TOHOKU TRAVELER

".....each day is a journey, and the journey itself home" Basho

1997 TOHOKU TRAVELER STAFF

It is important to first acknowledge the members of the Yokota Officers' Spouses' Club and anyone else associated with the publication of their original "Travelogue." Considerable information in Misawa Air Base's "Tohoku Traveler" is based on that publication. Some of these individuals are:

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The Tohoku Traveler was created as a public service for the members of the Misawa Community. It is not intended to be used by other agencies for their profit unless specifically authorized by the Director of the Misawa Family Support Flight. It is not meant as an endorsement of any of the businesses, tourist attractions, or individuals named herein. The sole purpose of this publication is to enrich the lives of the members of the Misawa Air Base Community by encouraging them to appreciate and enjoy Japanese culture through experiences gained by interaction with local and regional attractions.

INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to introduce the premiere version of "Tohoku Traveler". This very informative publication, designed as a guide for personnel assigned to Misawa Air Base, is a compilation of selfless efforts by numerous volunteers and a very dedicated Family Support Center staff. Many of the articles are originals researched and written by the volunteers and staff. However, we have also borrowed from publication and documents created by other Misawa Air Base agencies and elsewhere. I want to specifically acknowledge the Yokota Air Base Officers' Spouses' Club for allowing us to use several of their articles and for the original idea of such a publication as this.

We're fortunate to be stationed in such a culturally rich and diverse region of Japan—full of new tastes, sounds, sights and ideas that can't be found anywhere else. We would be remiss to spend a tour here without fully experiencing what the area has to offer.

My hope for this publication is that it will help Misawans in their exploration of Northern Japan. Some of us need a little nudge to make that first trip off-base, or out of town. Others have traveled extensively throughout Northern Japan and are simply looking for more places to go. This book has a little something for all of us.

We consider "Tohoku Traveler" to be a "living document", far from complete. I encourage you to take note of our omissions and send us an article describing the destination. We also welcome any other input or suggestions regarding this effort. Please call us at 226-4735, come by the Family Support Center, or visit our web site at www.misawa.af.mil/orgs/fsc/fsc.htm. Happy touring!!

MARK R. JOHNSON, Maj USAF, BSC
Commander, Family Support Flight

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GENERAL INFORMATION

TRAVEL BY BUS:

If you want to visit the Tokyo area, Travel Time offers the cheapest way - the Narita Shuttle Bus which goes to Tokyo twice a week. The cost is $45 per person, one-way. They also offer package trips like the Tokyo Weekender, usually on a three day weekend, which includes round-trip bus transportation plus several nights' accomodation. Travel Time also offers various bus trips to sightseeing and activity locations throughout the Tohoku region. Outdoor Recreation offers ski trips and other recreation trips by bus. The bus is the cheapest commercial transportation in Japan. There are three types of bus services: mass transit within cities, long-distance and sightseeing. For intercity buses, you may have to pick up a ticket issued from a dispenser when you board, and then pay when you get off, or you may have to pay the fare as soon as you board the bus. On some routes, there is only one rate no matter how long you ride. If you have time while waiting, check the sign at the bus stop. The long-distance buses usually travel through the night. Be aware - many bus companies in Japan still allow smoking onboard the buses.

Siriusu-go: Towada/Hachinohe to Tokyo Station (Yaesu South Gate) Fare: Y10,190 (from Towada), Y9,680 (from Hachinohe) It leaves Towada (Bus stop #1 at the Towada Station near the Daiei grocery store) at 2015 and then stops at Hachinohe (Konakano Bus Center Nambu Bus Station) and leaves at 2120. It reaches Tokyo Station at 0625 next morning. From Tokyo Station, the bus leaves at 2150, and arrives at Hachinohe at 0655 next morning and then at Towada at 0800. Tel: 0178-43-4521 (It is best to make a reservation, especially on the weekend.)

LaFore-go: Aomori toTokyo (9 hours, 30 minutes) Fare: Y10,000 Tel: 0177-73-5722 or 03-3215-0489/03-3743-0022

Umineko-go: (usually several buses a day per route) Hachinohe - Sendai (4 hours)
Fare: Y4,600 Tel: 022-256-6646 or 022-261-5333

Hassei-E-go: Morioka - Hachinohe (2 hours, 15 minutes) Fare: Y1,800 Tel: 0178-24-1121

Asunaro-go: Morioka - Aomori (3 hour, 15 minutes) Fare: Y5,600 Tel: 0177-26-7575

To get to Aomori airport from Aomori train station using a bus, there are two buses which to the airport: (Blue) JR bus: Board at the front of the bus and take a numbered boarding ticket from the machine located beside the driver. When your stop is announced, press the buzzer by the window. Refer to the electronic display behind the driver's seat and locate the number that is written on your boarding ticket. Deposit the indicated fare in the fare box with your boarding ticket. (Light green) City bus: Board at the center door and take a boarding ticket from the dispenser located to the right of the steps. Other procedures are the same as JR bus. For either bus, be sure to check the destination because there are several different routes.

