

— THE INSIDER'S —

# Look into JAPAN

A stylized graphic of a Japanese building, possibly a pagoda or a traditional structure, rendered in a dark brown color with a halftone dot pattern. The building is partially obscured by a jagged, torn paper effect that reveals a bright yellow background behind it. The text 'Look into' is written in a bold, yellow, rounded font with a dark outline, positioned above the building. The word 'JAPAN' is written in a larger, bold, yellow, rounded font with a dark outline, positioned below the building. The overall design is dynamic and eye-catching, typical of a magazine cover or promotional graphic.

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*We hope you enjoy this compilation of 21 of our newest cover stories from “The Insider.” The stories offer just a glimpse into the fascinating country of Japan, a country rich in history, culture and natural beauty. “The Insider”*

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# QUINTAR



# Coming of Age

By Devin Lindsey

In the middle of January a colorful sight emerges throughout Japan. It holds the beauty of cherry blossoms coupled with the festive mood of the New Year. The Japanese call it *Seijin no Hi* or Adulthood Day.

January 15 of each year is set aside to honor boys and girls who have reached the legal age of 20. They have crossed the threshold of adolescence and are now considered adults. They are ready to take on more responsibility and are expected to actively participate in society and religious ceremonies. They are now eligible to marry.

To express the change from childhood to adulthood, the Japanese look to a tradition which dates back to at least the seventh century called *gempuku*. *Gempuku* literally means "basic clothing." During the seventh century, when a young man reached the height of 4.5 feet (which was usually between the ages of 10 and 16), he was allowed to wear adult clothing, adult hair styles and to take on an adult name. With this came added responsibility to family life and to social events such as religious ceremonies and marriages.

Also during the seventh century, Japanese girls participated in a similar ceremony each year when they were between the ages of 12 and 16. During their transition from girlhood to womanhood they took on changes in hair style and in dress. For the girls, it was called *mogi*, meaning putting on the skirt.

Today, *mogi* is the most recognizable trait of Adulthood Day in Japan. On January 15, girls in kimono of



every type, design and color appear about the city drawing spectators wherever they go. The array of color, smiling faces and excitement blankets city streets, trains, temples and cultural halls. It is the kimono that symbolizes Japan's nationwide "Coming of Age" celebration.

During Adulthood Day, men and women who are eligible to participate receive gifts from friends, sponsors and relatives. For men, gifts range from business suits, clothing and masculine items all the way up to expensive watches and automobiles. The women usually receive their own kimono, which in some cases may cost more than 8,000 dollars.

Adulthood Day ceremonies today are grouped into two official functions. The day begins at a cultural hall or an auditorium where congratulatory speeches are given by the town mayor and distinguished speakers.

Afterwards, the eligible men and women visit local shrines and participate in Shinto "good luck" ceremonies.

*Seijin no Hi* not only symbolizes a day of giving and admiration, it represents a symbolic change in the lives of young men and women, the transition from childhood to adulthood. The Japanese culture has nourished this celebration for 13 centuries. It is characteristic of a society which holds great honor and respect for its elderly to lift up the hopes and promises of its youth ... to inspire the dreams of a new generation.

# Kabuki, a Dream of Music and Dance

By Andrea Dehnke

Bright lights, dancing show girls, extravagant scenery. Limousines pull up, exposing women adorned with diamonds and furs, and men in top hats and tails. Whether it be "Phantom of the Opera," "Cats," or "Hello Dolly," Broadway has long been considered an elegant night on the town.

In Japan, things are a little different. A trip to the theatre

doesn't mean limousines and tuxedos or caviar and champagne. It's a normal, ordinary event like going to the movies.

Kabuki is a good example of what Japanese theatre is like. It was created in the early 17th century for the common folk. Back then, only the elite were able to attend theatre functions because of their intellect and ability to understand the plays. Desiring a theatre of their own, something they could relate

to, the commoners requested special performances for themselves. Now, Kabuki is for both the rich and the poor, the young and the old.

One of the most distinguishable characteristics of Kabuki is the actors. No women perform in these plays, only men specializing in female roles. The actors begin training when they are children, and play both male and female roles until



# Geisha

By Susan Graul

The geisha – a truly unique, although dying aspect of Japanese life. Geisha is much more than a job, it is a way of life.

A girl or her parents must decide to start on the path of a geisha at an early age. This decision will affect the rest of her life. A geisha must go through a training period which may last for years in some cases.

She has many things to learn, to the point of perfection. Tasks, such as cooking and housekeeping, which are normally stressed in a young Japanese girl's upbringing will not be learned by the young geisha. In fact, a large part of her allure stems from her complete ignorance of a housewife's everyday tasks. She will not even be burdened with dealing with her own finances (to the extent of not knowing how much her own clothes cost!), and a multitude of other tasks normally associated with the act of everyday living. She must become a complete opposite of her patrons' wife.

It may sound as if this leaves the geisha with a very easy life – the perception is far from the truth. A literal translation of *geisha* is a person of the arts, *gei* meaning art and *sha* meaning person. She is expected to know how to play a variety of musical instruments, sing, perform short plays, dance, con-

they get older and are divided into two groups – masculine and delicate.

The play itself was designed to tell a story, either of history, or just everyday life. Frequently the plays lose all sense of reality and rationalism and turn into fantasies or fairy tales. However, focus should be directed not to the contents of the story, but to the beauty which is depicted through the use of unique effects, elaborate costumes and creative make-up techniques.

When attending a Kabuki play, one must be prepared to use his or her imagination to the fullest. They play contains much symbolism, allowing the viewer to draw many of his own conclusions. For example, the actors often wear red or blue make-up, suggesting bravery or evil spirits. Such subtle inferences are found throughout the whole play. The music, especially, is used to subconsciously tell the audience of a new scene or perhaps a different plot entwined into the first. Throughout the performance, stagehands, treated as invisible by the audience, appear on stage to assist the actors.

verse intelligently in matters of national and business affairs, draw out shy customers, and a long list of other artistic and social pursuits.

A geisha has been compared to the oil that ensures the smooth running of a machine. She is not a maid or servant. The closest she usually comes to serving is filling a sake cup for a patron! Maids are employed to actually serve the meals and clear the tables. Although geisha are allowed to drink with their patrons, they do not eat with them. After a pleasant evening featuring all sorts of food delicacies, a geisha is normally sent on her way with a small portion of cold rice and fish!

Contrary to foreign beliefs, a geisha is not a call girl. Although she usually does have at least one long-term relationship with a patron, it rarely ends in marriage. A geisha is not meant to be a competitor with a wife. They complement, rather than compete with each other. In fact, most wives view their husband's patronage of a geisha as more of a business arrangement. There is no animosity or jealousy felt towards the geisha. She is a necessary part of a successful (and normally wealthy) businessman's life!

The geisha – past, present and maybe future – a tradition that has lived on for centuries.

Although Kabuki differs quite a bit from American theatre, there are numerous similarities between Kabuki and Shakespearean theatre—namely the set. In the Elizabethan age, theatres were very primitive. People sat on a dirt ground and saw a barren stage. No backdrops, no fancy light shows, and sometimes no costumes. Only the bare essentials. Not quite as rudimentary, Kabuki uses the same principle of an open stage, complete with trap doors and use of passageways through the theatre. The trap doors (actually platforms) can be raised or lowered to enable actors to appear and disappear. In days gone by, these platforms were controlled by men beneath the stage, whereas nowadays, the platforms are motor-driven.

If just one thing could be said about Kabuki, it would have to be that it's a diversion not for the intellect, but for the senses. While the dialogue may be difficult to understand for foreigners, it's exciting just to soak up the sights and sounds of Kabuki – an experience that offers enjoyment to all.



# Hina Matsuri, a Festival for Dolls and Girls

*Hina Matsuri*, the Doll Festival, is celebrated on March 3. It is also often called *Momo-no-Sekku* (Peach Blossom Festival). Gause peach blossoms are at their best in southern Japan at this time of year. Both *Hina Matsuri* and *Tano-no-Sekku*, a festival held for boys on May 5, are still celebrated throughout Japan.

On March 3, families with daughters celebrate the holiday by displaying *Hina* dolls at their homes. They gather to pray for the health and continued growth of their daughters into graceful young women. During this season, a large variety of *Hina* dolls are displayed not only in doll shops, but also at department stores, in hotel lobbies and other public places. This participation by many public sectors helps to promote a festive atmosphere for the occasion.

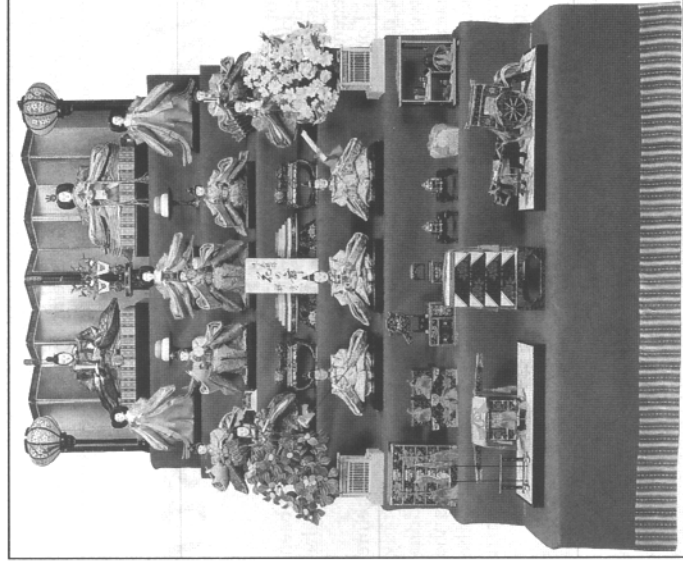
About 1,000 years ago in the early Heian Period (794-1192), children played a game with dolls made of paper or cloth. It was much like playing house. There was also a custom of making dolls and floating them down rivers or on the sea as a form of prayer for the protection of children from disease. The doll game and floating custom were eventually combined, resulting in what we see today as *Hina Matsuri*.

