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Community Publication

# JAPAN

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**MISAWA SAILORS  
WARM UP SAPPORO  
SNOW FESTIVAL**  
PAGE 4

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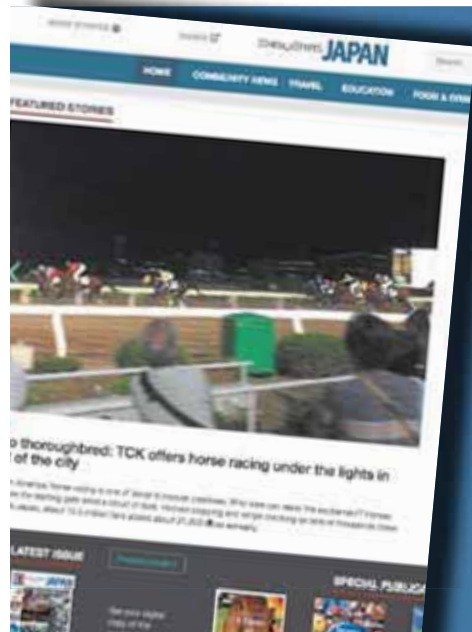
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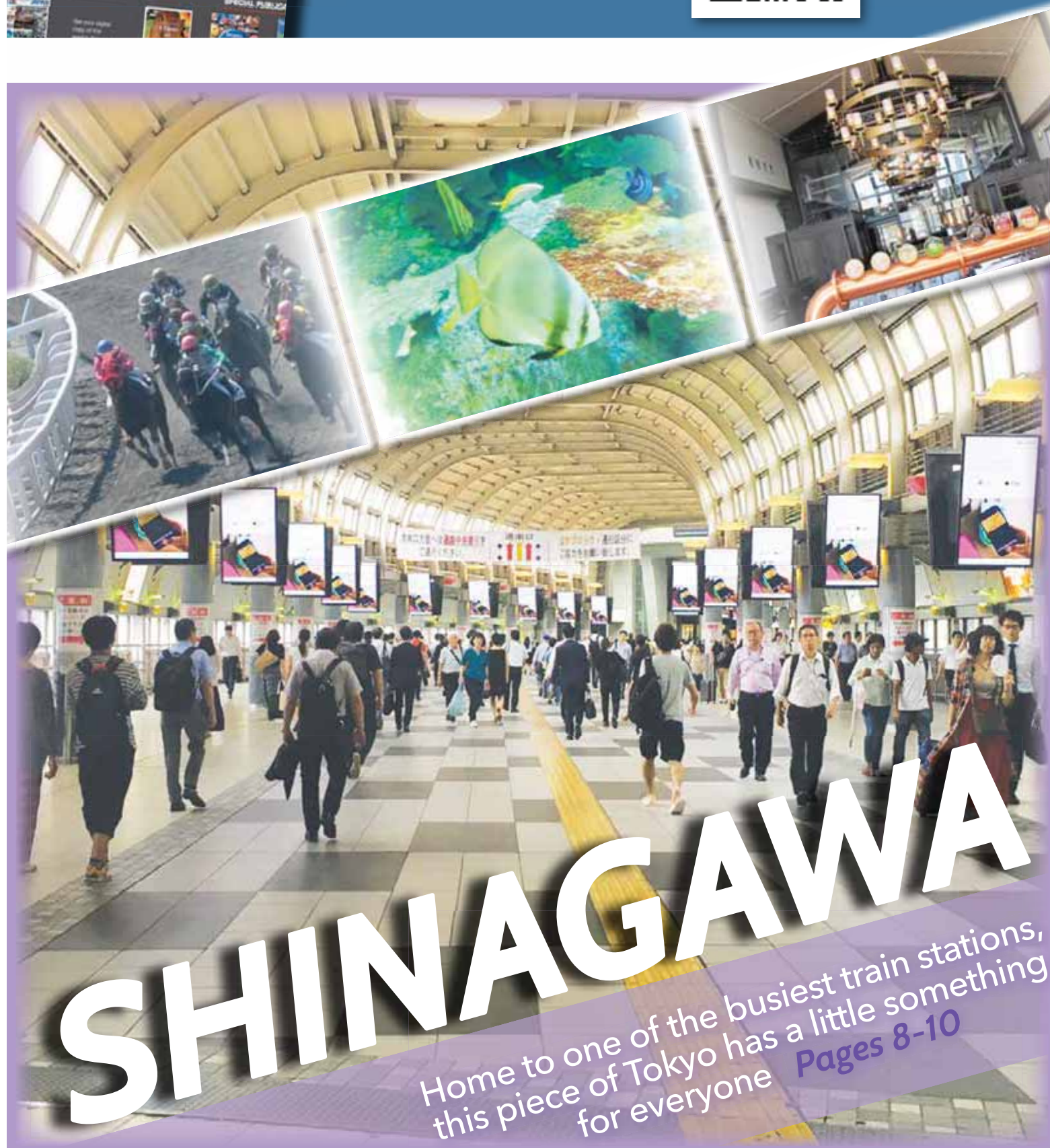
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Home to one of the busiest train stations,  
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**THE NEW SANNO**



# Misawa vet takes care of man's best friend

BY 1ST LT. JEREMY GARCIA,  
35TH FIGHTER WING

MISAWA AIR BASE – The 35th Security Forces Squadron has 10 military working dogs stationed at Misawa Air Base, aiding in the safety and security for Team Misawa. Just like our airmen,



Rachel Hixenbaugh gives a shot to an airmen's pug in order to preserve the elderly dog's health and ability to walk at Misawa Air Base on Jan. 18. Hixenbaugh's medical attention allows the dog to continue living a life with reduced physical pain from aging. Photos by 1st Lt. Jeremy Garcia, U.S. Air Force

these dogs have routine medical check-ups to ensure they remain fit to fight.

Rachel Hixenbaugh, a Misawa Vet Clinic animal health assistant, tends to these dogs, ensuring their health is up to standards.

"I love working with animals," said Hixenbaugh. "It's really fun and fulfilling for me to work with these patients and keep them as my clientele."

She started at the Misawa Pet Kennel as a volunteer and made her way to the Misawa Vet Clinic in the summer of 2017. This isn't her first time in a clinic, though; she's worked with animals for the past 12 years.

"I missed animals and the medical aspect of taking care of them," explained Hixenbaugh, as she described her transition from the pet kennel to the vet clinic. "I love participating in the surgeries and dental cleanings for the dogs, and I wanted to educate people on what it took to actually own and care for a pet."

The Hawaii-native explains some people are not prepared for the many responsibilities associated with pet ownership. As a result, she does her best in explaining the needs of different breeds to those considering buying a dog.

"She is on top of things, and she's been a ton of help around the clinic, especially covering noncommissioned officer work when we didn't have one," said Capt. Kevin Smith, the Misawa veterinarian.