FERRIES

Several ferries run from Aomori to different destinations. A fare for a car depends on the length and width of the car. The driver's fare is usually included (economy class). Passengers will be charged separately. Depending on routes and types of ships, you may take your pet; but your pet must stay in your car. You can make a reservation two months prior. On the day of departure, you need to do paperwork at the terminal, so arrive at the port at least 90 minutes before the departure time. Failing to do so may result in cancellation of your reservation. You also need to show your JCI paper, so be sure to take it with you. The fares for passengers are based on economy class. Be sure to check the fare and discount policies when you make a reservation. If you buy a round trip ticket, you will get 10% discount. Usually, for long distance routes, a ferry travels during the night and arrives at its destination on next morning. The short distance routes, (such as the one between Aomori and Hakodate), run several times a day. Higashi Nihon Ferry Tel: 0177-82-3631/0178-28-3985. Here's a list of routes and fares:

Vehicle fares:	**3m-4m**	**4m-5m**	**5m-6m**	***motorcycle**
Aomori-Hakodate (3hr 40min)	13150	16510	21510	2240
Aomori-Muroran (7hr)	16200	20280	25790	3770
Ohma-Hakodate (1hr 40min)	9990	12530	17840	1120
Ohata-Muroran (4hr 20min)	13150	16510	21510	2240
Hachinohe-Tomakomai (9hr)	16720	20900	26500	3770
Hachinohe-Muroran (8hr)	16720	20900	26500	3770
Express Ferry Unicorn/ Aomori Hakodate (2hr)	14840	18200	23200	2240

Passenger fares:	**Adult**	**Children (ages 6-11)**
Aomori-Hakodate	1420	710
Aomori-Muroran	3460	1730
Ohma-Hakodate	1010	510
Ohata-Muroran	1420	710
Hachinohe-Tomakomai	3970	1990
Hachinohe-Muroran	3970	1990
Express Ferry Aomori-Hakodate	2130	1070

*These fares are based on motorcycle with a gross exhaust volume of over 125c.c. and less than 750c.c. All fares for buses and ferries are subject to change. For more information or assistance, call Travel Time, 226-3555.

TAXIS

AAFES runs a taxi service called Kichi Taxi. They run seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The fare begins at 580 yen for the first two kilometers and increases 80 yen for every 300 meters and/or waiting time (or for every 275 meters during hours between 10p.m. and 5a.m.). It costs about 1000 yen from the main base to the Misawa Airport. Off-base taxis are slightly more expensive. There are two sizes, and they have different rates. If you are coming into Misawa at the civilian airport, it is a good idea to call Kichi Taxi as soon as you get to Misawa (or if you use the train, call from the train station). Taxi companies other than Kichi taxi will often tell you to get a Kichi taxi if you are going to the base. Also, Kichi taxi is a private

contractor, so they will take anyone on the waiting line at the airport or at the train station. If you have called a taxi, wait somewhere else other than the queue to ensure that YOUR taxi will come and pick you up. To reach Kichi Taxi off base, call 53-6481, on base, call 222-5438.

TRAINS

Trains are another option for transportation. It takes about five hours to get to Tokyo from Misawa. You need to change to a bullet train at Morioka station. The earliest train leaves Misawa at six in the morning and arrives at Tokyo about eleven o'clock. The latest one leaves Misawa at 1822 p.m. and arrives Tokyo at 2327 p.m. From Tokyo, the last bullet train (Yamabiko 59), which connects to the Express Train bound for Misawa, leaves at 1900. If you take a bullet train after this one, you'll end up stranded in Morioka. Another option is to use a sleeper train, which is more expensive. It leaves Misawa at 2200 and arrives Ueno at 0600 the next day. It leaves Ueno at 2223 and arrives at Misawa at 0718. The fare system is rather complicated. The base fare is determined by distance. An express fee is added if you use an express train or a bullet train. If you wish to use a reserved seat, that fee is also added. If you want to go first class, an additional fee will be charged. To avoid the confusion associated with figuring out the total fare, JR Higashi Nihon offers some discount tickets that you can use. Tokyo Myty is very useful if you complete your travel within a week and relatively cheaper. It costs 28,340 yen for round trip (March 1997), and you can even use a sleeper train. The Tokyo Ladies Kippu (ticket) is for two or more women traveling together. It is good for only three days, but during that time you can get on and off anywhere in Tokyo area. It costs 46,900 yen for two and 70,350 yen for three (both for round trip). There are more discounts depending on your destination. There are times when you can't use the discount tickets; usually during Golden Week, at the end of the year through New Year's day, and during Obon week. You can reserve your seat up to one month prior. For weekends and Japanese holidays, you should make a reservation as soon as the tickets are on sale. Japan Rail offers non-smoking seats. A bullet train called MAX is a two-story train. You can see the scenery better from the second floor than from a regular train. If you've ever driven to Towada, you probably noticed a small train running beside the road. This line connects Towada and Misawa, and is run by Towada Kanko Dentetsu. You can also use a train to go to Hokkaido. Harbor Hakodate Kippu is good for four days and costs 12,640 yen round trip. The discount tickets described above are for adults only. A child in elementary school pays half price of adult base fares. Express, reserved seat, and first class are different. A child under age 6 will ride free if accompanied by an adult. The procedure to take a train at Misawa station is different from the bigger stations. The gate will not open until 15 minutes before the departure time. There is a small waiting room right next to the gate. When you go through the gate, show your ticket to a station attendant who will stamp your ticket. When you change trains at the Morioka station, you do not have to give your ticket to an attendant; just show your ticket. He may take the portion of Misawa-Morioka from you. At the bullet train gate, show your ticket again. On both the bullet train and express train, a conductor inspects your ticket. He usually checks to see if you have a valid reserved seat ticket. To exit from a station in Tokyo area, there are two ways. If the back of your ticket is brown or black, you can most likely go through an automatic gate. Otherwise, go to a gate with an attendant and give your ticket. Travel Time can help you make reservations. For more information, call 226-3502. Also, the Family Support Center offers train trips to Hachinohe, which will familiarize you with the Japanese train system, how to buy tickets, etc. Call the Family Support Center at 226-4735 to register for the tour.

