and its surrounding area" is created by a new

station with a design that recalls a traditional Japanese house, and buildings in four blocks where streets are surrounded by greenery and designed by smooth curved lines.

● Movement within the district

Pedestrian spaces connected on the second-floor level are under development for ensuring better linkage, while the introduction of a transport assistance robot "Winglet" is under consideration.

● Interaction with local communities

Local events, such as festivals and Bon Dance in a plaza or park, are being planned together with local residents.

Facility Visit “Ai-Heart Minato”

[Facility Information]

1-4-8, Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo
108-0074
TEL: 03-5449-6455
FAX: 03-5424-1391
URL: <http://www.minato01.jp/>

Official Website



The Minato City Mentally Disabled People's Support Center (*Ai-Heart Minato*) is the only facility for mentally disabled people, which provides support for daily life, consultation, and assistance for social participation and self-reliance, so that mentally disabled people living in Minato City and their families can live with peace of mind in the community. It had operated as a community life support center in Takanaawa since 2005, but it was temporarily relocated to a private building in Hamamatsu-cho due to the renovation of its aging building. In June 2021, the renovation of the building was completed, and the center returned to Takanaawa and continues to provide consistent support for mentally disabled people by implementing new programs, including employment continuation support, short-stay services, and daily life experience. Mr. Hiroaki Tsuchiya, the director of the center, and Mr. Tetsuji Ikado, the office manager, showed us around the center, and told us about the support system, and the equipment and functions of the center.

~Connection with the community~

As part of activities to promote an understanding of mentally disabled people, the center provides them with opportunities to interact with local residents in various ways. Specifically, it holds events targeting local residents such as summer festivals, concerts, and mental health welfare seminars, as well as participation in events held by town associations and local merchants' associations by running a booth and other means.

Heart Cafe (1st floor)

Users cook in the kitchen and serve customers in the cafe. In addition to several kinds of coffee, a plate of curry and rice are popular among customers, some of whom come every day, and sometimes it is sold out. They can also enjoy richly-flavored hand-drip coffee after a meal. Currently, its seating layout has changed in consideration of preventing the spread of the coronavirus, and the entire room is thoroughly ventilated.



Heart Cafe (1st floor)

Community Activity Support Center (3rd floor)

In the open-space room where users can visit whenever they choose, various programs, such as a computer class, yoga class, and theatrical play class, are provided. There is also a resting room where those who cannot sleep at night or who are sick can take a rest. Moreover, the center provides telephone or face-to-face consultations so that they can realize their desired lifestyle, and responds to several dozens of consultations a day from those who have a feeling of loneliness or anxiety, or difficulties caused by mental disorders.



Environmentally-friendly interior and exterior designs using domestic lumber and a lot of green plants are easy on the eyes, and make visitors feel warm and comfortable.

Atelier Rosemary (4th floor)

In this atelier, mentally disabled people create coffee drip packs as original products. They grind coffee beans, weigh them, print packages, and fill them into those packages. Drip packs are sold at the “Heart Café” as finished products. Appropriate working hours and work content are determined in consultation with each person, in view of his/her condition as well as his/her strong and weak points. For example, a person who has difficulty working five days a week can choose to work one or two days a week.

Short-stay services (4th floor)

Short-stay services (up to three days and two nights per stay) are provided for the purpose of allowing users to experience living alone or providing them or their family with rest.

Life experience program (5th floor)

A daily life experience support program for social rehabilitation (e.g., cooking, money management, how to get along with others) is conducted three times a week for three months (one term), aiming at enabling users to acquire basic lifestyle habits centered on food, clothing and housing.



Atelier Rosemary (4th floor)

Embassy Visit Republic of Uzbekistan



Mr. Mukhsinkhuja
ABDURAKHMONOV

Uzbekistan in Central Asia, which is located at a key junction on the Silk Road, has had interactions with Japan since ancient times and still maintains friendly relations. The country achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and established diplomatic relations with Japan in the following year. The year of 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

We visited the Embassy of Uzbekistan at Takanawa 2-chome and interviewed Ambassador Abdurakhmonov, who was appointed in the summer of 2021. After graduating from a university in Uzbekistan, he came to Japan as a Government-sponsored foreign student, and completed the doctoral course of the Graduate School at Hokkaido University. Then, he ran a company in Sapporo, and lived in Japan for 18 years in total. We were surprised that he spoke Japanese fluently.

Area:	447,400 km ² (approx. 1.2 times that of Japan)
Population:	Approx. 33.9 million people (data of 2021 from the United Nations Population Fund)
Capital:	Tashkent
Languages:	The official language is Uzbek, but Russian is also widely used.
Religion:	Predominantly Islamist Sunnis



World Heritage Sites such as Samarkand and Itchan Kala



Samarkand
(World Heritage Site)

It has long been known as an oasis city on the Silk Road. Beautiful buildings decorated with blue tiles are lined up together, and the cityscape is called "Blue City" or "Samarkand Blue".



Itchan Kala
(World Heritage Site)

It is an inner town of the historical heritage city of Khiva, where there are many traditional examples of architecture, such as the former Royal Palace, mosques, and madrasahs (a higher educational institution for learning Islamic doctrine).

Samarkand was the capital of the Timurid Empire which assumed control of a vast area of the Eurasian continent in the 14th century. Khiva is located in the middle of two great desert areas, Kyzylkum and Karakum. Important archaeological sites are scattered around both areas.

Japanese archaeologist Kyuzo Kato (an honorary citizen of Termez City) is well known in Uzbekistan.

Mr. Kato had been involved in a number of excavations and exchange activities in cooperation with various organizations. He was awarded the Dustlik (Friendship) Order in recognition of his great contribution to historical research on Uzbekistan, and has appeared in a school textbook.