"I love working with animals."

– Rachel Hixenbaugh

"She's always willing to jump in and do whatever it takes to help."

Hixenbaugh has a passion for working with all kinds of dogs, but she empathizes with military working dogs because of their potential to be aggressive.

These dogs are responsible for detecting explosive ordinance and drugs and conducting perimeter checks with their handlers, which requires them to be disciplined and obedient.

"I really like working with aggressive dogs because most of them are misunderstood," said Hixenbaugh. "If you actually take the time to work with them and be patient with them, you'll see a whole other side of the animal you did not know existed."

Hixenbaugh is a pillar of stability for

military members and their animals because she has shown them she can be trusted with their pets.

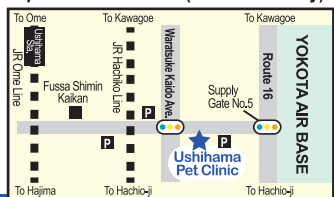
"A lot of the families here at Misawa appreciate her as the familiar face," said Smith. "In the military, things change often, and it's nice for people to have a vet they know and trust with their animals."

Hixenbaugh dedicates her life to taking care of animals and continues to do so, even when she is not at the clinic; she has 10 animals of her own between her home in Hawaii and here.

"There are so many abused and neglected animals, but when we give them attention and love, we see the change," said Hixenbaugh. "That means a lot to me; there is something about it that's very healing."

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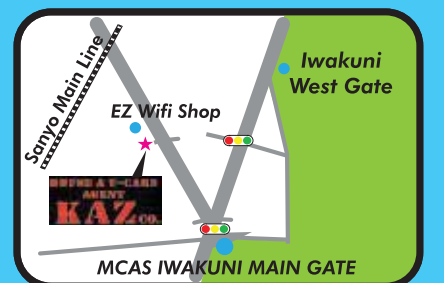
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The Navy's 2019 Sapporo Snow Festival entry, shown here Thursday, Feb. 7, featured an eagle, anchor and American flag.



Yeoman 2nd Class Zachary Sakuda interacts with Sapporo Snow Festival attendee Yoshiko Aoki as she admires the Navy's 2019 snow sculpture.

# Misawa sailors warm up Sapporo Snow Festival

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
CAITLIN DOORNBOS,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: Feb. 7, 2019

**SAPPORO** — A team of 11 sailors from Naval Air Facility Misawa in five days transformed a big block of compacted snow into a frosty monument to the Navy for the 2019 Sapporo Snow Festival this week.

“When you show up and it’s a 6-foot by 6-foot cube, it’s kind of hard to get people to envision what you’re putting on a napkin in a drawing in Misawa,” said Chief Petty Officer Frank Ring, a Seabee chief builder.

It was the 36th year the Navy sent a team to the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido to participate in the event. Chief Petty Officer Chris Norris, a chief construction mechanic, said the festival offers a chance to make

a grand gesture of goodwill to people from across the world.

“I would say as a community relations project, this is the gold standard for us in Japan,” he said. “This is the largest one we do, and I think it probably has one of the largest impacts, too — and not just in Japan, because we’re interacting with [people from] Taiwan, Australia, Hong Kong, Thailand, New Zealand, the Philippines, Israel and also people coming from stateside.”

This year marked the 70th snow festival, which draws more than 2 million visitors annually, according to organizers. The event — held Jan. 31 through Feb. 11 — offers food vendors, music performances and winter activities, such as sledding.

Visitors come to admire carvings by professional and amateur teams from around the world that are spread throughout a 13-block park in central Sapporo. This year’s snow

sculptures depicted everything from a 6-foot-tall Spongebob Squarepants to a 20-foot-tall Cup Noodles container complete with a built-in ice slide.

The Navy’s creation, complete with an eagle, anchor, American flag and “USN” block letters, was designed to be “easy to explain to the Japanese,” Ring said.

“The eagle represents strength and power, and the anchor represents Navy stability,” he said.

Ring’s idea worked — thousands of festival-goers stopped by to meet the sailors and admire

their work throughout the week. “I knew they were something related to America because of the eagle,” said snow-festival visitor Yoshiko Aoki. “I was here when they were building it last week and I came back to check the completion.”

Aoki, of Chiba, Japan, said she was glad for the chance to practice her English and

**“When you show up and it’s a 6-foot by 6-foot cube, it’s kind of hard to get people to envision what you’re putting on a napkin in a drawing in Misawa.”**

— Chief Petty Officer Frank Ring

interact with the Americans. She asked to take a picture with the sailors, who gave her a Naval Air Facility Misawa pin featuring the U.S. and Japanese flags.

“They are my son’s generation,” Aoki said. “Now we are friends.”

Petty Officer 3rd Class Sean Ingraham, an information systems technician, said the support visitors have shown his team has been overwhelming.

“Being out here shows our presence and that we’re trying

to get involved with the community,” he said. “It shows initiative — and, especially doing this for 36 years, it’s also consistency.”

The team members were nominated for the 11-day temporary-duty trip by senior-enlisted leaders in their commands for being exemplary sailors, Ring said. While three were Seabee builders, most did not have construction experience.

“The person who did a lot of the building was a master-at-arms,” Norris said. “To see people come together and their creativity come out, it’s really awesome.”

The sailors return to Misawa on Friday, but say they plan to return one day as visitors to the festival.

“It’s definitely something I’m going to hold dear to me forever,” Ingraham said. “It’s a good memory.”

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**EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:**  
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A Cup Noodles container.