SPACE-A and EML ORDERS

The cheapest way to fly for military personnel and dependents is definitely Space-Available travel. You can fly to almost any base in the world, for next to nothing. Of course, there are risks. You may be "bumped off" your flight because you're in a lower category than someone else is. You might be stranded in an air terminal for a day, or even longer. Plenty of planning and the ability to be flexible will make things easier. Know your category. You need orders to travel Space-A, either EML orders or leave orders. On EML orders: If you are active duty, or travelling with your sponsor, the category is 2A. If you travel without your sponsor, you are category 2C. With category 2A, you have priority over category 2C, thus giving you a better chance. (The only higher Space-A traveler is someone with emergency leave papers and if there is a seat, they get it.) You can sign up at midnight on the effective day. If you are 2C, make sure you get EML orders about one month before your intended travel date. EML orders for category 2C is good for about 90 days, and you can sign up as of the effective date on the orders. Second, regardless of your category, get two stamps on your orders: one for going and another for returning. Fax your orders to other AMC terminals where you will need to change flights or where your final destination is. Your name will then be on the list by the time you get there, and this will save time. The best time to use Space-A is right after the holidays or the school breaks. It is hard to do if you have school-age children. But you can take your children out of school as early as the end of May. September, January and February are usually the less busy months. During the high PCS season (May through August), Space-A on the Freedom Bird to Seattle is extremely difficult to get. Another busy time is in December, with many people trying to go home for the holidays. The best time to fly out from Misawa is on a Thursday. The Freedom Bird usually flies on Thursdays (twice a month, usually the first and third Thursday of the month). There are a few other scheduled flights to Yokota and other destinations also. The Navy offers Space-A whenever there is a flight. There are no scheduled flights, so call Navy Operations Air Terminal at 226-4004 for information. If you are in one of the lower categories, it is best to stay at the terminal. Although tedious, this is the best way to ensure that if, as frequently happens, flight times change, you will be there when they do. If you want to leave and come back, listen to the AMC employees. If they tell you to come back at a certain time, do it. Keep in mind that Space-A is not a commercial flight. They do cancel flights more often than commercial carriers. You should have an alternate plan (or plans) in case you cannot get a hop before your orders expire. It's also a good idea to attend the Space-A briefing given by the AMC personnel, which is held the last Tuesday of each month. The phone number is 226-2370/2371.

AMC terminals:

Yokota AB: The terminal is open 24 hours, with passenger services from 3a.m. to 10p.m. The cafeteria and USO family lounge are also open 24 hours, but there are no sleeping facilities available. It is hard to get a room at base billeting, especially from April to September. You have to sign up in person each morning of the day you are staying. Call 225-7712 for more information. There are some hotels off base, but they are expensive (about $100 per person). Car rental and Corporate Travel have counters in the terminal. A shuttle bus to New Sanno Hotel and Narita International Airport runs daily from the terminal at 0930.

Possible destinations are Iwakuni, Atsugi, Korea, Sasebo, Singapore, McChord AFB, Andersen AFB, Hickam AFB, Travis AFB, etc. DSN: 225-9526/9466, flight information: 225-7111/7119,

fax: 225-9768.

McChord AFB: The terminal is open from 0500 - 2200. USO has a small lounge which is open 0600 - 1800. There is a snack bar and vending machines. Rooms are available at base billeting on weekdays: it is difficult to get a room on weekends. Call 206-475-5900 for information.

Possible destinations are Travis AFB, Elmendorf AFB, Fairchild AFB, New Zealand, Australia. Some flights are booked out of Travis or Hickam. DSN: 976-2657, commercial: 206-984-2657, fax: 984-5659.

Hickam AFB: The terminal is open 24 hours, but there is no sleeping area. The USO is open 24 hours, except Mondays (closed 0500 - 2200) There is an AAFES snack bar that is usually open between 0500 - 2000, but hours do vary by day. Base billeting is not available for family accommodations. Reservations can be made at 909-449-2603 (commercial) or 315-449-2603 (DSN). There is a SATO counter and a car rental counter in the lower level terminal.

Possible destinations are Travis, Kadena, Andersen, McChord, March AFB, Pago Pago, New Zealand, Australia. DSN: 430-0111, ask for 449-1270. Prerecorded flight information: 808-449-1854, fax 449-1503.

Andersen AFB: The terminal is open 24 hours, as is the restaurant/snack bar. The Family lounge is open from 0700 - 2000, and there is no sleeping area. Base billeting is Space-A only (DSN: 315-366-8144).

Possible destinations are Hickam, Travis, Yokota, Kadena, Korea, etc. DSN: 315-366-2095, commercial: 011-671-366-5165/5135, fax: 011-671-366-2079.

Elmendorf AFB: The terminal is open 24 hours, as is the YMCA lounge. The restaurant is open from 0500 - 1900. Base billeting is available except during summer months. DSN: 317-552-2454, commercial 907-753-6110.

Possible destinations are McChord, Travis, Yokota. DSN: 317-552-3781/4616, commercial: 907-552-3781; fax DSN: 317-552-3996 or commercial: 907-552-3996.

Travis AFB: The terminal is open 24 hours a day. The cafeteria is open 0500 - 2300 daily. There is a USO lounge (open 0800 - 2100) Base billeting is available on a first come, first served basis. DSN: 837-2987 or commercial: 437-0700.

Possible destinations are Hickam (everyday), Kadena, Yokota, Eielson, Elmendorf, Osan, Andersen, New Zealand, Australia, Andrews AFB, etc. DSN: 837-1854, commercial: 707-424-1854/1-800-787-2534, fax: 707-424-2048/DSN: 837-2048.