There are various combinations of *Hina* dolls, such as the *Shimo Kazari*, a representation of the emperor and the empress; *Go-nin Kazari*, a five-doll display portraying the emperor, the empress and three court ladies; and *Jugo-nin Kazari*, a 15-doll display portraying the above mentioned five, plus five musicians, two ministers and three guards.

The displays often include lacquered miniature pieces of furniture, such as a costume box, a chest of drawers, a dressing table, an ox-drawn cart, etc. These displays are elaborate, often arranged on as many as seven shelves. Among the simplest of *Hina* doll displays are folded paper dolls pasted on a square piece of decorative paper.

If you desire to purchase a *Hina* doll display, your budget, the display area and storage area should all be taken into consideration before you make your choice. When actually choosing the dolls, consider the overall balance and harmony of the planned display.

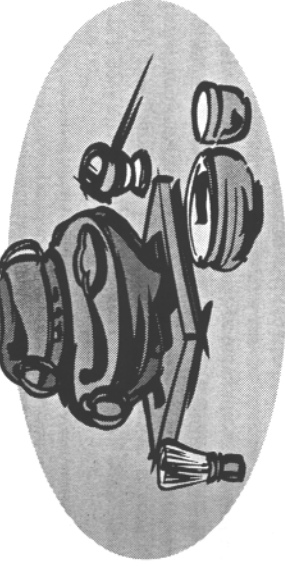
On the top shelf of the display, seated majestically on silk cushions, are the emperor and empress. They are set against a folding gilded fan, with tiny lanterns on either side. Attending them on the shelf below are their three ladies-in-waiting. On the third shelf, court musicians provide entertainment, with their *koto* (13-stringed instrument) and *shamisen* (3-string banjo-like instrument). The fourth shelf has the Minister of the Right and the Minister of the Left, while on the next shelf, in case of attack, three guardsmen stand by. Tiny pieces of furniture, beautifully made in black and gold lacquerware, such as mirror stands, bureaus and palanquins for travelling, are arranged on the bottom shelf. Household utensils such as those used in *chanoyu* (tea ceremony) are arranged between the dolls. Delicacies presented in tiny dishes and bowls, which are sometimes no bigger than thimbles, are offered to the dolls.



## O-cha (Tea): A Symbol of Japan

By Polly Hemler

The most beloved of all nonalcoholic drinks of the Japanese people remains green tea, or *o-cha*. Green tea, was originally used for medicinal purposes, (and recently medical experts have found green tea to have heart healthy benefits). O-cha has long been considered essential to everyday life, holding the same honored place as water, rice, and soy sauce. Tea is drunk scalding hot all year long, served without milk, sugar or lemon, in cups without handles. Tea is linked to many things, even its name is used to connect rooms in the home and places of business to everyday life. For example, the room



in the house called the *Chia-no-ma* (tearoom) is actually the living room where many things occur besides tea drinking. The *chia-ya* (teahouse) could be anything from a dealer in bulk tea to a roadside rest house to an establishment in the pleasure quarters of the past where geisha and ladies of related occupations plied their trades.

Tea can symbolize four aspects of Japanese living and thinking: respect, relaxation, hospitality, and comfort. Just the introduction of the steaming drink seems to spell relaxation, slowing down for a cup of tea means taking a break from the hustle and bustle of the day. In the Japanese

household there is felt an obligation to offer tea and/or a snack in the morning and late afternoon, for those who perform services in and around the home. In most Japanese companies and business offices, (tea is served by young girls sometimes hired solely for this purpose), tea is served at ten in the morning and again at three in the afternoon.

The girls serve tea to guests, employees, and to just about any caller to the business. A steaming cup of tea is offered to

all, otherwise it would be considered a violation of social etiquette. Whenever a visitor calls or enters your home, an offer of a cup of tea is expected.

A hot cup of green tea can help lift the spirits and ease mental fatigue. If brewed stronger than usual, it aids an intoxicated man to regain his senses. For times of stress, or when people are troubled, a cup of tea will likely be offered to ease their suffering. The Japanese belief and acceptance in

# Japanese Astrological New Year

By Polly Hemler

How Ancient Animal Astrology actually began has been lost in the passing of time, but this is the most popular legend...

Lord Buddha called upon all animals to come to him before he departed from Earth. Of all the animals in the world, only twelve came to bid Buddha farewell. To reward them Buddha named a year for each animal. The first to arrive was the mouse. The mouse was awarded the honor of beginning the cycle of the Twelve Animal Years (also known as the first cycle of the Chinese Zodiac).

Chinese astrology is a practical philosophy, the basic idea is to harmonize our thought behavior with heaven, earth and humanity, nourished by the life force.

The oriental year is based on the cycle of the moon, and can begin from the middle of January to the middle of February. The Chinese calculate the start of the new year according to the second new moon following the winter solstice.

The twelve animal signs are: the mouse, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and boar. Each animal represents a special human quality or desire, and together the animals symbolize the various personal traits that present a lifelike image of the human race. The Chinese say that your birth animal "is the animal that hides in your heart." Another oriental proverb contends that when a person dies, his or her heavenly star dies as well, to be replaced with a newborn star!

The MOUSE (1900, 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996): Sharp-witted, brilliant, entrepreneurs, charming, skillful, attractive, prosperous, talented, amusing, lucky. Mice enjoy life's broad canvas, delighting in experiencing all sorts of new sensations and getting as much out of life as they possibly can.

The OX (1901, 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997):

the healing power of the cup of green tea compares to Americans' chicken soup.

There are many different types and grades of Japanese tea. The three main types are "sencha," which is green, "bancha," which is light brown, and "matcha," the powdered green tea used in the tea ceremony.

Have a steaming cup of tea and feel your spirits being lifted

accommodating, so long as they want to be. They always fit in and are gifted with power and luck.

The SNAKE (1905, 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001): Wise, cautious, discreet, fun-loving, mysterious and charismatic. Snakes tempt, charm and bewitch us. They are endowed with wisdom and understanding.

The HORSE (1906, 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002): Gregarious, proud, active, strong, warmhearted, talented. Horses tend to have a very active social life and enjoy travel and freedom.

The SHEEP (1907, 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003): Prudent, romantic, compliant, tidy, persnickety, altruistic. Sheep tend to have a reserved nature, yet are the most gifted artistically and are superb entertainers.

The MONKEY (1908, 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004): Quick-witted, faithful, resourceful, successful, candid, impetuous. Monkeys can size up any situation in an instant. They need freedom and cannot resist a mental challenge.

The ROOSTER (1909, 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005): Extrovert, resilient, brave, well-dressed, showy, cocky. Roosters have no trouble bouncing back from any degree of despair and frequently occupy positions of authority.

The DOG (1910, 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006): Intelligent, dependable, loyal, warmhearted, open. Dogs are the givers and loyal to those they love and always wear the white hat.

The BOAR (1911, 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007): Hard-working, happy sensible, talented, outgoing, sensual and sensitive. Boars are the people everyone admires; they are the nicest, most loving and caring people around.

In Japan, the astrological new year begins on the first of January. Although an ancient Chinese legend, over the centuries the Japanese have adapted it to fit their own culture.



The RABBIT (1903, 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999): Home-loving, generous, ambitious, creative, cultured.

Rabbits are the peacemakers, the diplomats, always looking for a compromise that will please all concerned.

The DRAGON (1904, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000): Unusual, dynamic, refined, charismatic, accomplished, self-assured. Dragons are flexible and

# Jesus in Japan

By Todd Wagstaff

The Christian world believes that after Christ was crucified in Jerusalem his body was entombed, and after a brief period, resurrected. Easter commemorates this resurrection.

An ancient, obscure Japanese legend suppressed by Portuguese Jesuits during the 14th century, sheds a different light on the life and death of Jesus Christ by suggesting that perhaps His life was more complex, involving different cultures and peoples than suggested by the Old testament.

According to accepted Christian belief, the New Testament contains the definitive historical accounts of the life of Christ. Theologians ask us to accept this information on the basis of faith, and we do, if only because precious little factual information exists to back it up in scriptural accounts.

According to Biblical data, Christ was born about 27 B.C. and lived to 33 years of age when he was nailed to the cross and crucified by Roman soldiers. The bible tells us His ministry lasted barely three years. Aside from the story of His birth, the founding of the Pharisees at age 8, His ministry and His death, nothing is known of Christ's life up until the beginning of His ministry 22 years later.

The bible tells us that after the crucifixion of Christ, His body was entombed and was subsequently resurrected. It is important to remember that He died and His body disappeared. *Perhaps Christ did not die? Perhaps someone died in his place?*

## Explanation in the Orient

The legend of Jesus and his brother, dating back to the time of Christ, suggests the not only did Christ not die on the cross, but that he lived a happy productive life, married, fathered three daughters and spent a great deal of time ministering and working miracles among the people of this general area.

According to the legend and elders of Herai Village, located 50 kilometers south of Misawa, Jesus Christ arrived in

Japan at the age of 21 during the reign of Emperor Suinin (27 B.C.).

The legend suggests he journeyed to Japan to seek the education and experiences available at that time only in the Orient. He did not initially arrive in Northern Japan, rather he

upheaval. Shortly after the beginning of His ministry, according to the tale, perhaps through a case of mistaken identity, the brother of Jesus was arrested by Romans, tried and crucified for "crimes" allegedly committed by Jesus.

The legend further suggests that due to the lack of acceptance by His people, and because His teachings were not politically popular, Jesus decided to return to Japan.