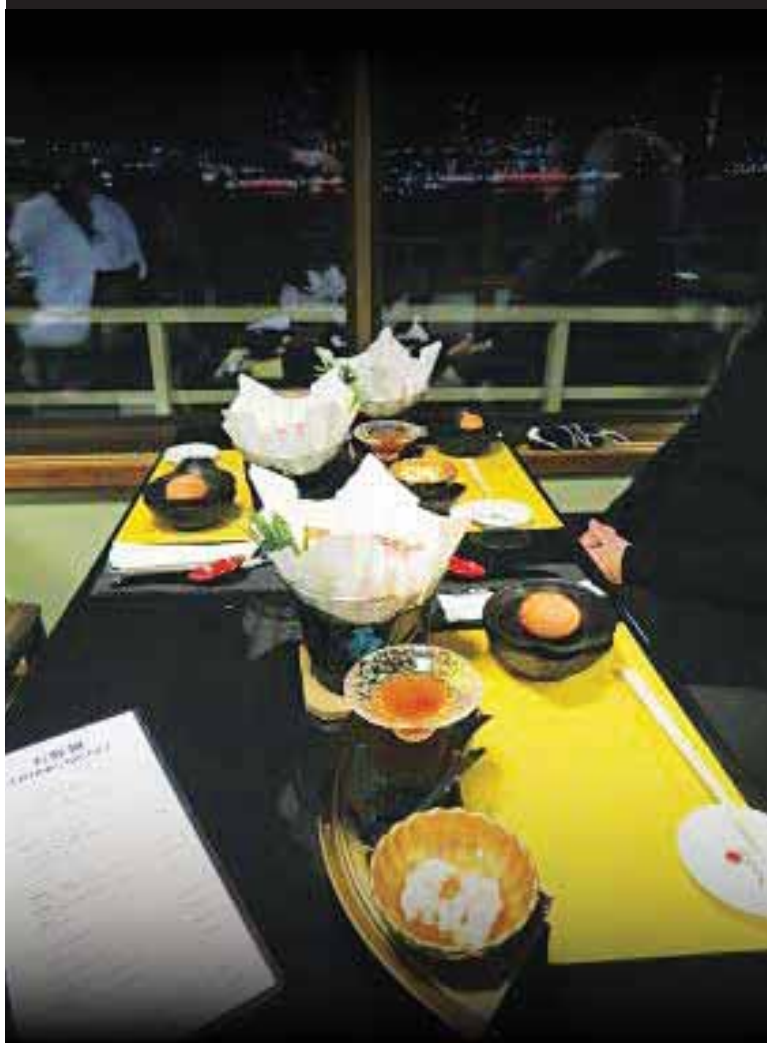
Yeoman 2nd Class Zachary Sakuda interacts with Sapporo Snow Festival attendee Yoshiko Aoki as she admires the Navy's 2019 snow sculpture.



Star Wars characters and spacecraft.



Suship boat reflection sumida river.



Suship dinner ship course sushi.

# SUSHIP

## A floating world of fine dining

STORY AND PHOTOS BY VICKI L. BEYER,  
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE

During the Edo Period (1615-1868), a concept and imagined universe entitled ukiyo, or “the floating world”, made its way throughout the country. Within the growing urban centers of Edo, Kyoto and Osaka, the idea represented the common people’s desires to spend their time being entertained, as the rich and elite did. To the simpler countryfolk that lived far away from the prospering cities, the idea came to represent a near mystical vision of luxury and extravagance the early city-dwellers of Japan experienced. Ukiyo-e was born of this image, the art form dedicated entirely to depicting images of the “floating world.”

There may be less blind reverence and artistic admiration for the lives of those who mingle within “the floating world” today, but on the other hand, there is a much more accessible “floating world.” This newer concept also espouses an appreciation for the finer luxuries and forms of entertainment in life, but it comes in the form of an excellent ten course meal served in a stylish atmosphere aboard a small ship afloat in Tokyo Bay.

In sight of the Rainbow Bridge and the sparkling lights of Odai-ba, the floating restaurant called “Suship” (the obvious portmanteau of “sushi” and “ship”) serves a ¥10,000 set menu meal dominated by seafood sourced from Hokkaido.

Diners are picked up at a boat landing near Kachidoki Bridge for a 10-15 minute ride down the Sumida River, reaching Suship shortly after passing under the Rainbow Bridge. The ride is a visual aperitif, allowing expectations of the experience ahead to build up.

From the outside, Suship looks like many other yakata-bune dinner boats, but inside, it has Western-style seating that can fit

a maximum of 36 diners. Tatami flooring and woven bamboo on the ceiling keep the room quiet no matter how crowded with guests it might be. The lovely space, the elegant atmosphere, the fantastic water views—it’s easy to imagine this as a great spot for a romantic dinner.

You’ll find the appetizer already laid out and waiting at your table, but before picking up your chopsticks, take in the view. You’re sitting close to the water, with city lights in the distance and their reflections twinkling in the undulations of the bay.

The appetizers consist of a number of small seafood dishes, cleverly contained in two tiers of a semi-circular jubako. It’s hard to know where to begin. About the same time as you have made your decision and begun to sample crab or squid or salmon roe (to name a few of the appetizers), the waiting staff light a small lump of cooking fuel below a pot containing all the ingredients for an individual serving of sukiyaki (thin slices of beautifully marbled beef), which takes center stage. As the broth heats, the beef and the vegetables that surround it begin to cook and soon the entire dish is happily bubbling away. By now, you’re worked through the seafood appetizers—or most of them, at any rate—and are ready to enjoy the freshly cooked sukiyaki.

To complement your meal, consider adding the drink package. Right now, the restaurant is offering the unlimited package for just an additional ¥1,200—how can you beat that? In some restaurants the house “vintage” is questionable, but in this case, the sake served is an excellent complement to each course of the meal.

After sukiyaki, the next course is a delicate clear soup with a joint of crab legs, the flesh juicy and delicious once you’ve extracted

it. Next comes shrimp and toro tuna sashimi, with the usual condiments to be added to the soy sauce. The succulent sashimi literally melts in your mouth.

Following this, three plates of sushi are served, one at a time. First come four pieces in Edomae-style sushi, accompanied by thin slices of gari ginger pickles. The second plate carries two pieces of nigiri sushi, one halibut and one raw octopus, each topped with a small dot of pink (grated radish with some pink mustard for color) to make the white fish look like little Japanese flags. Apparently octopus needs to rest a couple of days to make it tender enough to be eaten completely raw.

The last plate of sushi includes oshizushi which has been pressed in bamboo for a couple of days, as well as an uncut tuna roll (the waitress recommended using fingers to eat it) and even a California roll.

By this time, you’ve been stuffed; this is a big meal. Fortunately, the dessert is light, a few pieces of jelly-like warabimochi dusted with matcha powder; a perfect end to a memorable meal.

Throughout this delightful meal, enjoy views of the bay, neighboring dinner boats and the lights of the city. If you feel up to it, take a breather on the boat’s roof and relax to the slow ocean breeze while you take in the spectacularly expansive view in every direction. It is the perfect cap to an amazing dining experience.

Suship offers hourly seatings from 5pm until late (make online reservations <https://suship.com/#reserve>). From the time of pick up at Kachidoki Bridge (about a 7-8 minute walk from Tsukiji Station) to the time you are returned to the same spot, the escape is about three hours. It is a fantastic evening in the floating world of fine dining.



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Eiji Tsuburaya mentoring actor Haruo Nakajima King Kong vs Godzilla.  
Photos courtesy of TM&© Toho Co., LTD;  
© Tsuburaya Productions; © Eiji Project



# TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY GODZILLA DIRECTOR OPENS IN FUKUSHIMA

BY EDWARD L. HOLLAND,  
STRIPES JAPAN

**E**xperience the world of Godzilla, Ultraman and their co-creator, Eiji Tsuburaya the God of Special Effects in Sukagawa, Fukushima, as the region continues to rebound from the Great Eastern Earthquake. On Jan. 11, after five years in the making, the Sukagawa Citizens Exchange Center tette building opened to hundreds in attendance.