Kadena AB: Open 0600 - 2200. Base billeting: the Shogun Inn (DSN: 632-1100) does not accept advance reservations. Duwage Lodge at Camp Lester requires reservations usually 45 days in advance.

Possible destinations are Yokota, Osan, Los Angeles International Airport, St. Louis, Andersen,

Hickam, Bangkok, Jakarta, Indonesia, etc. DSN: 315-634-1281, commercial: 011-81-611-734-1281, fax(commercial): 011-81-611-734-4421.

Osan AB: Open 0630 - 2100. The snack bar is open 0630 - 1800 and the USO is open 0800 - 1700. Base billeting requires reservations 60-90 days in advance. (DSN: 784-1844). There is a shuttle bus service to and from Kinpo International Airport. The cost is $15.

Possible destinations are Elmendorf, Travis, Kadena, Yokota. DSN: 784-1854, prerecorded information: 784-6809, fax: 784-4897.

Los Angeles International Airport: The AMC counter is located in Terminal 2, near the Northwest counter. The counter hours are 0630 - 1500 and it's also open for night flights. LAX is open 24 hours. The USO is located in Terminal 4, on the arrival level, near American Airlines. Operating hours are 0800 - 2300. A free military shuttle runs weekdays from Los Angeles Air Station to the airport hourly. Pick up is at the USO. **It is dangerous to sleep in the airport**, so have money for hotels/motels. The AMC counter has discount coupons and will make reservations for you.

Examples of the prices for round trip: Seoul -Y23,000; Los Angeles Y49,000; USA (four stops) Y79,000; Honolulu Y48,000. Prices vary according to departure date. An important thing to remember is that refund policies for cancellation, change of date, or missed flight, vary widely depending on the individual airlines, types of tickets, etc. When making reservations, be sure to ask about the policies. You can also purchase a pass offered by major airlines that allows you to fly unlimited for a period of time within CONUS. Delta Airlines (Tel No. 03-5275-7000) offers two kinds: a 30-day pass ($449) and a 60-day pass ($749). One disadvantage is that you fly on a space-available basis. To purchase, all you need is proof that you ive outside of the States (EML orders and a military ID card should be okay). Contact major airline companies for more information. Possible destinations are Seattle, Yokota, Osan, Kadena, Iwakuni. Space A overseas is very limited; average 0-10 seats per flight normally. DSN: 833-2714/0715, commercial: 213-363-0715/0716, prerecorded flight information DSN: 833-2790 or commercial: 363-2790.

Kunsan AB: The terminal and the passenger lounge are open 07:30-16:30. For billeting call DSN: 315-782-4604 or commercial: 011-82-654-470-4604. There is a shuttle bus service to Osan Air Base 7 days a week, and it costs $10. DSN: 315-782-4666/5403, commercial: 011-82-654-4666/5403, fax(commercial): 011-82-654-470-5616/5406 or (DSN): 315-782-5616/5406.

Commercial Flights:

If you plan to use Japanese commercial flights, there are some discounts available. For example, if you fly during an off season, you can get a discount for as much as 50% of the airplane ticket. The drawbacks are that you must buy your ticket two months prior, the fee for cancellation or change is very high, and the number of tickets is limited. The discount rates are varied and depend on how many weeks in advance you buy a ticket and the dates you want to travel. Japan Air Service publishes a monthly schedule for the several months in advance. Some travel agencies offer discount airplane tickets to foreign countries such as the United States, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, etc. If you do not want to take a hop, a ticket to the States with four stops is very useful. It is only available to those who live outside of the States. No.1 Travel (Tel No.: 03-3200-8871/03-3986-4291/03-3770-1381).

DRIVING IN JAPAN:

Driving in Japan is a different experience for most Americans. You have to drive on the left-hand side of the road, and the driver's seat is on the right side. The roads are narrow, there are more pedestrians and bicyclists (most of whom do not follow traffic rules), and the speeds are generally quite slow. Since Misawa is a small town, the only traffic jam is the morning and afternoon rush to get on- and off-base. But if you go to Hachinohe or Aomori, keep in mind that the busy time is from 0700 - 0900, and from 1700 - 2000. Most people are off on Sundays and every second and fourth Saturday the of month there is no school, so roads are usually more crowded. Also, the zero and five dates are designated as delivery days, so there will be more trucks and vans on the roads. You should also know the Japanese holidays, particularly New Year's (December 28-January 5), Golden Week (April 29-May 5), and Obon (around August 15). If you plan to go to Tokyo during Obon, go there at the beginning of the week and come back at the end of the week since many people who live in Tokyo leave for their home town at the beginning and head back to Tokyo at the end of the week. Driving in Tokyo is much different from driving in Misawa. The traffic is always congested except for midnight hours. On a three-day weekend or any weekend during school break, you will not believe the traffic jam on the Chuo Expressway; it starts as soon as just outside of Shinjuku and lasts up to the exits at the resort areas. The toll/express roads are very expensive. From Misawa to Tokyo, it will cost about 15,000 yen. One way to save money is to buy a highway card issued by Japan National Expressways. If you buy a 30,000 yen card, you will get extra 3,000 yen (which means you save 10%). It is good for all National Expressways (Tohoku, Chuo, Shuto, etc.), but it may not be used for other toll roads because they are run by local agencies. Another option is to buy a coupon ticket, which is a book of 10 tickets and usually comes with one free ticket. This coupon ticket is useful if you use the toll road frequently and the distance is short (like Michinoku toll road). You can purchase a card or a coupon at a toll booth or any service area's vending machine. Remember to use common sense and ALWAYS be a defensive driver. If you can't "read" what another driver is about to do, it's better to play it safe than take a chance. Special precautions are needed during winter. Even if your car has winter tires or all-weather tires, you still have to drive slowly when there is ice or snow on the road. The major roads are plowed fairly quickly, but many minor roads are not. Even if seems that other people are driving like usual, do not do it yourself. Many roads and intersections can be covered with "black ice" during the winter. It's wise to give yourself plenty of stopping time. Expressways will be closed for heavy snow or really bad weather. Some roads, especially those in mountains, are closed during the entire winter. When traveling in the winter, it is also a good idea to keep winter supplies in your car: a bag of kitty litter for adding traction, a shovel, tow chains, jumper cables, a warm blanket, and extra food and water. Also be sure that everyone in the car is dressed appropriately for the season. If you get stuck during the winter, a T-shirt is not going to keep you very warm! On the plus side, there are many advantages to travelling by car. You can travel at your own pace and set your own hours. It is much cheaper than any other form of travel here in Japan. If you bring your own food and drinks, you can save even more. You can stock up the car with toys, books, etc. for the kids and be sure to stop periodically so everyone can stretch their legs and get a break. You'll definitely get to see some great sights in Japan, not just the tourist highlights. If you are interested in seeing the "real" Japan, driving is the way to go!