## Homecoming in Herai

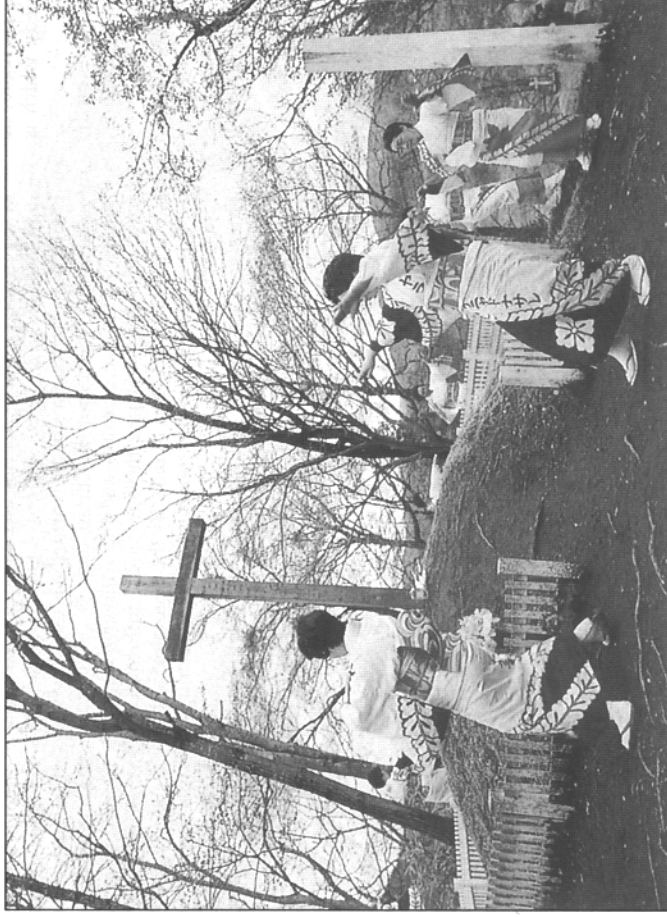
An exact chronology of His return to Jerusalem, death of His brother and subsequent return of Jesus to Japan cannot be made. But the legend is specific in saying that Jesus brought with Him the ears and hair of His dead brother so they could rest in peace near where Jesus would settle (The name for Jesus' brother is "Ishikiri").

Another fascinating aspect of the saga tells us that Jesus spent over a year returning to Japan, traveling to Alaska and Siberia to eventually settle in what is now the township of Shingo, in the village of Herai. According to experts, the word Herai is a Japanese translation of the word Hebrew.

The legend suggests that even in remote Northern Japan, far away from Jerusalem, there were people who still conspired against Jesus and His teachings. Perhaps to avoid such people and in effort to blend in with His adopted culture, He changed His name to Herai Taro Dai Ten Ku. He eventually received the nickname of "Tenju" meaning long-nosed goblin, because of His Caucasian features.

The story says he eventually married the Lady Miyu and fathered three daughters before His death at the age of 106.

As the legend goes on to say, the grave of Jesus, referred to as Torai-Zuka, and that of His brother called Todai-Zuka are contained in two dirt mounds on the outskirts of Shingo Village. The grave sites are still reverently tended to by the elders of Shingo Village, some of which are believed to be descendants of Jesus. An annual "Jesus Festival" is held in the early summer, attracting visitors from all over Japan. Portions





of the festival resemble a Catholic mass and songs are not sung in Japanese but in a language similar to Hebrew.

Members of the Sawaguchi family in Shingo are said to be the direct descendants of Christ's eldest daughter. The family has a small stone bowl and a wooden box that supposedly belongs to Him. The Sawaguchi family crest closely resembles the Cross of Judea.

Upon the death of Christ, the villagers continued to practice the teachings He left behind. It is said that He received the love and respect of people throughout the land for His efforts to help the poor and for his ability to heal the sick. The legacy he left behind includes an interesting folk remedy which is practised among Herai villagers.

When a child is sick, the mother paints three crosses on the child's forehead. An incantation is offered, and it is believed that healing will take place.

With the passage of time, this brand of "Christianity" became diluted with Buddhism until only the Herai villagers remained to carry the torch.

During the first decades of the 15th century, an event took place that drastically changed Japanese life.

# The Nature of Bonseki

By Herb Bastuscheck

A little known traditional art form in Japan is bonseki (*bon* meaning "oval tray" and *seki* meaning "stone"). Everyone knows flower arranging, tea ceremony, miniature bonsai trees, calligraphy, etc., but mention bonseki to most Japanese and you'll get a blank stare.

In the whole northern Tohoku region there are only four cities where bonseki is taught: Sendai, Yamagata, Morioka, and Hachinohe - which has 14 students and one teacher, Masa Saito.

Misawa's Japan Day, in 1996, was the first time for bonseki students to get together and demonstrate the art, which consists of placing rocks and different sizes of sand on a black enamel

tray to create pictures of natural scenes like mountains, lakes, rivers and seashores.

Bonseki started in Japan about 1,400 years ago. Its purpose was to promote mental training and concentration in the Zen tradition. The stones and sand are

## Upheaval in Japan-Refuge on the mound

The *daimyo* (rulers) of the era, influenced by ambitions of trade and profit, allowed Portuguese Jesuit missionaries to circulate throughout Japan. In an era when the Buddhist priesthood was showing signs of corruption, the Jesuits were able to convey an aura of absolute faith and strength of character. In turn, the Jesuits, led by Francis Xavier, infused their religious message with materialism and trade. Several *daimyo* converted to Christianity and ordered their entire domains to do likewise.

It was during this time that the legend of Christ's burial mound reached the disapproving Jesuits. Obtaining a license to preach from the shoguns of the North, the Jesuits traveled into this area to teach "proper" Christianity.

But the Jesuits were zealots and the willingness of the Japanese leaders to tolerate the substantial influence the Jesuits had acquired began to fade. By the beginning of the 17th century, the Tokugawa authorities set out to exterminate Christianity.

To escape persecution and almost certain death, many Japanese Christians moved north to the Shingo area, location

of the Herai Village, where they felt safe from warring Shogun of the South.

The legendary burial site of Jesus and his brother in Shingo Village would have probably remained an obscure myth remembered only by the elders of the village if a startling discovery had not been made.

## 21st Century Belief

In 1935, the grave sites were "rediscovered and authenticated" by an archeologist by the name of Kyoma Takeuchi. His research into the mounds helped lead archeologists to discover a 40 foot scroll in the Shingo Village library that bore the faded signature of Herai Dai Ten Ku. The scroll is believed to be the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. Faded and decomposed by time, the scroll is elaborately scripted in Chinese like characters and is believed to be two thousand years old.

Legends are as varied as religious beliefs. Many may scoff at such a legend as this, you be the judge. While you're in Japan visit what many consider to be the final resting place of Christ. The site is located 54 kilometers southwest of Misawa, in the town of Herai, in the township of Shingo.

a symbol of the earth. During the Edo Period (1603 A.D.~1868

A.D.) bonseki was generally performed for the tea ceremony and displayed in the *tokonoma* (alcove) corner of the room along with a painted scroll and flower arrangement. Gradually it became one of the main art forms itself.

The fundamentals of bonseki were written during the Kamakura Period (1192 A.D.~1333 A.D.) by Zen priests. A tea ceremony master and samurai lord, Hosokawa, Sansai, became its main benefactor. The stones represent natural mountains and rocks, and the sand represents rivers, lakes, ocean, trees, waterfalls and other land features. These symbolize the elements of simplicity and clearness - leading to a feeling of peace and calm.

About 125 years ago, at the beginning of the Meiji Restoration, Hakuen Katsumo studied Western art elements of perspective and style and incorporated them into the bonseki pictures to portray more realism.



# The Rabbit in the Moon - A Japanese Tale

Adapted By Amy Friedman

Every night the Old Man in the Moon looks down on Earth to see how his animals and people are doing. He smiles to see them resting after a hard day's work. He winks at sleeping children. He hovers over rivers and lakes, lighting the waves and the shore. Then he sails on to other lands.

One night long ago, the Old Man lingered in the sky over a forest in Japan. The animals below seemed to him to live in peace and harmony. Suddenly he spotted a monkey, a fox and a rabbit who were living side by side. The Old Man began to wonder about these animals that he knew only by sight. After a while he began to long to know them better.

"Which of these friends is the kindest creature?" he asked himself as he watched the rabbit dash across the fields. "I wonder which is most generous?" he said softly as he watched the monkey swing from a tree. "I wonder what they are truly like," he said as he watched the fox paw at the forest floor to make his bed. "I need to know more about my creatures."

The Old Man floated a while longer, but finally his curiosity got the best of him. "I must go and see for myself," he said, and because the Old Man in the Moon is a magical creature, he was able to transform himself into a poor beggar. In this disguise he floated down to Earth.

He walked through the forest until he came to the clearing where the monkey, fox and the rabbit lived. When the creatures saw him, they looked up at him with bright shining eyes.

"Good day, sir," the rabbit said. "How do you do?" "Welcome to our forest," said the monkey, and the fox bowed low.

"Oh, friends," the Old Man said, leaning heavily on his walking stick, "I am not doing well. I am old and poor, and I am very hungry. Do you think you could help me?" "Of course we'll help," the monkey chattered.

"We always help our friends," the fox agreed.

"We'll fetch some food for you," the rabbit added, and without a moment's hesitation, the three ran off, each one in search of food to offer the poor beggar.

"And we are skilled at finding food," the fox added. Now all three sat waiting for the rabbit to return.

Meanwhile, the rabbit dashed this way and that through the forest, but no matter how he tried, he could not find food for the beggar. At long last he returned to the clearing.

"Friend," the monkey cried, "you have returned!" "I have," the rabbit said sadly. "I must ask you to do me a favor, dear friends. Please, Brother Monkey, will you gather firewood for me?"

And Brother Fox, with this firewood will you build a big fire?"

The monkey and the fox ran off at once to do as their friend asked, and the beggar sat quietly by, watching in wonder.