Career of Archaeologist Kyuzo Kato



Mr. Kyuzo Kato



Kara-tepa Ruins (ancient Buddhist monastery)

Graduated from Sophia University Faculty of Humanities. Awarded the title of Professor Emeritus at Soka University and the National Museum of Ethnology. Born in Gyeongsangbuk-do in Korea under Japanese rule in 1922. In his teens, moved to Yamaguchi Prefecture in Japan, where his brother lived. Served in the war, and had been detained in Siberia for five years. Visited Uzbekistan as the head of the Japanese archaeological research team in 1989, and since then has been involved in the excavation and survey of Buddhist sites for 27 years. Unearthed a huge stupa with his colleagues at the Kara-tepa Ruins in 1998 (the stupa was the main tower built around the 4th century, and it is said that Xuanzang Sanzang dropped by the tower when he passed the Silk Road in the 7th century). Died in Uzbekistan in 2016 (at the age of 94).

Navoi Theater, which has a deep connection with Japan



Alisher Navoi State Academic Bolshoi Theater, which is a stately brick building



There are 1,400 seats, and the lobbies are decorated with amazing sculptures.

The Navoi Theater is one of the largest theaters in Central Asia and the Middle East. After World War II, about 500 Japanese people who had been detained in Siberia were sent to Uzbekistan as construction workers, and engaged in the construction of the theater.

Those involved in the construction work were divided into about 20 groups for each specialty, and Army Technical Captain Yukio Nagata (25 years old at the time) took the lead, bringing workers together and cheering them up, and this led to the completion of the theater. It is said that some local residents were moved to see Japanese workers working diligently, and offered them food.

Many buildings collapsed in the great earthquake that struck Uzbekistan in 1966, but the Navoi Theater remained intact, and attracted attention as "a surviving building which had been constructed with the help of the Japanese". The story of the Japanese who worked diligently and earnestly continues to be handed down.

Many young people in Uzbekistan are studying Japanese

Not to mention the story of the Navoi Theater, Uzbek people take a lot of interest in Japan partly due to the influence of the TV program "Oshin" (watched by 80% of Uzbek citizens) and anime. There are about 150 private Japanese language schools. You may be surprised to hear that 70% of Uzbekistan's population is made up of young people (under 40 years old), so I hope that such young human resources will be able to play an active part in Japan.

Plenty of delicious fruits



A market in Tashkent where a wide variety of dried fruits and nuts are sold



Uzbek wine and traditional painted plates

Uzbekistan has many sunny days, and plenty of delicious fruits, such as melons, grapes and apricots, can be harvested. Dried fruits and nuts are very delicious. However, since it is an inland country, it is difficult to trade with foreign countries by maritime transport. We have been selling such products online, and I hope that in the near future we will be able to sell them in Japan, including supermarkets.

pet I am a member of the community!

Katsumaru and Vivian coming from Miyakojima

Katsumaru: A male dog whose estimated age is three years

Vivian: A female dog whose estimated age is one and a half years

Caretaker: Mr. Yutaka Nakajima (living in Shirokane)



Vivian (left) and Katsumaru (right)

Katsumaru and Vivian were kept separately on Miyako Island in Okinawa Prefecture, and started living in our house a year ago. When we started keeping those dogs, they seemed nervous during their walk in an urban city unfamiliar to them, but they learned from a dog trainer about what they needed to live. They have become accustomed to urban life more quickly because they do everything together. They like to go to Shirokane Park and the Shirokanedai Acorn Children's Amusement Park, in particular.

The place where I first met those two dogs is the website of a group for protected dogs. My wife had become strongly aware of the problem of the killing of stray dogs and cats. She had been working for an NPO saving pets from being killed over 10 years ago, and I was influenced by her. I often get acquainted with European people because of my job, and I have learned that they are strongly opposed to the sale of companion animals, so I started thinking about having a protected dog. Some people say that protected dogs are traumatized and shut their mind against human beings, but all the protected dogs we have met seemed to enjoy living with human beings thanks to the enthusiasm and affection of the members of the animal welfare organization. In our house, Katsumaru never leaves me alone because he likes playing rough with me, while Vivian as a female dog stays near my wife who always treats her indulgently and gives her snacks secretly.

Now they enjoy living in Tokyo, playing with and chasing each other.



Dogs stop at the sight of my hand gesture meaning "Wait!"

(Written by: Takigawa and Tamaki; Photo: Matsushima)

Notice from the Regional City Office

What is Minatop?

This is a community-based information paper that has been published in the Takanawa area since 2006, and is created in collaboration with the local people and the ward.

The contents are diverse, such as "local events and community activities," "local history and resources," and "people who are active in the community," and you're sure to discover something new. Read Minatop and become attached to the area.

I hope that this information paper will help some people to become interested in or like the area called "Takanawa".



Local people and the ward having an editorial meeting.



Why don't you learn "Easy Japanese" ?

Foreign residents from 130 or more countries reside in Minato City.

For this reason, we are actively promoting the use of "easy Japanese" which consists of rather simple Japanese expressions so that both Japanese and foreign residents can have conversations with other residents from any country, and can participate in local activities in cooperation with other community residents.

If you have any problems in your neighborhood, such as "I don't know how to use 'easy Japanese'," "I don't know how to communicate with people from other countries", or "I cannot interact with other people due to a language barrier", please contact the Internationalization Promotion Section of the Regional Promotion Division.

[Contact] Global Community Planning Subsection, Community Promotion Section, Industry and Community Promotion Support Department TEL : 3578-2565

Open until 7:00 p.m. on every Wednesday. * Services handled are limited. Please check in advance.
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