TIPS FOR DRIVING

1. You can make it (in most cars) from Misawa to Aomori or Mutsu and back on one tank of gas. If you're going much farther or plan to tour by car a lot when you reach your destination, bring extra yen. Off-base gas prices are very high!

2. Bring yen with you!

3. If you have young children in your group, you'd be wise to pack foods they like, as well as snacks and drinks. Of course, you can't travel too far in Japan without running into a drink machine, many of which offer delicious fruit juices, water, sports drinks, and of course, sodas.

4. It's a good idea to tell someone on base where you're heading, in case something comes up. Also, if you bring a Y1000 yen phone card, you'll be able to call back to Misawa in case of car trouble, etc.

5. Don't forget to bring your camera and extra film!

RESTAURANTS

There are many different kinds of restaurants in Japan, from small one-man operations to familiar fast-food chains to deluxe establishments that require reservations and nice clothes. Morning "sets" include coffee or tea, "Texas" toast, and a small salad or yogurt for about Y500. These are served until 1000 in the many coffee shops around train stations. This can be quite economical for breakfast as coffee alone can sometimes be Y500. Lunch specials are also good deals. Lunch prices are lower than dinner prices, often for the exact same items. Specials are usually displayed by wax food models in glass display cases just in front of the entrance to the restaurant. During tea-time in the late afternoon, cake "sets" include a slice of cake or pie with a cup of tea or coffee. There are sometimes different kinds of gourmet teas and coffees available also. Ordering is easy. Many restaurants use picture menus, so you can make a selection simply by pointing to the pictures. If necessay, you can take the waitress outside and pointing out the wax models of the desired meals. If your choice in a western-style restaurant is an a la carte item, the waitress may ask whether you would like the lunch or dinner set: for an additional Y500, you could get soup or salad, rice or bread (pan) and coffee or tea. If you want a Japanese dish, you may be asked if you want teishoku style, that means the selection would come with bowls of rice and miso soup, usually for an extra Y300. At more traditional Japanese places, usually known by the dark blue noren curtain in the doorway (indicating the restaurant is open for business), basic Japanese language skills may be required. Establishments with round red lanterns outside serve alcohol; guests usually sit at a bar or around small tables on tatami mats. These are usually yakitori places serving grilled chicken on skewers or sushi bars offering raw fish. Conveyor belt sushi bars (kaiten zushi), or "sushi-go-rounds" offer raw fish and rice selections circulating around a central metal bar. The different designs on the plates indicate different prices, ranging from Y100-Y400 per plate. Besides raw fish, cooked fish, cucumber, tuna, and egg sushi, Jell-O, ice cream, or yogurt may also come around on the conveyor belt. Green tea is made by the customer from the tea bags in containers on the bar. Soy sauce (shoyu) and pickled ginger are also available. If something other than what is on the belt is desired, requests can be made of the "cooks" in the center. The bill is totaled up by adding up the

number of plates stacked in front of the customer. These places are very popular with families and are busy on the weekends. Meals at specialty restaurants can run over Y4000 per person and require reservations which can be made over the phone through a travel agent or hotel. Meal selections must some times be specified days in advance.

PHONES

The Japanese commercial telephone system is operated by the Nippon Telephone & Telegraph Corporation, or NTT. You can find indoor and outdoor public telephones just about everywhere in Japan. Yellow and green telephones accept both 10 yen and 100 yen coins. Red phones accept 10 yen coins only. Green phones also accept magnetic, prepaid telephone cards. The charge for a local call is 10 yen per minute. A call is automatically cut off if an additional 10 yen has not been inserted when the warning buzz is heard. You can make direct inter-city calls from these phones. Domestic area codes always start with zero, and are parenthesized or hyphenated in telephone directories to indicate where the area code ends. The area codes are 01 for Tokyo, 06 for Osaka, 045 for Yokohama, 0176 for Misawa & Towada, 0178 for Hachinohe, 0177 For Aomori. Domestic calls are cheaper at night and on Saturday, Sunday & national holidays, with the charge reduced by 20 to 40 percent for domestic calls of distances over 60 km.

NTT English information: Tokyo 03-3201-1010
Yokohama 045-322-1010
Open from 0900-1700 on weekdays,
0900-1200 on Saturdays

To call Misawa from off-base, dial 53-5181 for the operator. If you are calling from outside the local area, add the area code (0176) and dial 0176-53-5181.