When the fire was blazing, the rabbit turned to the beggar. "I have nothing to offer you but myself," he said. "I am going to jump into the fire, and when I am roasted, please feast upon me. I cannot bear to see you go hungry."

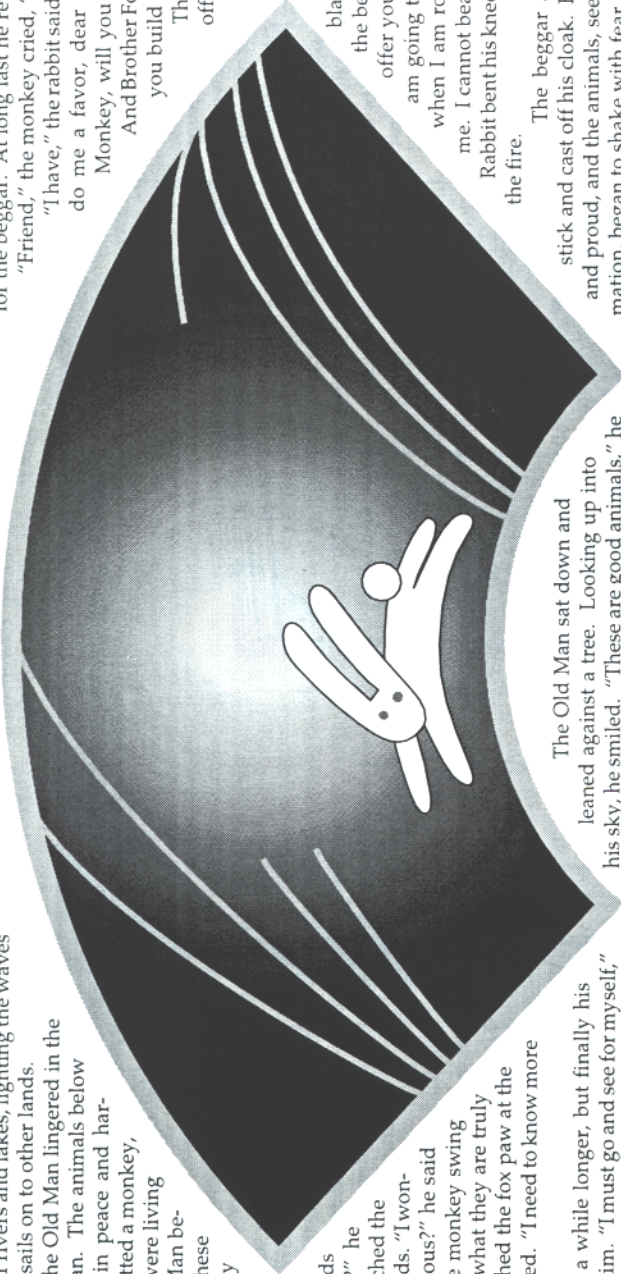
Rabbit bent his knees, preparing to jump into the fire.

The beggar at once threw away his stick and cast off his cloak. He stood straight and tall and proud, and the animals, seeing this strange transformation, began to shake with fear.

"Don't be afraid," the Old Man said. "You see, Rabbit, I am more than a beggar, and I have seen that you are more than generous. Your kindness is beyond price, but you must understand, I wish you no harm. I do not want you to sacrifice yourself for my comfort. I will take you home with me, where I can watch over you and make sure you are never harmed."

The Old Man in the Moon lifted the rabbit into his arms and carried him up to the moon. The monkey and the fox watched in amazement, but they were grateful, for they wished their friend no harm.

If you look carefully at the moon when it is full and bright, you will see the rabbit living there in peace, resting in the Old Man's arms, helping him to watch over us all.



The Old Man sat down and leaned against a tree. Looking up into his sky, he smiled. "These are good animals," he said to himself, "and I am curious to see who is most generous."

Before long the monkey returned, carrying an armload of fruit. "Here you are," the monkey said. "The bananas and berries are delicious. And take these oranges too, and these pears. I hope you will enjoy my gift," and he lay his fruit before the beggar.

"Thank you, my friend. You are kind," the beggar said, and before he had finished speaking, the fox raced into the clearing. He carried a fat, fresh fish between his teeth, and this he laid before the beggar. Again he bowed.

"My friend," the fox said, "I offer you a fresh fish to ease your hunger. I hope this will satisfy you." "You also are kind," the monkey said proudly.

# The Big Brush-Off

By John P. Smith

The Japanese have hundreds of traditions, beliefs and customs that have evolved over almost 2,000 years of civilization.

Some of these customs and traditions have found acceptance worldwide while others remain uniquely Japanese. In addition, these beliefs can range from mildly humorous through to the outright outrageous, while others hit right on the mark.

One such custom that, while seemingly ridiculous, is one that would work every time – presuming that everyone knows the trick. That custom is how to get rid of an age-old problem – the unwanted guest. It goes something like this...

For those nights or evenings when a visitor seems intent on keeping the family away from their dinner or beds but it would be too impolite to ask him to leave – don't ask – just drive him away with a broom.

Yes, a broom.

According to the book, *Mock Ioyā's Things Japanese*, take your broom and set it upside down against the wall or door with the handle on the floor.

According to ancient Japanese superstition, this is said to have a charm in sending the visitor away immediately. It's more effective if the visitor sees the broom.

To additionally increase the effectiveness of the spell – provided the guest is still around – fan the broom three times with a *shamaji* (a wooden rice spoon). This is sure to nudge the persistent critter toward the door.

I tried this spell over several weeks and it is very effective – even on Americans who were unaware of the tradition. It usually got the visitor out of the house within minutes.

Most of the trial-runs with the charm went something like this:

would casually walk over to the broom corner, pick up the broom and dustpan (to be inconspicuous) and sweep for a short bit.

After emptying the pan, I would – again being casual and carrying on with the boring conversation – set the broom

upside down in the corner by the front door.

This generally evoked an immediate question from the guest: "Why'd you put the broom upside down in the corner?"

To which I would casually answer: "It's an experiment I'm trying on an old Japanese superstition."

"Oh, really?" What's it supposed to do?"

"Drive unwanted guests away." I'd say. Very effective. The visitor was usually gone in minutes.

Unfortunately, as the broom always did the trick – I never got a chance to exercise the rice spoon option.

However, if the broom trick fails, *Things Japanese* has a sure-fire alternative.

What you do is take *mogusa* or moxa and spread it on the underside of soles of the guest's shoes – which, because of Japanese tradition, were conveniently left in the entrance.

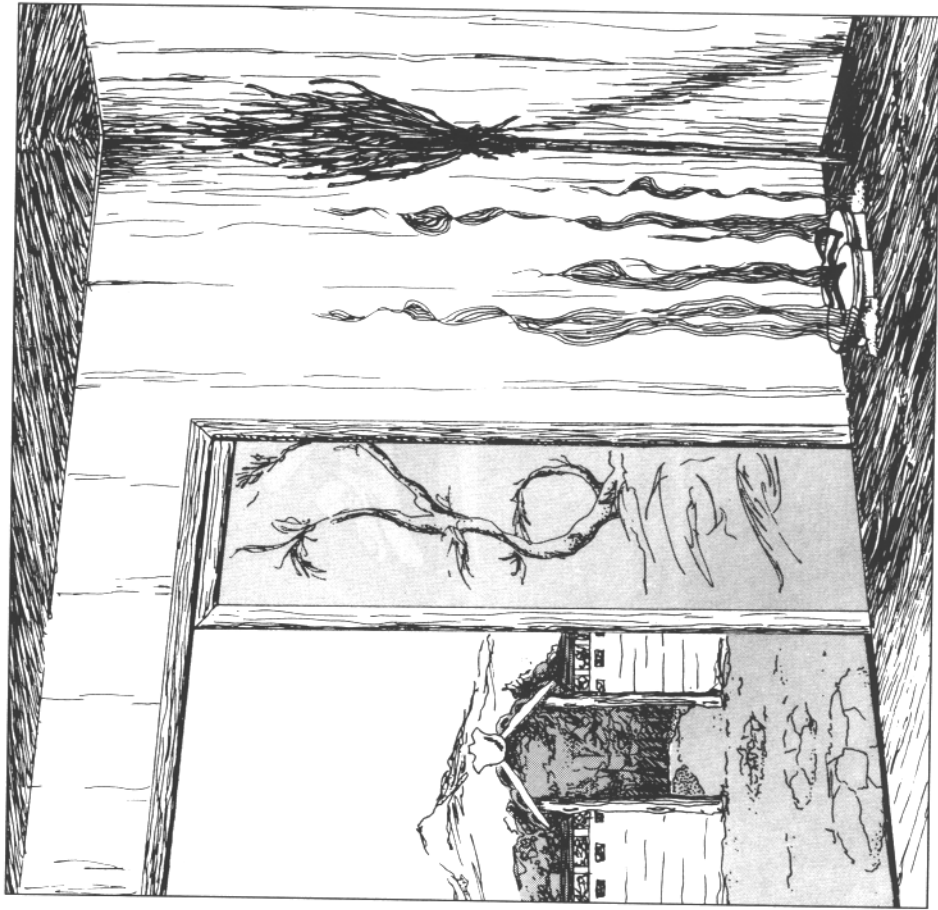
But don't leave it there. Instead, light it on fire – this not only gets rid of any evidence of tampering, but is also certain to send the guest away.

Why? According to *Things Japanese*, it is believed that when the moxa is lighted on the soles of the shoes, the guest's feet itch and he won't be happy until he puts his shoes on and leaves the house.

Of course, this must be done without the visitor knowing what's happening to his shoes. It would definitely be impolite to ignite the shoes while they're still on the guest's feet – making this spell useless to many Americans.

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to test this charm – but I've got my moxa and matches standing by, just in case.

What's the point of all this? If you're ever at a Japanese friend's house around dinner and smell something burning – it might not be food! Take a hint.