During the opening ceremony, Mayor Katsuya Hashimoto said, "Our brand-new community center tette (hands) is Sukagawa city's main place for cultural

exchange and citizens' activities and we are committed to nurturing citizens here long into the future. We also honor tokusatsu (special effects) master, Eiji Tsuburaya, born in Sukagawa city, for his accomplishments at the Eiji Tsuburaya Museum, an archival center that will disseminate Japanese special effects to the world."

The dreaming spirit of Tsuburaya, who was inspired by Merian C. Cooper's King Kong (1933) to make his own monster movies, is chronicled in detail on

the 5th floor of the tette Exchange Center. Before his untimely passing in 1970, Tsuburaya worked on more than 250 military and science fiction movies



Director Eiji Tsuburaya.

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and TV programs with Toho Studios and his own Tsuburaya Productions. With a tight-knit team of 60 innovative artists, he debuted Ultra Q (1965) and Ultraman (1966) to unsuspecting Japanese homes, spawning the first kaiju boom.

All over Sukagawa you can celebrate Tsuburaya's universe of characters at the town's city hall, train station, post offices, stores, airport, and the community center with its five modern floors of: classes, music rooms, event halls, libraries, and child-care spaces. The tette building also includes cultural meeting rooms, an Ultra FM radio station, stores, Ultraman kaiju statues, and the museum focused on the aspiring airplane pilot who flew south, ascended to photographer, and became an unequaled director of special visual effects, utilizing miniatures and suitmation, co-inventing Japan's most iconic monsters and heroes.

Godzilla (1954), directed by Ishiro Honda, produced by Tomoyuki Tanaka and Tsuburaya's Ultraman (1966), with designs by Tohl Narita forged an unforgettable path of entertainment bridging kaiju and superheroes in movie houses and homes heralded by award winning filmmakers Shinji Higuchi (Shin Godzilla, Attack on Titan) and Guillermo del Toro (The Shape of Water, Pan's Labyrinth). Tsuburaya's endless cavalcade of "monstars" continues to delight as both sides of the Pacific await the spring release of Godzilla: King of the Monsters by Legendary Warner Bros. An infectious sense of wonder and imagination bred by Tsuburaya surrounds you at the Science Patrol themed

Fukushima airport, on the Ultraman adorned main street and in the inanimate, yet life-like Godzilla suit at the museum.

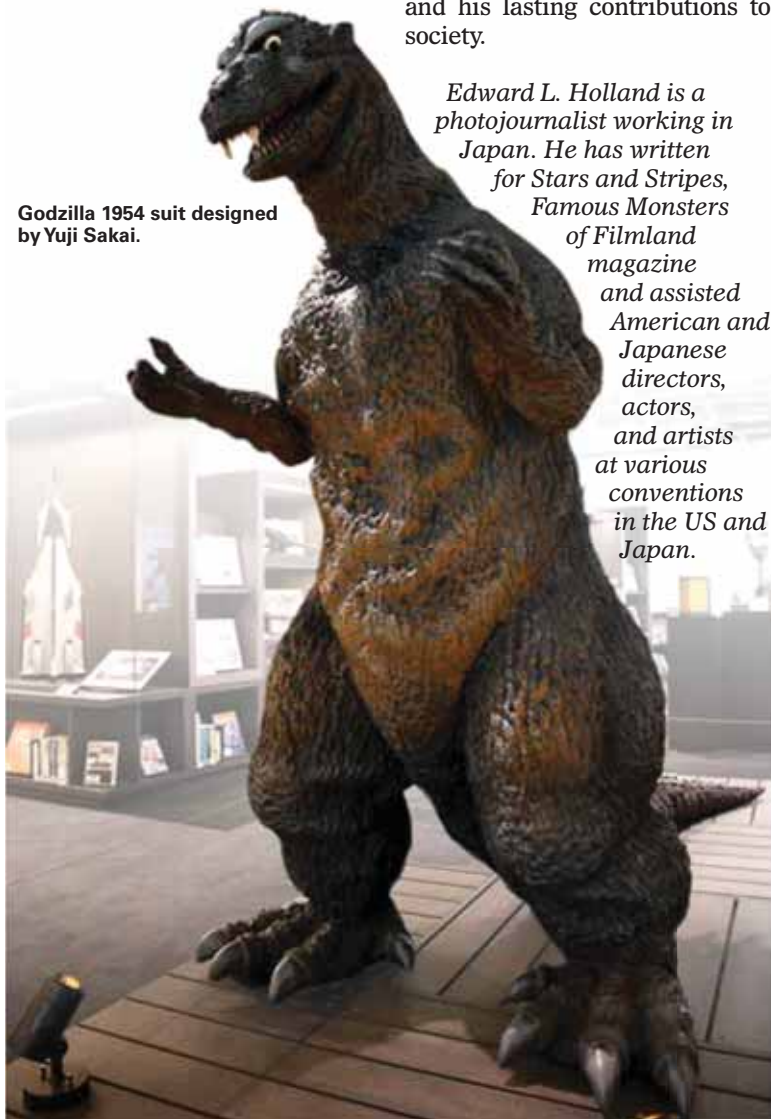
The Exchange Center assists children, seniors, and the disabled by providing a common space to meet, read, exercise the body, mind and honor the legendary spirit of resilient Fukushima. The Tsuburaya Museum, a fusion of more than 100 exhibits, models, displays, 1,200 plus books available to check out, dioramas, audio-visual zones, and a 14-minute Godzilla short film with the aforementioned 2-meter 1954 style Godzilla suit is something to behold for ambitious artists and fans. With its three photo free zones and create-your-own kaiju interactive screens, you can come away with lasting memories during a trip north of the hustle and bustle of Tokyo.

"The Tsuburaya Museum is bigger than I thought it would be, with so much information, not normally available for the public to see," Resident Mayu Hashimoto said. "I highly recommend it!"

Aligned with the spirit of innocence, the museum exists as a foundation to inspire children now and into the future; to dream as Tsuburaya did making model airplanes as a child above his family's miso paste factory, before attending flight school in Haneda, Tokyo, and later launching a ground-breaking career in motion pictures. The Eiji Tsuburaya Museum in Sukagawa, Fukushima is a welcoming environment for adults and parents to reminisce of fantastic beasts and heroes from their childhood, and to trace in-depth with children the heart, soul, and spirit of Godzilla, Ultraman, Mothra, Rodan, King Ghidorah, the God of Special Effects' milestones, and his lasting contributions to society.

*Edward L. Holland is a photojournalist working in Japan. He has written for Stars and Stripes, Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine and assisted American and Japanese directors, actors, and artists at various conventions in the US and Japan.*

Godzilla 1954 suit designed by Yuji Sakai.