The Tourist Information Center (TIC), operated by the Japan National Tourist Organization, offers everything from free travel information about Japan to offering suggestions on tour itineraries. They do NOT handle reservations, however. The Tourist Information Center in Tokyo can be reached by calling 03-3502 1461. They are open from 0900-1700 on weekdays, 0900-1200 on Saturdays. They are closed on Sundays and national holidays. If you want to visit there while in Tokyo, take the gray Hibiya Subway line to Hibiya. Exit out A4, go up the stairs to the street and TIC will be on your right, just before the overhead railroad tracks.

Other TIC's:
Tourist Information Center (Kyoto) - hours are the same as the Tokyo TIC, telephone: 075-371-5649.

Tourist Information Center (Narita airport), open 0900-2000 every day, year-round. They are located in Passenger Terminal 2. Telephone: 0476-34-6251

Tourist Information Center (Kansai airport), open from 0900-2100 on weekdays, 0900-1200 on Saturdays. They are closed Sundays and national holidays. Telephone: 0724-56-6025.

Teletourist Service provides 24-hour taped information on current events in and around Tokyo

Tourist Information Center (Narita airport), open 0900-2000 every day, year-round. They are located in Passenger Terminal 2. Telephone: 0476-34-6251

Tourist Information Center (Kansai airport), open from 0900-2100 on weekdays, 0900-1200 on Saturdays. They are closed Sundays and national holidays. Telephone: 0724-56-6025.

Teletourist Service provides 24-hour taped information on current events in and around Tokyo in English. The telephone number is 03-3503-2911.

JAPANESE POSTAL SYSTEM

The double crossed capital "T" is the symbol of the postal service. It is found anywhere there is a connection with the post office, and is sometimes used as a map symbol indicating the location of post offices. It is also displayed at stores and shops (cigarette shops, for instance) that sell postage stamps, revenue stamps and post cards. It is also used on printed materials to indicate the postal code.

Your Japanese Address:
Your name,
PSC # & BOX #
APO AP 09319
Misawa AB
64 Hirahata Misawa-shi Aomori 033

The red square or cylindrical-shaped mailbox, or the square box-like mailbox, is used for posting stamped mail. They are marked with the postal symbol. The mail collection schedule is also clearly posted. Any letter or post card can be dropped in a mailbox outside of post office service hours as long as it does not require some form of record keeping or is not too large in size. Those items need to be brought to a post office counter. Mail boxes having tow slots are either marked according to the destination (for example, Tokyo and Others) or according to the type of mail.

THE JAPANESE BATH

At its simplest, the Japanese bath is merely a way of getting clean. But even a single experience reveals that it is also much more than that. After rinsing away the grime of everyday life outside the tub, one slips slowly into a deep pool or tub of sparkling clean hot water and sits submerged to the chin. Only a few minutes of soaking in that water, its heat seeping deep into the body, and the mind begins to drift. The motivations for bathing in Japan go beyond efficiency and transcend physical cleanliness. What the bath offers is a sensual feeling of well-being, of harmony with one's environment and with one's self. Anger and frustration disappear. How have the Japanese survived so well the discordant pressures of their modernity? Perhaps the bath is one of Japan's secret weapons for survival in the modern age. Perhaps it is the balm that soothes the aches and bruises brought on by the frantic pace and conflicting tensions of life as it is everywhere lived today.

TO CHECK IN**:** at the main entrance, take your shoes off and put them on one of the shelves or use a coin locker (100 yen). Then, go to the counter and pay the attendant. Some hotbaths have ticket machines. Always wash and rinse yourself BEFORE getting into the baths. Never get in the tubs with soap or shampoo on yourself. Bring soap, shampoo, wash cloth, bath towel, hair dryer, etc. - nicer baths may provide some of these things, but unless you

know beforehand, it's best to bring your own stuff. Prices listed for each onsen are for adults. Elementary school children are usually half the adult price, and babies and toddlers are usually free. Most onsens, or hotbaths, are divided into separate areas for men and women. There are many different onsens, each with its own unique atmosphere. Some are small, and some, like Komaki's rock onsen, are quite large. The more expensive onsens can be very luxurious. Some even have outdoor tubs where you can sit cozily even in winter and watch the snow fall. Most children enjoy the experience, but some of the baths may be too hot for them.

SHRINES

Many of the temples and shrines are open daily and foreigners are welcome to visit. One of the local Buddhist temples is a scheduled stop on the Base INTRO tour. As with many places in Japan, shoes must be removed before entering. The "Jinja," or shrine, is where believers in Japan's indigenous religion (Shinto) go to worship. "Shinto" originated in ancient peoples' fears of demons and supernatural powers, and their worship of them. It has no written body of doctrine, but it is Japan's main religion, and is practiced widely through ceremonies and festivals. If you want to see the typical classical architecture of Japan, there is no better place to go than one of its many Buddhist temples. These temples, with their image of Buddha, were established for the practice and propagation of the Buddhist religion which originated in India, and came to Japan via China.

GOOD LUCK AND BAD LUCK

Superstition is a natural part of Japanese life and thought, but young people ignore or are unaware of many of the old beliefs. The north-east is considered unlucky, since it is the direction by which demons enter and leave. It even has a special name (kimon), which means "devils gate," and it is bad to build a house with the entrance facing this way. It is also thought unlucky to sleep with the head towards the north "kitamakura", since this is how dead bodies are laid out. Certain days are either lucky or unlucky, and are noted on calendars. The most important ones are "Tai-an," a lucky day which is excellent for weddings, and "Butsumetsu," which is unlucky but good for funerals. Wedding halls are virtually empty on "Butsumetsu" days in spite of the special low prices they offer as an inducement. The number four is unlucky, since one of its pronunciations, "shi" can also mean "death." Hospital rooms are always numbered 1, 2, 3, 5. Japanese children sometimes make a paper doll called "teruterubozu" and hang it outside the window to bring fine weather the next day. It's a lucky sign to find a stalk floating upright in your teacup. The event is described by the phrase "chabashira ga tatsu."