# Useful Japanese Phrases

Good morning	Ohayo Gozaimasu	It's beautiful.	Kirei desu	Chair	Isu
Good afternoon (day)	Konnichiwa	What is this?	Kore wa nan desu ka	Child	Kodomo
Good evening	Kombanwa	Please show me	Misete kudasai	Cigarette	Tabako
Good-bye	Sayonara	Please write it	Kaite kudasai	Coffee	Kohi
Good night	Oyasuminasai	Where is it?	Doko desu ka	Coffee with milk	Kohi gyunyū
How are you?	O Genki desu ka	How much is it?	Ikura desu ka	Fruit	Kudamono
I am fine	Hai, genki desu	Please give me this	Kore o kudasai	Good	Yoi
And you?	Anata wa	Let's go	Ikimasho	Girl/Woman	Onna
Thank you	Domo arigato gozaimasu	Straight ahead	Massugu	Man	Otoko
You're welcome	Do itashi mashite	Left	Hidari	Hot water	Oyu
Excuse me (to get attention)	Sumi masen	Right	Migi	Hotel	Hoteru
Excuse me (pardon me)	Gomen nasai	A lot/plenty	Takusan	Key	Kagi
Hey (to get attention)	Anone	A little bit	Sukoshi	Money	Okane
Do you speak English?	Eigo-ga hanase masuka	Why?	Naze desu ka	New	Atarashii
A little	Sukoshi	When?	Itsu desu ka	Old	Furui
No, I don't speak any	lie, hanasemasen	Fire	Kaji	Paper	Kami
I don't understand	Wakarimasen	Ambulance	Kyukyūsha	Pencil	Empitsu
Please say it again	Mo ichido itte kudasai	Police	Omawaisan	Room	Heya
Please wait a moment	Chotto matte kudasai	Help!	Tasukete	Stamp	Kitte
What is your name?	Anata-no onamae wa	Quick	Hayaku	Station	Eki
What time is it?	Nan-ji desu ka	Watch out	Abunai	Store	Mise
I'm sick	Byoki desu	It's all right	Daijōbu desu	Taxi	Takushi
Do you like it?	Suki desu ka	Oh, I see	Aa, soo desu ka	Telephone	Denwa
I like it	Suki desu	Cheap	Yasui	Ticket	Kippu
I don't like it	Kirai desu	Expensive	Takai	Water	Mizu
It's delicious	Oishii desu	Cold	Samui	Small	Chiisai
It's not good	Dame desu	Hot	Atsui	Large	Ohkii

## PRONUNCIATION

"A" as in father

"E" as in bet

"T" as in mosquito

"O" as in note

"U" as in flute

- Where is the \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ wa doko desu ka. (Where is the telephone?) (Denwa wa doko desu ka.)
  - Do you have \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ ga arimasuka. (Do you have black tea?) (Koh-cha ga arimasuka.)
  - Please give me \_\_\_\_\_ o kudasai. (Please give me a fork.) (Fokku o kudasai.)
  - The \_\_\_\_\_ does not work. \_\_\_\_\_ ga ugoki masen. (The toilet does not work.) (Oterai ga ugoki masen.)
  - I am \_\_\_\_\_, Watakushi wa \_\_\_\_\_ desu. (I am John Smith.) (Watakushi wa John Smith desu.)
  - Excuse me, I am lost. I do not speak Japanese. Please show me how to get to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Sumimasen, michi ni mayoi mashita. Nihongo o hanasemasen. \_\_\_\_\_ e no ikikata o oshete kudasai.

# THE BESTIALS



# Shimoda Kehi Shrine Festival

By Simon Bernard

The Kehi (formerly "Kibi") Shrine Festival dates back more than 500 years and is the only one of its kind in Aomori Prefecture.

**History:** In 1191, General Mikahito Nambu gave the order that breeding livestock should begin in order to strengthen the line of the Nambu clan horses. Since that time, the Nambu area (from Shimokita Peninsula in the north to Tono City, Iwate Prefecture in the south) has had the reputation for producing the finest horses in Japan.

Of all the ranches in Nambu, "Kizakino" in the Misawa/Shimoda area was known for producing the best horses for battle. For this reason, the Kehi jinija, an enshrinement for "Osozan," the god of horses, was built sometime before 1477 and was dedicated to the Emperor Choa.

From that time on, livestock-breeders brought their animals to the shrine where artists drew their pictures. These in turn were blessed by the priests and brought back to the owners' houses to be placed at their home altars. Originally painted on wooden boards, today they are drawn on paper. These



drawings are also available to the public at prices ranging from ¥1,000 to ¥5,000.

Throughout the year, three major prayers are offered at the shrine: in spring, for the coming harvest; in summer, for good weather; and in autumn, in thanksgiving for the harvest. During the summer festival, pilgrims from all over Nambu come to pray for the health of their animals. The festival is enlivened with streamers and banners; street stalls with food; toys and games; and the selling of livestock paintings and good luck charms for transportation safety (be sure to pick up one for your car).

Based on the old Japanese calendar, the shrine festival falls on a different day each year, but is usually held in early July. Look for the edition of "The Insider" which prints a list of festivals every year, with dates and times.

## How to get there

Go out the POL gate. Travel 1.1 kilometers after the fifth traffic light and turn left at the fork in the road toward Hachimohe. Go 1.5 kilometers to the stop sign and turn left. The shrine is on the right about 500 meters after the stop sign. Parking is available on side streets. It is about a 10 minute drive from base.

# Towada Taiso Festival

In 1856 the area we now know as Towada City was once called the Sanbongi Plain. It was full of life, but not sustaining. The area lacked the one thing that could bring a livelihood to those who chose to live there - water.

Oddly enough, it took the imagination and relentless determination of a wayward samurai to change things on Sanbongi Plain forever.

Tsuto Nitobe was born in 1793 and was a member of the Nambu Clan that settled Morioka. Around 1855 he gave up the honors that were bestowed on all the samurai and traveled north of Morioka to the plain he had come to love. He saw what others could not see - a way to turn a barren plain into a fertile rice growing region.

His plan was hardly simple, but in 1856 Tsuto started work on a series of tunnels and irrigation ditches that would bring water from the Oirase River, which empties into Lake Towada, to the northern dry plain. After four years of exhausting la-

bor and numerous difficulties, the job was complete, and even by today's standards it was enormous. Tsuto and his workers dug over 15,000 feet of tunnels through two mountains, and irrigation ditches that were 22,304 feet long. Farmers were able to harvest their first crop of rice, in 1860 the year the project was completed.

At the same time work was being done to irrigate the plain, Tsuto was busy drawing up plans for roads and 6,500 acres of rice paddies. Much of what is present day Towada City can be attributed to his designs.

The story of Tsuto Nitobe does not end with his death in 1871, but continues with the life of his grandson.

Inazo Nitobe (pictured at right with his wife) was born in 1862 and attended the prestigious Tokyo University before going abroad to study in the United States and Germany. He obtained a doctorate in agriculture and law and in 1920 was appointed Japan's administrator at the United Nations.



Following the end of the Chinese/Japanese War, Inazo stressed the importance of Japan maintaining good relations with the United States. He considered it imperative for maintaining world peace and emphasized the point to a young Emperor Hirohito whom he taught international relations. Inazo and his American wife spent most of their lives working to improve ties between Japan and the United States. He died in Victoria, Canada in 1933.

Long after the death of both these men their memory is

still honored. A museum, statues and monuments can be found in Towada City and Inazo's is the face that appears on the 5,000 yen bill.

Towada city pays homage to these two men who left their mark with an annual Taiso festival the first week of May. Events for the three day festival include: stage performances, karaoke contest, folk dancing, koto performances, local foods, other various exhibits and bargains all along Walker's Paradise (which is Route 4).

# Festival of the Living Dolls

By Simon Bernard

As the season changes, the temperature cools, and the festival season winds down, you'll not want to miss Shimoda Town's Festival of the Living Dolls, the last festival of the year in the Nambu Area (Eastern Aomori Prefecture). Just a 20 minute drive from the POL gate, the festival, which is also known as the Shimoda Autumn Festival, which is held on the Autumn Equinox, a Japanese national holiday.

## Small Beginnings

Because most towns in Japan were devastated during the war, local residents wanted to find a way to revitalize their communities. Beginning in the 28th year of the Emperor Showa, the original Shimoda Festival was centered around the Fushima Inari Shrine located near the train station in Mita, Shimoda. The shrine was well-known for its powers in warding off sickness, promoting long life and ensuring abundant harvests of grains.

Lacking money and resources, the residents themselves dressed up as "living dolls" and were paraded around in rickshaws. Over the years,

## How to get there

Go out the main gate and take a right at the second light. Continue past the Nagasakiya department store. This road will take you past the Misawa Train station, about 16km after the station, you will be in Towada City. When you come to a split in the road you will want to stay to the left. At this point you should see a Daiiei Department store on your left. At the T-intersection make a left onto Route 4. The festival site is four lights down on your left, you can't miss it!

with the development of paved roads, many changes have been made and now colorful dolls and decorations abound on large floats, depicting historical figures and tales of Japanese and Chinese folklore.

Until recently, the Festival of Living Dolls could only be found in one other place in Japan. But now, other communities have adopted this unique way of celebrating festivals. Ancient dances and other rituals have been incorporated into the festival. One such dance, the Chicken Dance, dates back to the Edo Period. Today, people from all over the prefecture come to join the fun.

## How to get there

Go out the POL gate. 1.1km after the 5th light, turn left at the Y. Follow 1.5km to the stop sign, turn left. Go past the Kehi Shrine (on the right). Continue till you reach Route 45 at the light. Go straight until you reach a flashing red light. Turn right and park in the Town Hall parking lot or go ahead and turn left before the bridge and park underneath the bridge (at the Salmon Festival site). The station is a few minutes walk from the bridge on the right.