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OKINAWA MISAWA YOKOSUKA ATSUGI ZAMA YOKOTA FUJI IWAKUNI SASEBO OKINAWA MISAWA





## Shinagawa Shrine

What better way to start a day trip in the traditional gate town of Tokyo than by visiting the majestic Shinagawa Shrine?

Since Shogun Minamoto Yoritomo founded it in the 12th century, numerous feudal lords visited and worshipped the shrine as they sought safety of sea travel and victory in battle.

Raised up along long gray stone stairs, you will find a traditional black shrine hall with two torii gates. Go through the torii gates and make a wish in front of the shrine hall by casting a coin, making two bows, two hand-claps and again, one deep bow.

You may notice a small mountain in the shrine garden near the stone stairway. It is a miniature Mount Fuji, called “Shinagawa Fuji” or “Fujiduka”. Because Mount Fuji is so worshipped, people will climb and hope to have their wish granted at the top. The tiny artificial mountain was built for those who were not able to climb the real Mount Fuji. If you climb the mini-Fuji, be sure make your wish at the top.

Did I mention the shrine is known as a strong “power spot” - a location that many believe gives you power and luck?

### Shingawa Shrine

LOCATION: 3-7-15 Kita Shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo  
(4-minute walk from Shinbanba Station of Keikyu Line)

URL: [www.tokyo-jinjacho.or.jp/shinagawa/5264/](http://www.tokyo-jinjacho.or.jp/shinagawa/5264/) (Japanese)  
TEL: 03-3474-5575

The coastal area of Shinagawa as seen from the Tokyo monorail.



# Shinagawa

## An old – and new – gate town

STORY AND PHOTO  
ST

## Ohi Horse Racetrack

Ok, now you're feeling lucky after visiting the shrine and miniature Mount Fuji, so take a walk up to Ohi Racetrack, aka Tokyo City Keiba (TCK), to test out your new-found luck.

With more than 11 million people visiting each year, the TCK is one of the most popular racetracks among six racetracks available in the Kanto Plain.

The 100-yen (\$0.90) admission lets you watch all 8 - 12 races for the day. They are open around 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (day race) and 2 - 9 p.m. (evening race) depending on the races. This racetrack is known for its evening races, as 72 of the total 92 days of racing are held at night. You can drop by this racetrack on the way home from work to enjoy late races, as well.

There is outdoor and indoor bleachers, or you can sit in special box seats on the observation decks for an additional 1,000-3,000 yen.

On a given race day, you'll find thousands of people, mostly men in their 60s or older with a few younger couples, busily studying and marking up their programs. Once the race starts, the crowd roars and the horses bolt out of the starting gate, galloping along the one-mile track at breakneck speed for less than two minutes.

If you're feeling really lucky after wishing at the Shinagawa Shrine, there is the “3-ren-tan,” (trifecta) where you try to pick the first three finishers in order for a single race. In 2010, one of these 100-yen tickets paid out a record sum of roughly 25 million yen (\$225,000).

With the 3-ren-tan, there are 9 ways of betting available at the racetrack. The cheapest ticket is just 100 yen. You can buy any of these tickets – just mark the horses' numbers, the type of bet you want and the amount on the application form and insert it with money into a ticket machine. After that, you'll get your wager ticket and you're good to go. The forms are in Japanese, but the Japan Racing Association has an online guide in English.

The newly renovated Diamond Turn restaurant offers quality buffet dining on the 4th floor of an observation deck - a great place to watch the races.

### Ohi Keibajo (Tokyo City Keiba) Racetrack

LOCATION: 2-1-2 Katsushima, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo  
(10-minute walk from Tachiaigawa Station of Keikyu Line)  
URL: <http://www.tokyocitykeiba.com/en/>  
TEL: 03-3763-2151



With attractions that include a horse track, shrine and a one-day trip for anyone looking to get off base a Shinagawa was developed as a post town and Japan for hundreds of years. Located in Southeast Tokyo, on their way to the big city.

Nowadays, it is still an important gate town of Tokyo, a platforms for 8 railway lines including the bullet train.

More than 530,000 passengers get on and off the train to Kyoto, Osaka and other parts of western Japan, as well.

Despite the hundreds of thousands of people just for anyone staying in Japan.

[takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com](mailto:takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com)





## SHINAGAWA

One of the Tokyo 23 Wards

POPULATION: 403,338  
(as of 2018)

LOCATION: 2-1-36 Hiromachi, Shinaga-ku,  
Tokyo  
(Ward Hall - 30-minutes from Hardy Barracks)

ATTRACTIONS: Tokyo City Keiba (Ohi Horse Racetrack),  
Shinagawa Shrine, Shinagawa Aquarium, T.Y. Brewery  
URL: [www.city.shinagawa.tokyo.jp.e.ke.hp.transer.com/](http://www.city.shinagawa.tokyo.jp.e.ke.hp.transer.com/)  
TEL: 03-3777-1111 (Shinagawa Ward Hall)



# Shinagawa Town of Tokyo

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,  
STRIPES JAPAN

Shinagawa, aquarium and waterfront brewery, Shinagawa makes for a great  
and explore part of Japan.  
and was a gate city of Edo (old Tokyo) for the western regions of  
many tourists would pass through or stay overnight in Shinagawa

Shinagawa Station is one of the Tokyo's largest stations with 22  
trains at the station every day, including tourists on their way to  
well as Tokyo salarymen on their way to work.  
"passing through," Shinagawa has plenty to make it a destination

## T.Y. Harbor Brewery & Restaurant

Don't miss wonderful views of the Tokyo coastal area from the  
monorail that runs through Shinagawa. Take a 10-15-minute walk from  
the aquarium to Ohi Keibajo-mae station to find this unique train.

Seats on the monorail are installed on the center of train, which enables you  
to enjoy the impressive views of Tokyo coastal area.

Get off the monorail at Tennozu Isle Station to visit a stylish craft brewery located  
on the waterfront.

With the open, peaceful atmosphere, T.Y. Harbor is an ideal place to wrap up your  
one-day Shinagawa strolling with its savory homemade craft beers and tasty dishes. Large  
triangular-roofed brewery buildings, wooden decks, boats and piers in front of the brewery  
form a picturesque vista with surrounding iron bridges, parks and colorful buildings.

The wide, wooden interior and high ceilings give the bar a classical look and cozy atmo-  
sphere. At the restaurant, you can sit indoors or out along the water. I recommend the deck,  
as you'll have a beautiful view of the canal and all the boats that pass.

The brewery offers six homemade beers (pale ale, amber ale, wheat ale, IPA,  
imperial stout and brewer's choice of the month), various other spirits and soft  
drinks.

The pale ale was my favorite with its extremely fruity and hoppy, yet crispy  
bitter flavor goes well after long day of walking around the area.