FOLK HANDICRAFTS

TSUGARU NURI: Tsugaru lacquerware dates back to the feudal times. It is made of many layers of lacquer colors, then scoured and polished until the design comes through. This procedure may be done up to 40 times. The end product has a hard, durable, and beautiful finish. One piece can take up to a year to complete! You can buy the lacquerware at many locations, including the gift shops at Komaki's resort, and the department store gift counters.

FOLK TOYS: these toys include the Tsugaru kites, which depict Samurai warriors, the clay pigeon whistles, wooden tops, and various kinds of dolls.

KOGIN EMBROIDERY: Kogin began as a decorative way to mend holes in the sashiko, a quilted coat worn as a field smock. First the patterns (usually geometric) were hand-stitched onto a patch, which would then be sewn onto the quilted coat. The decorated coat was worn on festive occasions. The work today can be bought in a variety of forms, including wallets, handbags, neckties and runners. Kogin embroidery comes in many colors and designs.

AKEBI WICKERWORK: these beautiful handmade basket items are made from common materials such as ground bamboo or the Akebi vine. These date back to the Edo period. The wickerwork is highly valued all over Japan. The baskets are available at gift shops and souvenir shops.

Notes

Frozen Waterfall Near Towada

MISAWA

Misawa is located in Aomori (which means blue-green forest) Prefecture, the northernmost prefecture on the island of Honshu. Misawa is a growing city of over 45,000 people. It is the tourist gateway to northern Japan. Many Japanese tourists come from all over Japan to stay at the famous Komaki Onsen Resort, visit the Hakkoda Mountains, or tour the spectacular Oirase Gorge and Lake Towada area. In addition to being a connecting point in tours, Misawa is host to the U.S. Air Force's 35th Fighter Wing. The town and the base have maintained a close friendship with numerous cultural exchanges. The base hosts an annual "Japan Day" at the base high school , which features Japanese artists, dancers, musicians, athletes, historians, chefs, and others. Misawa City in turn sponsors an annual "American Day" at their beautiful auditorium downtown. Americans proudly share their art, crafts, dance, music and food with the townspeople.

SHOPPING:

Misawa offers a variety of shopping opportunities. The main shopping street, covered and lined with poles, offers everything from pet shops, fabric shops, drugstores, flower shops, antique and souvenir stores. Located immediately out the POL gate and on the right are China Pete's and the Pony Plaza. Each store carries a wide selection of dishes, china, souvenirs and other novelty items.

Helping Hands: This shop sells local handcrafted items and plants. Their nursery is very nice, and is located about 15 minutes from the Misawa Train station.
Getting there: Starting from the train station on your left, turn right at the Hot Spar intersection. Drive until the road comes to a "T" then go right. You'll be on the road headed for Kamikita…just look to the left and you'll see Hands. This is about a 20 minute drive from the train station.

#2 and #9 Markets: The farmers' markets are a great source for fresh produce, flowers, crackers, and fish. When produce is in season, the prices are reasonable. The #2 market occurs on the days ending in "2" (2nd, 12th, and 22nd of each month). This market is located about 2 blocks off Pole Road in Misawa. The #9 market occurs on days ending in "9." It is located behind the train station.

Getting there: #2 Market: From Nagasakiya, head toward base on Pole Road. At the first stoplight, turn left. When you see the brown NTT building, turn left one block and look right. #9 Market: (on the 9th, 19t, and 29th): Past the train station, take the first left. Cross the entire set of tracks and look left for the parking lot.

KOMAKI ONSEN:

The Komaki Onsen complex, located just past the train station, is a fascinating mixture of the old and new Japan. The complex consists of four ultra-modern hotels. It includes museums with displays of everyday articles used by Tohoku farmers, recreated thatched roof farmhouses, rock gardens, an open air Noh stage, tea houses, temples, a bowling alley and a

swimming pool. Connecting all these attractions is a maze of tunnels lined with ancient artwork. The jewel of the complex is the nationally famous hot bath. This giant onsen is complete with a waterfall and trees. It is reminscent of Lake Towada and the Oirase river.

MISS VEEDOL BEACH:

Another point of international interest in Misawa is Sabishiro, or Miss Veedol, Beach. From this windswept location, two American aviators successfully launched the first non-stop Trans-Pacific flight. Clyde Panborn and Hugh Herndon put Misawa on the international map with their flight from the beach all the way to Wenatchee, Washington. Today, the beach park is bordered by a pine tree park with hiking trails.

MISAWA HEATED INDOOR POOL:

The city of Misawa has a beautiful indoor heated pool located only minutes from the base (15-20 minutes). The new, modern facility is reasonably priced and offers a fun filled day for the entire family. the indoor water complex has a large pool for lap swimming, a nice size toddler pool with a small animal slide, a Jacuzzi, a sauna, locker rooms, shower facilities, and a cafeteria with vending machines (hot noodle soups, beverages, ice cream).
Hours of operation: 10:00 - 21:00, Tuesday-Sunday, closed Mondays. Swim caps are required. Cost: Y500 for adults, Y100 for children. Adult escorts who are not swimming are free. Group rates are available. Phone: 59-3850.
Getting there: exit POL gate to first traffic signal. Turn left. Go pass the Misawa airport to the next traffic signal. Turn left. Continue straight through the next intersection (no traffic signal). After passing through the intersection, look ahead toward the right. Beyond the fields you will see a triangular shaped building with blue stripes and a smoke stack (this is the pool). Drive approximately 1-2 km until you see the road on the right that leads to the building. Turn right and the pool is one block on left.