丁巳仲夏  
吳昌碩書



# Travel Opportunities

By Stephanie J. Gonzales

Warning! This story is not meant for the "feeble-minded." Do you have spring fever? Do you need to get out of Misawa, but don't have the money to do it? Don't despair, there are hundreds of things to do and see without spending your hard earned salary! You can drive any direction (not too far east) without spending one yen, yet see and experience some of the Japanese culture at its finest. Thousands of photo opportunities await you. So fill up that gas tank (on base) and drive out to "the land of the rising sun."

I recommend starting early - time flies when you're having fun! Pack your own lunch, don't forget to fill up with gas the night before. Take some yen, just in case of an emergency or that once-in-a-lifetime souvenir that you just can't live without. If you want to socialize with the locals, don't forget to pack your dictionary.

Most roads are not well marked but don't be afraid to make a wrong turn. The worst thing that can happen is you'll have to turn around or you'll be right back on the road you started

on. More than likely, it will lead you to an "undiscovered" Japanese neighborhood, where you may find a unique shrine, a park, a beautiful garden or some other interesting treasure. Do-it-yourself trips...

## Quick trips:

**Miss Veedol Beach** - Camping, walking on the beach, recently renovated parking area, remote control airplane pad and restrooms. Out the POL gate, turn left at the first stoplight. Continue straight until the third stoplight. Turn left onto Hwy 338, continue 5km north.

**Lake Ogawara Recreation Complex** - Includes wooded nature trails, obstacle course, athletic fields, kiddie horse rides, beach, an *onsen* (hot bath), and the Misawa Historical Museum. During the summer, it's very accessible by exiting the Beach Gate in North Area.

On the other side of Lake Ogawara is another beach and campground. To get there, just drive around the lake, staying as close as possible to the coast. You're sure to see lots of

quaint villages and shrines along the way.

**Shimoda Town** - This town is so close, it feels as if you haven't even left Misawa. Go out the POL Gate and continue south. You will see signs for the shrine, the lake as a playground and plenty of swans and ducks - and don't forget the shopping mall.

**Statue of Liberty Park** - A small replica of "Lady Liberty" can be found in Momoishi Town, located out the POL gate turning south onto Hwy 338, you'll see the statue on the left. Here you will find walking trails and a playground with a giant slide. Warning: you won't get the kids off once they start!

**Hachinohe City** - What can I say about this magnificent city? You can spend as little or as much time/money as you want here. Some of the highlights I've found that won't cost a dime, only your time... Fantasy Dome, Children's Land, numerous shrines, an old-fashioned fish market (be early for this one), flea market and more.

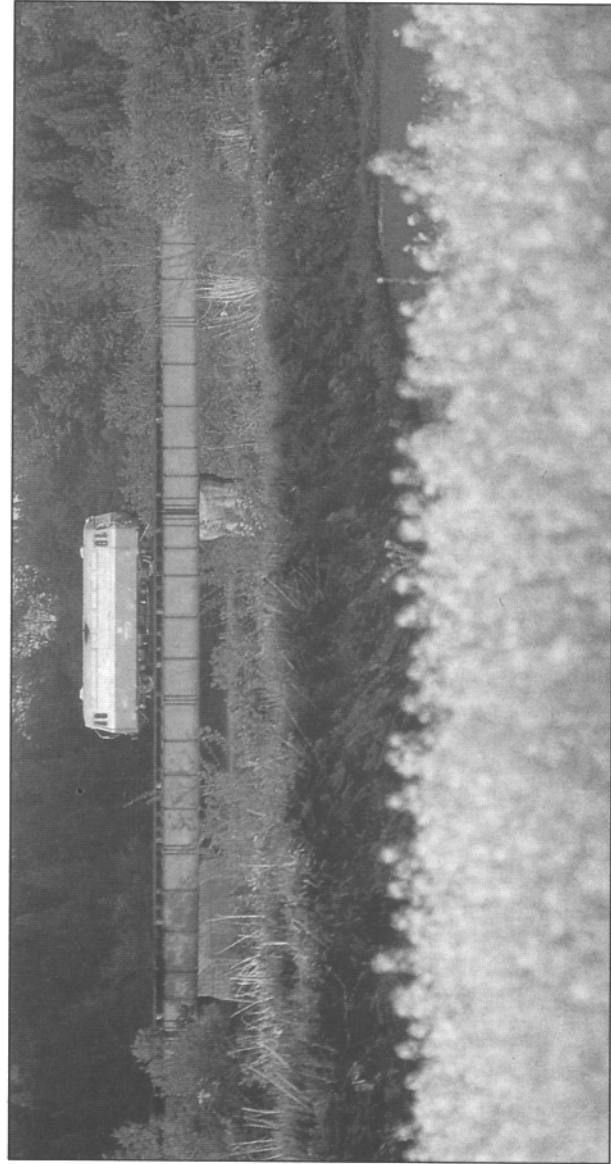
**Kabushima Shrine** - Also known as Seagull Island, is an interesting stop-off point on the way to Tanesashi Seaside for a scenic drive along the beach. Both are located on the coastal road just south of Hachinohe. You can spend hours either walking or driving around the Hachinohe area.

## For the more adventurous:

**Lake Towada** - Spring, summer, winter or fall, this beautiful area changes with each season (a must-see in the fall!). Prepare to enjoy it along with hundreds of Japanese who travel from near and far with their cameras and paint brushes. The town of Yasumiya is a great getaway village for children and adults alike! There are many hotels, shops and restaurants that cater to the never-ending stream of visitors. There are also walking trails and a magnificent shrine. Pedal boats, canoes and bikes can also be rented. If you want to get some different views of the lake, a drive around Lake Towada is definitely worth the time. Take the main highway, keeping the lake in view at all times, and eventually you will be back where you started from. Roads are closed during the winter.

**Towada City** - Located in the city itself is a beautiful shrine just off the main road in the middle of town. While most Misawans are aware of the local shopping on "White Pole Road," bargains can also be found on "Walker's Paradise" in Towada City.

**Oceanside Beach** - Another way to spend the day, one of



my favorites, is to get on Hwy 338 and stay as close to the ocean as possible. There are an endless amount of access roads (well, more like paths) to the beach. Feel free to walk the beach as far south or north as your legs can carry you. Or just park and absorb the natural beauty and soothing sound of the waves. There's no telling what treasures you will find. We've noticed that different times of the year bring a variety of

# Climbing Mt. Fuji

By Bruce and Nancy Spangler

Each year, in July and August, adventurous people from all over the world head to Japan's highest and most celebrated peak - Mount Fuji. Climbing this 3,776 meter (12,389 foot) mountain, with its breathtaking scenery, gives one a rewarding sense of accomplishment.

The climb and descent are long and strenuous (usually lasting 8-9 hours), but with adequate preparation it can also be enjoyable.

Some essentials for the climb include:

- A backpack
  - Sturdy, comfortable footwear
  - Warm layers of clothing (temp. at summit 41-44° F)
  - Rain gear (poncho with hood or nylon jacket)
  - Dry clothes in a plastic bag (for the trip down)
  - Cotton gloves
  - Lightweight, high energy food and bottled water
  - Yen for walking stick stamps, food and water.
  - Map of Mount Fuji climbing trails
  - Camera (in a plastic bag)
  - Flashlight (you may finish your descent in the dark)
- You can drive or take a bus to the fifth station where you will begin your climb. Here you will find several shops that sell walking sticks (*Kongo-zue*) which provide support during the climb and descent. They also make a great souvenir. On the ascending route there are many rest stations with bathrooms and kiosks that sell bottled water and some food (the prices go up with the altitude). Most stations also provide proof of your climb with decorative stamps that are burned onto your walking stick (for a small fee).

With six climbing trails and four "fifth stations," it is imperative that you know the name of your trail and follow your map. The ascending and descending trails follow different paths in places and sometimes merge with other trails. Pay special attention at the junctions to be sure you remain

different seashells. My husband has been accused of finding every Japanese fishing port north of Tokyo.

This is just the beginning - I've said nothing about the hundreds of great hideaway places you'll find. You may find it more enjoyable if you do some background reading on the people, customs, food, festivals, etc. There is so much to do, see and experience, so get out there and enjoy! You don't have

to be rich and famous to be a world traveler.

Recommended readings: "The Insider's Look Into Japan," (the first one) available at Misawa Insatsu; "Exploring Tohoku - A Guide to Japan's Back Country," base bookstore; a good map of Tohoku.

ever there's a break in the cloud cover). Resting is a frequent necessity on this trip, so use your stops to enjoy the spectacular scenery.

Whether you reach the summit or enjoy the view from a lower vantage point, climbing Fuji will be a memorable experience.

Tip: Check with Travel Time for info on trips to Mt. Fuji.



# Hakodate

The glittering night view of Hakodate, located on the southern tip of Hokkaido, has enchanted visitors for years. The daytime view is breathtaking as well, with beautiful structures of the past jutting out from steep hillsides, while the harbor bustles with activity below.

Opening its port to international trade in 1859, Hakodate was among the first Japanese seaports open to foreign vessels. A strong Western influence on the city's architecture can be seen in the western district of the city which is spread out along the base of Mt. Hakodate and the Motomachi area.

**Some of the historical landmarks follow:**



**The Foreign Cemetery** dates back to 1854, when Commodore Perry came to Hakodate with his fleet. When one of his sailors died of illness, this ground was offered for his final resting place.

**The Chinese Memorial Hall** is the only building in Japan constructed in the genuine Chinese style without using any nails and is a reminder of the Qing dynasty.

Churches from the past include the United Church of Christ constructed in circa 1930; Russian Orthodox Church, where a Russian priest first introduced Greek Orthodoxy to Japan; Motomachi Roman Catholic Church is easily recognized by its Gothic styling and weather vane; and the Episcopal Church, the missionary base of a sect within the British Protestant Church.