As T.Y. Harbor is a very popular spot and always crowded with customers.  
A reservation is recommended, although waiting along the waterfront for a  
table isn't such a bad option.

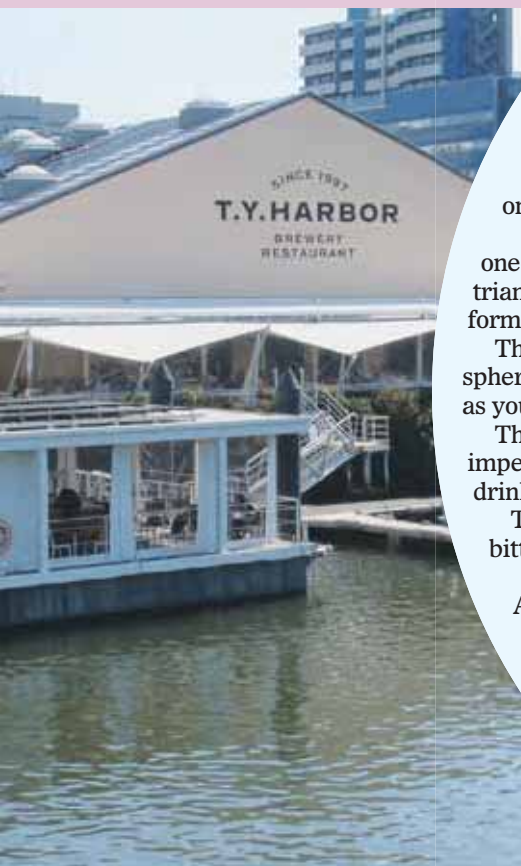
### T.Y. Harbor Brewery & Restaurant

LOCATION: 2-1-3 Higashi Shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo  
(7-minute walk from Tennozu Isle Station of Tokyo Monorail)

HOURS: 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., 5:30 - 10 p.m.

URL: [www.tysonsjp/brewery/en/](http://www.tysonsjp/brewery/en/)

TEL: 03-5479-455



SEE SHINAGAWA ON PAGE 10





# SHINAGAWA: Activities for young and old



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

## Shinagawa Aquarium

Be sure to drop by Shinagawa Aquarium nearby the racetrack, as it offers full-scale displays of more than 450 species throughout its 25 areas.

Must-see attractions in the aquarium include giant tanks with see-through undersea tunnels. Walking through the glass tunnels, you can get a close look at 1,500 fish and more. You feel like you're walking on the ocean floor as you see countless species swim past you, including groupers, sea breams, sharks, turtles, giant rays and seals. It is a truly amazing and surreal experience.

You can also operate a remote-controlled turtle-shaped robot that swims in the tank. Its water-proof camera and high-resolution monitor let you observe these sea creatures even closer.

The aquarium also features seal and dolphin shows 10 times a day. Here, you can see giant dolphins jumping through hoops while cute seals wave to you with their funny gestures.

There are various other tanks full of colorful coral reef-dwelling fish, large fish from the Amazon River, electric eels and transparent Indian glassy fish, along with mammoth sharks and several different penguins.

It may take a couple of hours to enjoy all the tanks and attractions.

The aquarium is situated in a large public park with a saltwater pond, lots of rocks and various flowers. It's a nice place to take a stroll and enjoy a hot dog or some popcorn on your way back from the aquarium.

### Shinagawa Aquarium

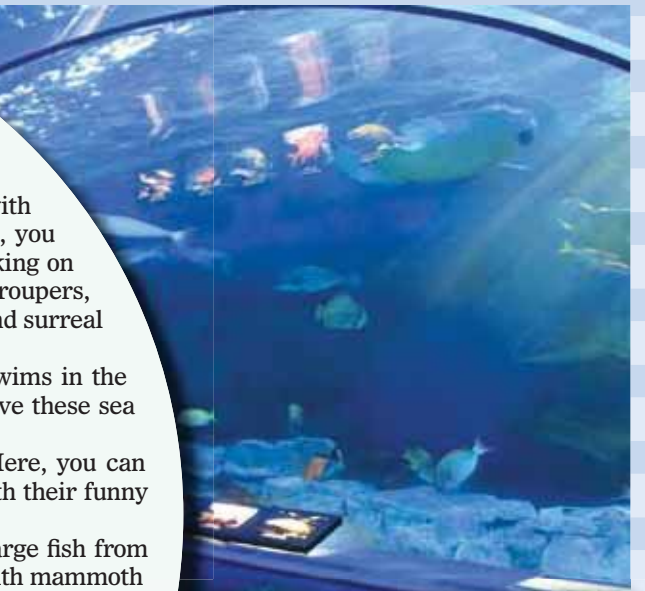
**LOCATION:** 3-2-1 Katsushima, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo  
(8-minute walk from Omorikaigan station of Keikyu Line)

**HOURS:** Wed. – Mon., 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**ADMISSION:** adult: 1,350 yen, ages 65 and older: 1,200 yen,  
elementary and middle schooler: 600 yen, ages 4-5: 300 yen

**URL:** [www.aquarium.gr.jp](http://www.aquarium.gr.jp)

**TEL:** 03-3762-3433



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## FEBRUARY

### MAROON 5

Tokyo, Feb. 25, 7 p.m., Tokyo Dome, 10,000-12,000-15,000-38,000 yen; Udo 03-3402-5999.

### THE INTERNET

Tokyo, Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m., Shinkiba Studio Coast, 6,300 yen (adv. standing); Smash 03-3444-6751.

### YELLOWJACKETS

Tokyo, Feb. 26 & 27, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Cotton Club, 7,800-9,000 yen; 03-3215-1555.

### THE MANHATTANS FEAT. GERALD ALSTON

Tokyo, Feb. 26 & 27, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 7,900-8,900 yen; 03-3405-1133.

### PALE WAVES

Tokyo, Feb. 27, 7 p.m., Ebisu Liquidroom, 6,500 yen, Feb. 28, 7 p.m., Daikanyama Space Odd, 6,500 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

### MATTHEW MORRISON

Tokyo, Feb. 28, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 11,000-12,000 yen; 03-3405-1133.

### CHVRCHES

Tokyo, Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 7 p.m., Toyosu Pit, 7,500 yen (all standing); Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

## DOMINIC MILLER

Tokyo, Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Mar. 2 & 3, 5 & 8 p.m., Cotton Club, 7,800-9,000-9,500 yen; 03-3215-1555.

## MARCH

### TENEBRAE SOLMNIS VOL.9

featuring WATAIN(Sweden), Anaal Nathrakh(UK), Hybrid Nightmare(Australia), Ethereal Sin(JP), Tokyo, Mar. 1, 5:30 p.m., duo Music Exchange, 8,000 yen (adv), 9,500 yen (doors); For more information, Evoken de Valhall Production 050-5586-8199 or info@ev-pro.asia.