**The Trappistine Convent** was the first convent in Japan, where nuns lead a serene life under the strict precepts of St. Benedict.

**The Old Hakodate Post Office** is a vintage red-brick building popular among the young as it has been transformed into a shopping center.

**Beautiful Japanese architecture of the past can be seen at the following:**

**The Hakodate Hachimangu Shinto Shrine** was founded in 1454, and the present shrine was completed in 1918.

**Higashihongan Temple** is the oldest concrete temple in

in the Bay District. Storehouses built in the previous century have been refurbished into buffet restaurants, bars, shops and event halls making the area another of the city's attractions.

Given the nickname "Daimon," meaning Great Gate, the Hakodate Railway Station area is home to many shops and markets. Hakodate's famous seafood and fresh produce can be found at the Morning Market which opens at 3 am!

In harmony with the city's historic streets are Hakodate's streetcars, the first in Hokkaido, in operation since 1913.

Transportation to Hakodate from the main island of Honshu is available by plane, jetfoil, ferry boat or railway (going through the famous Seikan undersea tunnel).

Embraced by the charm of its natural beauty and the memories of its rich past, Hakodate welcomes you to experience it all.

## How To Get There

**By Train:** Four trains go to Hakodate daily without transferring. However, most trips require a transfer in Aomori. Ask a conductor if you have any difficulties. The journey by train takes you through the Seikan Tunnel, the world's longest undersea railroad tunnel, measuring 53.85 km (33.44 miles) long, which connects the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. Travel time from Misawa to Hakodate is about 3.5 hours.

**By Ferry:** Ferries leave to Hakodate from Aomori, Noheji and Oma (3 hours 40 minutes from Aomori, 4 hours 40 minutes, from Noheji and 1 hour 40 minutes from Oma). Fares are inexpensive for second-class passengers. If you plan to take your vehicle on the ferry, figure on paying at least 10,000 to 15,000 yen. The fares are based on the length of the vehicle and are higher for cars longer than 3 meters. You must register your vehicle at the ticket office, if you wish to take your vehicle.

Aomori offers the most convenient ferry service to Hakodate, with at least eleven daily trips. The ferry wharf is located about 6 kilometers west of Aomori off of Highway 7. Once in Hakodate, the ferry wharf is located 5.3 kilometers west of the city.

**By jetfoil:** A hydrofoil service is available from Aomori to Hakodate. The jetfoil takes 1 hour and 40 minutes and the wharf is located near "Aspam" (the triangle shaped building in Aomori). The Hakodate jetfoil terminal is located across from a "Cluster of Warehouse," about 1.3 kilometers from the city center. Ferry and train fares are half price for children, ages 6-12.

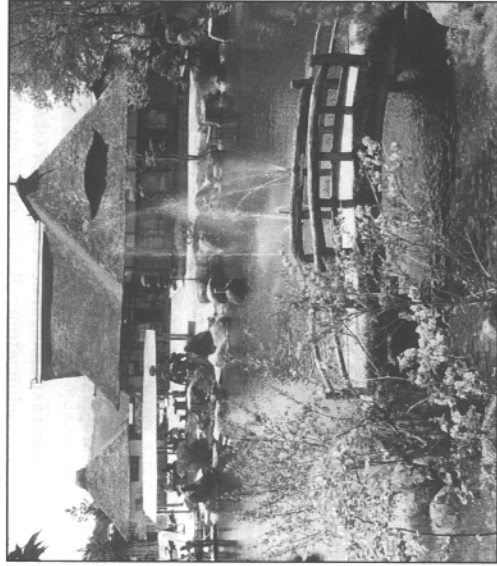
# Tono

By Leslie J. Pratt

Ask any Japanese person about the legends of "Tono" and they'll smile with recollections of childhood tales which are as much a part of every Japanese child's life as Mother Goose tales are to American children. The setting for the legends is the picturesque Kitakami Basin, not too far from Misawa in central Iwate Prefecture. Don't leave Japan without seeing traditional rural Japan, *tono style*. You'll always remember this charming 'undiscovered' secret of Tohoku.

The famous folklore heritage is preserved in "Tono Monogatari" or "The Legends of Tono" written by Kunio Yanagida. The book is considered a classic of traditional Japanese folklore, some referring to it as the 'bible' of classical Japanese legends. One of the more famous of the legends is that of the Kappas, troublesome little water imps. All Japanese children are quite familiar with these mischievous little pond creatures who are said to prey on youngsters who venture too close to water without parental supervision, which may explain why kids here seldom dare play close to water without adults near by.

Due to the surrounding mountains, the town of Tono has always been isolated from the rest of Japan and as a result, has developed a rather unique cultural charm all its own. A surprising number of traditional farm houses and many other



its feudal days, a castle town of the Nanbu clan and many of the remnants still remain. Tono has many traditional Japanese inns, or *ryokans*, which are a cultural experience in themselves. The folks at the Travel Time office can help you with reservations via the Tono Tourist Information Office at 0198-62-3030 or 4244.

As with many Japanese towns your best bet for beginning your visit is a stop at the train station where you can find maps and information in English. You can also pick up a copy of a translated "Legends of Tono." Rental bicycles from the Visitor's Center are a popular touring mode. One enchanting way to see Tono is simply by aimlessly wandering around on a bike (but keep that map handy). Surprisingly, the rental bikes can accommodate lanky American frames. The maps include three low-threat bike tours around the basin as well as many points of interest including the Tono Folk Village, museums, and many unusual old temples.

## How to get there

The best way to get there is to drive south on the Tohoku Expressway to Morioka and take the southernmost interchange. You then take Hwy 396 about 45km to reach Tono. You can also get there by train on the Shin-Hanamaki line from Morioka. Splurge a little, stay the night, take plenty of film, and enjoy your trip!

traces of pure Japan can still be found. Tono is home to some of the friendliest people you'll ever meet and is surrounded by unscarred mountains and peaceful rivers. Over the years the town has flourished as a market place, a lodging town, and in

# Tsugaru Peninsula

By Leslie J. Pratt

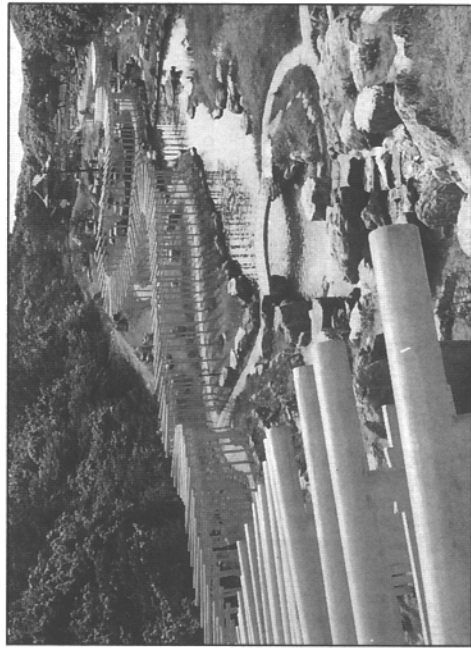
Not far from Misawa lies the Tsugaru Peninsula, rich in traditional Japanese culture and natural splendor. Extending northwest from Aomori City, the Tsugaru Peninsula is a great get-away with many sights to see. Come explore the Japan's enchanting jewel to the north.

Cape Tappizaki, on the peninsula's northernmost point offers impressive views of the Tsugaru Straits, where waters from the Pacific Ocean and Mutsu Bay clash with waters of the Sea of Japan. Violent waves are formed as the two water bodies meet and battle for equilibrium.

Highway 280 and 339 follow the coast around the peninsula and take you through many fishing villages where the people are friendly and the scenery delightful. The villages

were there long before the automobile, so "Main Street" is usually much narrower than in your American hometown. With fishing as the villages' mainstay, there is plenty of seafood to choose from. Roadside vendors sell fresh squid cooked to perfection on outdoor grills. The merchants are especially hospitable and curious about visitors to their remote outreach, and offer free samples of their foods.

One of the area's best known claims to fame is the 54K long Seikan Rail Tunnel connecting the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido. It is the longest tunnel in the world and lies 240 meters under the sea of the Tsugaru Straits. A tunnel entrance park just East of Kanita is a great placeto let the kids roam, as



well as letting the adults study the technological marvel.

One of the most impressive Buddhist temples in Tohoku can be found on the western coast, just south of Jusanoko Lake. The Takayama-Injari-jinja shrine is home to dozens of picturesque shrines, several of them built along a meandering stream. An enchanting path along the stream is accentuated with 201 torii gates.

A monument to shipwrecked American sailors can be found near the Takayama shrine which marks the spot where a merchant vessel ran aground during a vicious storm in 1889.

# Tsuta Onsen in the Hakkoda Mountains

By Karen R. LaMontia

Tsuta Onsen is famous because of where it is located and its rustic look. It is an old *onsen* (hot bath) built with wood and set amidst trees in the Hakkoda Mountains. The wood buildings blend very well in this mountain arena. The original structure at Tsuta Onsen was built in the early 1900s and it is an excellent example of old style Japanese architecture. Although this building is no longer used as the onsen's main entrance, it still stands as proud and inviting as it did at the beginning of the century. This onsen is popular with older Japanese people because of its healing mineral waters both inside the building and in one of the seven pools outside. It is popular with the younger Japanese especially in winter, because of its location to ski grounds in the Hakkoda mountain range. The word *Tsuta* comes from the name of a vine that twists its way through the forests of the Hakkoda Mountains and through the lobby at Tsuta Onsen Inn.

A poet from the Meiji era named Keigetsu Omachi travelled extensively through the Hakkodas. However, when he discovered the then small inn at Tsuta he decided to stay and make it his home. Until his death a few years after he arrived at Tsuta, he wrote poetry about the beauty of the area and his feelings toward it. He was so taken with Tsuta that prior to his death he requested that his ashes be buried on a nearby hillside. To this day the bust of Omachi stands proudly between the old bathhouse and the garden.

Once inside the bathhouse, you will think you have stepped back in time. These days the bathhouse has a men's and a women's side but other than that it remains the same as it did

The locals were perplexed with what to do about the four odd looking survivors with voracious appetites. The village elder dispatched two young runners to Aomori to consult with government authorities. The Americans were eventually repatriated, but they left a lasting cultural impression which is celebrated every year with a commemorative running race to Aomori.

The cheapest and perhaps the most enjoyable way to spend a few days on the Tsugaru is by camping at one of the many campgrounds on the northern points of the peninsula. Like

when it was built. Both sides house small but quaint bathing pools with high wood beam ceilings and floors made from beechwood. The bathhouse not only smells of mineral water

changing area from the pool; changing and bathing are done in the same room. Even though the pool is small when compared to other onsens, it is not difficult to find a private corner to bathe in.

After a relaxing hot bath there are several walks you can take for further relaxation. One of them is a 3km walk that leads to the seven pools of Tsuta. Along the trail there are places to have a picnic or just sit and listen to the sounds of nature. The view along the trail presents rich mossy areas, a lush forest and resident birds, plants and insects.

If taking a hike after your bath does not appeal to you, consider taking a leisurely walk around the Tsuta Onsen grounds. There is a small pond where Koi fish await any food offerings you may have, and there is also a Japanese-style garden to gaze at. If bathing makes you hungry or puts you in the mood to shop there is a small restaurant and souvenir shop across from the garden.

Tsuta Onsen has a ryokan on the premises, but if you plan on spending a night or two, arrangements must be made in advance by calling (0176)74-2311. This is a popular onsen amongst the Japanese and it books up quickly. Even if you don't stay overnight at Tsuta the experience of having seen and bathed at this historic and rustic onsen tucked away in the Hakkodas is sure to leave you with a memorable experience.

Aside from spending your time taking hot baths and relaxing, Tsuta is the gateway to a drive around the Hakkoda Mountains. Within an hour from Tsuta is the monument of Corporal Goto honoring his bravery in the rescue of



soldiers during a 1902 military exercise. A troop of men left their Aomori City base to train for a possible battle in Siberia during that cold winter. Much to their surprise the weather changed for the worse and turned into a blinding snowstorm. Many of the men lost their way and/or froze to death. Corporal Goto set out alone to help find and rescue his troops but he too got trapped in nature's storm and was temporarily frozen while in the standing position. The corporal made it through this unforgetting weather unharmed. However, many of his men lost their lives and some of them lost one or more of their limbs.

The bronze statue stands at the top of a small hill overlooking the plateau where this event took place. The plateau is now a lovely park and picnic area with grass and trees

# Shirakami Mountains

The Shirakami Mountains cover the 130,000 hectare mountain zone which lies in both Aomori Prefecture and Akita Prefecture. Among these mountains is a 16,791 hectare beechwood forest which was placed on the World Heritage List in December 1993.

The mountains lie on a granite base formed 90 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period. In the Miocene Epoch of the Neocene Period, 12 to 20 million years ago, volcanic rock



replacing the frozen men of years gone by. There is also a small restaurant and souvenir shop at the base of the plateau. Not far from here is the Hakkoda Ropeway which operates in all seasons, closing only during high winds when it becomes unsafe. In the winter the cable car is full of skiers wanting to challenge the slopes of the Hakkodas. In subsequent months cable cars are full of sightseers.

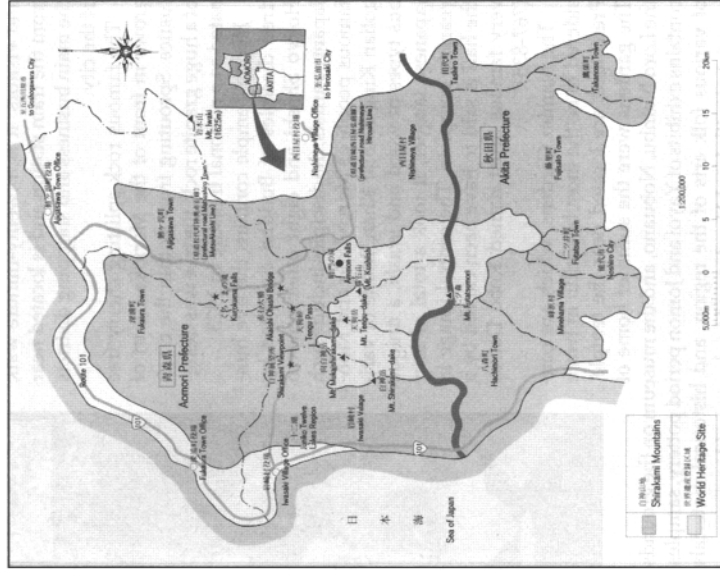
The Hakkoda Mountains are full of adventure and they are a good place to get away for a day or a weekend. There are many nature trails, onsens and spectacular views in this mountain range. In October the mountains are especially beautiful because of the trees changing into their autumn colors, but begin your trip early in the morning because Japanese people from as far as the southern islands come to

see the changing leaves in the Hakkodas. There is always something to do there that will please the entire family.

## How to get there

If you drive out the main gate, turn right at the second traffic light, follow the road signs to Lake Towada, turn away from Yasumiya (right) at the arch, then continue driving up the winding mountain road, you will soon find yourself in front of the Tsuta Onsen entrance located in northern Japan's beautiful Hakkoda Mountains.

On a final note, the Hakkoda Mountains are less than two hours from Misawa's main gate. The roads are winding in spots but nothing too treacherous. It would be advisable to take extra gas, oil and water on your journey. In winter months, it would be wise to consider taking sandbags also.



Since its addition to the globally recognized World Heritage Site list, the Shirakami Mountains are assured of being forever preserved in their natural state, offering the world a spectacular forest museum.

# Morioka City - Kyoto of the North

There's something for everyone in Morioka - a city as rich in cultural history as it is in natural beauty. Referred to as "The Kyoto of the North," Morioka City was once the capital of the ancient Nambu region. The city's natural environment and historical landmarks have been well preserved. It is located just three hours southwest of Misawa.

Although Morioka Castle no longer stands, the walls of the old fortress remain in Iwate Park. The park is filled with hundreds of beautiful trees and provides a peaceful setting for Morioka residents and visitors. It is a twenty-minute walk from the train station and is located near the main business and shopping districts of the city.

The famous rock-splitting cherry tree grows in front of the Morioka Court of Justice. Sprouting from within the crack of a huge granite rock, the tree was designated as a national treasure in 1923.

Hoonji Temple contains the five hundred disciples of Buddha. Sculpted by Hokyo Shoshi and eight other renowned Japanese artists, the disciples include such famous people as Marco Polo and Mongolian King Kublai Khan. Made of various types of wood and *urushi*, a unique Japanese lacquer, it took a total of four years to complete. The central image in the hall is said to have been carved by a very famous artist named Kobo Daishi (767-835).

The Nambu Gardens, which are considered to be the most beautiful in Iwate Prefecture, are located near the temple. The gardens were the summer home of the Lord Nambu, Nobuano, and the museum on the grounds contains exhibits of Yayoi and Jomon period pottery, samples of various folk arts of the region, and historical materials associated with Lord Nambu and his household.

Also located in Morioka is a Zoological Park, Art Museum and a Handi-Works Square, featuring local folk arts.

ready to give you another bite-sized serving of noodles as soon as you finish one. Bowls are stacked or match sticks are accumulated to keep track of one's eating prowess. When you just can't manage another bite, you must signal the persistent waitress by covering your bowl before she can refill it! Wanko soba is especially fun with a crowd as guests try to

Festivals abound throughout the year. In addition to the winter snow festival, a cherry blossom festival is held during April in Iwate Park. In June, there is the "Chagu-Chagu" Festival where one hundred horses are uniquely decorated and paraded through the streets. A summer dance festival called "Sansa-Odori" is held August 2-4 followed by a *Mikoshi* (portable shrine) festival called "Hachimangu" during mid-September.

## How to get there

- (1) Go out the POL Gate. Turn left at the first traffic light and proceed about 7 km to a "T" intersection (Route 338). Turn right.
- (2) Continue along Route 338 for 11 km. At this point, Route 338 ends. You will be on the crossbar of a "T" intersection with the other two parts of the "T" being Route 45. Continue straight ahead on Route 45 toward Hachinohe.
- (3) After about 9.5 km, Route 45 will be split by a median strip while approaching an intersection. You should see a green sign in English denoting Hachinohe Expressway. Turn right at this intersection to the Hachinohe Expressway.
- (4) After about 3 km on this road, you will come to a river. After crossing the bridge you will come to a large "Y" intersection. You will be on the upper right hand branch of the "Y" with a large pachinko parlor to your right.
- (5) After about .5 km on this road you will come to a traffic signal with signs for the Hachinohe Expressway. Turn left at this intersection. This is the actual entrance road to the expressway.
- (6) Enter the expressway and continue through the Ashiro Exit, which is the point where the Hachinohe Expressway meets the Tohoku Expressway. Continue on the Tohoku Expressway heading south toward Morioka, Sendai and Tokyo.
- (7) Continue along the Tohoku Expressway to the Morioka Exit. The entire trip takes approximately 2 1/2 hours. (Both expressways have tollbooths.)



out-eat each other. The present record is over 100 bowls!

Then there is the Koiwai Farm. This 5,000 acre farm is located about 30 minutes from the city and commands a majestic view of Mount Iwake (alt. 6,700 feet). It is the home of prize cattle, sheep and chickens, and boasts a snow festival in the winter. A highlight of the farm is an elaborate dinner of various meats and vegetables cooked on a hibachi grill at the table and is called "Chengis Khan."