### DAVID T. WALKER

Tokyo, Mar. 5 & 6, 6:30 & 9:30 p.m., Billboard Live Tokyo, 8,800-9,800 yen; 03-3405-1133.

### NATHAN EAST

Tokyo, Mar. 5 & 6, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Blue Note Tokyo, 8,500 yen; 03-5485-0088.

### FEVER333

Tokyo, Mar. 5, 7 p.m., Ebisu Liquidroom, 5,500 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

## EXTREME THE DOJO VOL.32

featuring Napalm Death, Eyehategod, Misery Index, Melt-Banana, Tokyo, Mar. 6, 6:30 p.m., Shibuya Club Quattro, 9,000 yen (adv. standing); Smash 03-3444-6751.

### MIROSLAV VITOUŠ TRIO

Tokyo, Mar. 7 & 8, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Cotton Club, 8,000-9,000-9,500-10,000 yen; 03-3215-1555.

### COURTNEY BARNETT

Tokyo, Mar. 8, 7 p.m., Tsutaya O-East, 6,500 yen; Smash 03-3444-6751.

### MICHAEL LANDAU LIQUID QUARTET

featuring David Frazee, Andy Hess & Ian Thomas, Tokyo, Mar. 9 & 10, 5 & 8 p.m., Mar. 11 & 12, 6:30 & 9 p.m., Cotton Club, 8,500-9,500 yen; 03-3215-1555.

### ALLISTER

Chiba, Mar. 10, 6 p.m., Chiba Look, 4,000 yen; Tokyo, Mar. 12, 7 p.m., Shibuya Club Quattro, 4,000 yen; Creativeman 03-3499-6669.

### CLOUD NOTHINGS

Tokyo, Mar. 11, 7 p.m., Tsutaya O-East, 6,000 yen (adv. standing); Smash 03-3444-6751.



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Kameido Tenjin



Atami Matsuri



Yushima Tenjin

Devoted to a deified scholar Sugawara no Michizane, Yushima Tenmangu Shrine (Yushima Tenjin) features a beautiful collection of 300 plum blossom trees. The shrine is very popular with students (and their parents) who come here to pray for luck during entrance exams and a successful school year. The shrine hosts the annual Bunkyo Ume Matsuri where you can enjoy traditional music, performing arts and tea ceremonies at weekends.

Kameido Tenjin

Kameido Tenjin attracts crowds during May when its beautiful wisteria garden blooms, but the 300 plus plum trees should not be overlooked. Kameido Tenjin is a beautiful place for ume hanami (as a rule of thumb, shrines with the word 'tenjin' in their name, the Kami name of Lord Sugawara, tend to be associated with plum trees) and offers a variety of entertainment from the middle of February to the end of March. The shrine's arched vermilion bridge is very impressive, and it is worth checking out the famous 'Goken no Ume' tree that blossoms both red and white flowers.

## Tokyo's best spots for plum blossom viewing

STORY AND PHOTOS BY NANO BETTS,  
TRAVELWITHNANO.COM

While cherry blossoms get all the glory when it comes to heralding the arrival of Spring, modest blooming buds of ume (plum blossoms) have been held in high regard here in Japan and are celebrated by the ume matsuri, the plum blossom festivals, all around the country.

Prior to the Nara Period (710-794 AD) it was in fact the blossom of the plum tree that Japanese referred to as hanami (flower viewing). Initially introduced to Japan from China, plum trees were considered ornamental trees intended for the gardens of the nobility and public spaces. They were also equated with good fortune and are still thought

to ward off evil. That's why so you will often find them planted around shrines, temples, or even private gardens.

Most often, you will find shrines hosting the festivities dedicated to the plum blossoms. These include performances, fun activities and plum-themed art and food stalls. Early February to mid-March is when the city starts to fill up with bursts of white, blush and hot pink. You can spot the blooming trees everywhere although there are a few spots which boast with a nice choice for plum-watching. Here are some of my favorite places to see Japanese plum blossoms in and around Tokyo.

Hanegi Park in Setagaya

With 650 and 700 ume blossom trees (of various color) the Hanegi Park offers one of the most beautiful spring scenes you can get throughout February.

Hanegi Park



Located on Umegaoka (Plum Blossom Hill), you can expect a joyful spring atmosphere with koto string instrument performances, outdoor tea ceremonies, haiku classes and mochi rice pounding exhibitions. Needless to say, there are food vendors selling plum-themed food including jelly, ripe plum madeleines and daifuku buns.



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## Odawara Matsuri

Plum viewing might be used as a good excuse to get a little break from the hustle of the metropolis. If you feel like a little day trip, then Odawara might be a perfect destination. Not only will you get a chance to see the famous Odawara Castle, but also enjoy 35,000 plum trees on show of all different colors, shapes and sizes set around the Soga Bessho Bairin grove and framed by the iconic backdrop of Mt Fuji. Major festival attractions include calligraphy and lion dances among others.

## Atami Matsuri

If you crave some sun and sea, then Atami is a perfect place to be if the weather is right. It is a little resort town located within an hour from Tokyo and used to be a major honeymoon destination back in the day. Not only does Atami host the Kawazu-zakura festival – a type of sakura blooming in January/February – but it also is home to a gorgeous ume garden. Basically, you will be able to view plums and sakura in one trip!

## Ome-shi Plum Park

Ome-shi features 1,500-tree plum grove which are truly a sight to see. The 1,500 trees that cover the sloping hills of the park make it look like mounds of cotton candy. There is also a 300-year-old plum tree. Like all other places, the park's festival lasts from the end of February to the end of March.



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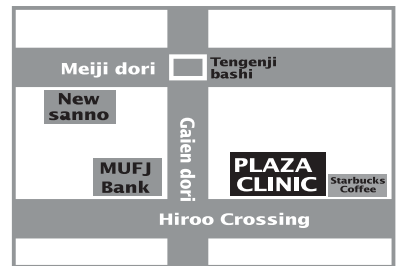
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Every year, humpback whales migrate to the temperate waters near Okinawa to give birth to their calves.

# Warm winter waters off the coast of Okinawa draw whales, watchers

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI,  
STARS AND STRIPES  
Published: Jan. 17, 2019

The Kerama Islands are only about 25 miles from Naha — just an hour-long ferry ride away. But, during the winter season, the waters surrounding the small group of islands might as well be a world away from the hustle and bustle of Okinawa's largest city, as the area transforms into one of the best whale-watching spots in the world.

Every year, humpback whales migrate to the temperate waters near Okinawa to give birth to their calves. For those interested in seeing these massive mammals up close, several whale-watching tours are offered throughout the winter season. (The whale-watching season runs through early April.)

The best way to take a whale-watching tour is to take a high-speed ferry from Naha to one of the Kerama Islands (which can cost up to 5,970 yen, or about \$55, roundtrip for adults) and to then choose a tour operator upon arrival. I opted to head to Zamami Island, where I signed up for an excursion offered by the Zamami Whale Watching Association.

Tours departing directly from Okinawa also are available — but I prefer the flexibility of going to the islands so I can explore for a while afterward.

The tour, which costs 6,000 yen for adults and 3,000 yen for children, is about 2½ hours long and offered twice daily — once in the morning and once in the afternoon. It's best to reserve your spot on the tour in advance through the ZWWA website.

For those who tend to get seasick, it might be best to take motion sickness medication the night before or the morning of

The best way to spot a whale is to look for the streams of water the whales expel from their blowholes, as they look like fountains shooting out from the ocean.

your excursion, as the waters can be quite choppy.

After checking in, visitors are given a short introduction to humpback whales, but the presentation is conducted in Japanese. Once aboard, the designated whale searchers on the boat's crew scan the waters and guide the boat captains to nearby pods of whales.

The best way to spot a whale is to look for the spouts of warm air that the whales expel from their blowholes as they exhale — the spouts look like fountains shooting up from the ocean.

Another easy way to spot whales is to find ones that are

breaching or slapping their tails on the water's surface.

After disappearing into the water, it could be anywhere from 15 to 20 minutes before the whale surfaces again.

A pod of mothers and calves is much easier to watch, as the calves cannot remain submerged for long. Because of this, the young whales usually hang out near the surface of the water and are more visible to whale watchers.

On one whale-watching excursion, I once saw a mother whale teaching her calf how to breach by leaping from the water. It was one of my favorite memories in 11 years of living on Okinawa.

Several years ago, I had another close encounter with a mother whale and her calf as they swam beneath the boat. The whales

were so close that I could see the barnacles on the mother whale's skin.

After your whale-watching excursion, take the local bus (300 yen for adults) from the port to Furuzamami Beach, one of the most popular beaches on the island. Furuzamami was voted the best beach

A variety of operators, including the Zamami Whale Watching Association, offer whale watching excursions near Okinawa.

in Japan on TripAdvisor and has two stars from the renowned Michelin Guide.

The waters of Furuzamami Beach are relatively warm in winter, reaching about 68 degrees Fahrenheit — so it is nice enough to dip your feet in or snorkel, if you bring your own gear. There are few local restaurants on Zamami Island, and the information desk at

the port is always happy to offer recommendations.

To see a whale up close is a rare opportunity, and many enthusiasts travel great distances hoping to catch a glimpse. But on Okinawa, world-class whale-watching in the winter is only a short ferry ride away.

ichihashi.aya@stripes.com



## OKINAWA WHALE WATCHING

**COSTS:** Prices for whale watching excursions vary based on the company and length of the tour. Individuals should also factor in the cost of the ferry to an excursion's departure point if not purchasing a tour that departs directly from Naha. The Zamami Whale Watching Association's tour, which departs from Zamami Island, costs 6,000 yen (or about \$55) for adults and 3,000 yen for children.

**INFORMATION:** zwwa.okinawa/englishinformation

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:

STARS AND STRIPES  
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The waters of Furuzamami Beach are relatively warm in winter, reaching about 68 degrees Fahrenheit — so it is nice enough to dip your feet in or snorkel, if you bring your own gear.



# Stripes Sports Trivia

The stories and highlights of Bo Jackson are hard to top. Baseball, football, track – he did it all. And did it all at a high level. The once-in-a-generation athlete seemed super-human at times. Unfortunately, though, Bo was human, and injuries cut his NFL career short. He played in only 38 games to be exact. He played in more games (45) at what university?

Answer

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**Kanji of the week**

草

Kusa/Sou(Grass)

**Language Lesson**

It's funny.

Omoshiro desu.

**SUDOKU**

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

**HOW TO SOLVE:**

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Last Week's Sudoku:

6	4	2	1	3	5	8	7	9
8	1	3	7	9	6	2	4	5
9	7	5	2	8	4	6	1	3
2	9	6	3	7	1	4	5	8
3	8	4	6	5	2	7	9	1
7	5	1	9	4	8	3	2	6
4	3	8	5	1	7	9	6	2
1	6	9	4	2	3	5	8	7
5	2	7	8	6	9	1	3	4

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**The Weekly Crossword**

by Margie E. Burke

**ACROSS**

- Handel contemporary
- Long, long time
- Bomb
- Autumn color
- Bearded beast
- Ancient Germanic letter
- "Rocky" actress Talia
- Restraint
- Academic term
- Elite soldier
- Cubby hole
- In the raw
- Park or Pennsylvania
- Lab tube
- Scout leader?
- Obliterate
- Out of gas
- They're sealed in a Go-Go's song
- Put into effect
- Give a hoot
- Secretly run off together
- Gather bit by bit
- Routing word
- Biological reversion
- Lustrous fabric
- Dime division
- Part of a flower
- \_\_\_\_\_minded
- Harbor blaze fighter
- Okay to eat
- Nissan model since 2008
- Tight
- Mountaineer's challenge
- Letter sign-off
- Nose (out)
- Carryall bag
- Airplane assignment

**DOWN**

- Big cheese
- Advil target
- Feature seen on old-house roofs
- Legalese word
- Come to terms
- Active one
- Absorb, as a cost
- Provoke
- Uncontrolled
- Air bag?
- "\_\_\_\_\_bitten, twice shy"
- Take a look
- Coast Guard operation
- Citadel student
- Limerick starter
- Eleanor, to Teddy
- Willing follower?
- Magician's cry
- Song of David
- Bourdain's "Parts Unknown", e.g.
- Chill-inducing
- Uneasy state
- College bigwig

**Answers to Last Week's Crossword:**

M	I	S	S	S	W	E	D	E	H	O	S	T
A	C	H	E	W	A	X	E	N	I	N	T	O
C	O	U	N	T	E	R	A	C	T	B	E	A
E	N	T	A	I	L	M	A	R	R	I	A	G
T	A	L	C	Y	E	A	S	T				
I	M	P	E	R	I	A	L	E	N	C	A	M
N	O	R	A	N	N	U	L	T	U	T	O	R
E	V	E	N	G	O	N	E	R	S	I	R	I
R	E	F	E	R	N	A	V	E	L	M	E	N
T	R	E	P	A	N	R	E	F	O	R	E	S
R	E	G	A	L	R	I	S	E				
F	R	E	N	E	T	I	C	N	E	C	T	A
R	E	N	T	I	N	O	P	E	R	A	B	L
E	A	C	H	O	D	D	E	R	S	A	S	S
T	R	E	E	N	A	S	T	Y	T	R	O	T



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