MISAWA ICE SKATING RINK:

Misawa has a beautiful ice rink that is only one year old. It is very easy to get to from base. Admission prices: (**free** admission every Saturday!) Y550 adults, Y350 Sr. High School students, Y250 Jr. High School students, and Y150 for Elementary School students. It costs Y300 to rent skates. When you enter the lobby, there will be ticket machines to your right. Purchase your admission and skate rental tickets, then bring the tickets to the people at the counter. They have American/Japanese size charts to go by. The skates are a little wide for most American feet, so you may want to bring an extra pair of socks! Also, you are required to wear gloves while skating. You can bring your own or borrow some there. The public skating hours are 0900 - 1945 on weekdays, 0900 - 1800 on weekends. The rink is closed on Wednesdays.
Getting there: Go out the POL gate. Continue straight until you reach the sixth traffic light. Turn left at the light. The skating rink will be back from the road on your left, after you pass through another light near a gas station. Turn left and follow the road around to the “back” of

FESTIVALS:

There are numerous street festivals held throughout the summer in Misawa. Base and city residents alike participate in or simply enjoy watching the colorful celebrations and parades. Booths line the main shopping streets, vendors offer snacks and drinks, and kids can try their luck on games of chance. Summer is a short season in the North, so residents make the most of it, with a festival held almost every weekend, ending with the spectacular Nebuta festival in late August. The other seasons are celebrated as well, with the cherry blossoms in spring, chrysanthemums in fall, and snow and ice festivals in winter.

American Day - an event which introduces American culture to the local Japanese community. Many private organizations from Misawa Air Base set up booths on the street between the City hall and the Civic Center of food, drinks, T-shirts, etc.

Momoishi Sand Festival - held at Momoishi Beach in July.

Lake Towada Fireworks - beautiful fireworks display held at Lake Towada in July.

Lake Ogawara Festival - this event takes place for the purpose of celebrating the coming of summer and to pray for a safe summer season at the lake. A beauty contest and elementary school students' sumo contest, along with many other attractions, are held.

Tanabata Festival (late July) this festival is held usually the 3rd weekend in July. It takes place right outside the main gate - you can't miss it!

Komaki's Kappa Festival - this festival is held at the Komaki Resort to celebrate the creation of the earth as well as the water goblins known as Kappa. It usually takes place the 3rd weekend in July, at the same time as the Tanabata festival. The resort is opened to the public and parking is free. There are food and drink booths, a great fireworks display, and many demonstrations of local dances and drumming. Not to be missed is the dragon boat battle, held twice a day. There is something going on the entire two days of the festival. The fireworks are held on the Saturday night, starting about 2000. There are also giftshops and an outdoor china and ceramic-ware flea market.

Misawa Summer Festival - this is a three day festival which takes place in August, with the purpose of praying for a bountiful rice harvest during the autumn harvest months. On the first day and final day, floats depicting historical Japanese samurai are run through the streets. On the second day, the liveliest day of the festival, the Costume Parade kicks off festivities, and is climaxed in the evening with the "International Summer Festival." The main attraction of this International Summer Festival is the Mikoshi Contest, in which Americans and Japanese compete against and with each other.

Misawa Port Festival - this festival takes place for the purpose of praying for Misawa City's big catches of fish, one of the city's two main industries. The festival usually takes place on the first weekend of September, and the main attraction is the fireworks display on Sunday night.

Shimoda Swan Festival - held at Shimoda Park, just 15 minutes from base. Each year, the Sibirian white swans come to Shimoda to spend the winter. You can visit the swans throughout the winter - children will enjoy feeding them bread or popcorn. The festival includes a "swan calling" contest as well as other events. The exact date is usually published by the Shimoda Town Hall about a month before the event.

Japan Day (first Saturday in April) - this event is held once a year at Edgren High School for the purpose of introducing Japanese culture. There are many booths set up at the event, which are separated into the following categories: festival, Japanese food, sports, and culture. War drums, Shinto dances, martial arts, sumi-e, tea ceremonies, flower arranging, yakitori, sushi, and many other cultural subjects are introduced.

Misawa Air Festival - this festival is really an airbase Open House. Held in September, there are food and drink booths, gift booths, a static display of aircraft, an airshow, and various other activities. The base is open to the public and this event draws a crowd of thousands!

Shimoda Salmon Festival - held in November, the main attraction of this event is the salmon catching by hand. You get to keep whatever salmon you catch. They will also have a demonstration of the Japanese drums, a vegetable market, fireworks and more. There are places set up to clean and fillet your fish, for a small fee. Children will enjoy trying to catch the fish. Dress warmly for this event!

RESTAURANTS

Misawa has many restaurants to choose from. There is everything from a quick snack to a full-course meal. Most restaurants near the base have either a picture menu or a menu in English to help you place an order. The following are just some of the places you can try.

Jubi's: menu includes Japanese dishes, steaks, seafood and pasta. The seafood curry is delicious! Prices range from Y1000 - Y1500 for lunch to Y4000 and up for dinner. The atmosphere is very quiet and nice. Not recommended for small children.
Getting there: Go out the POL gate. Go to the third traffic light and turn right. You'll end up making a U-turn around median. Jubi's restaurant will be on the left.

Restaurant Miyaki's: Chinese dishes, various prices. Open 1100 - 2000. Closed most Tuesdays.
Getting there: the restaurant is located on Green Pole street,(going towards base), kitty-corner across the street from the Michinoku bank, on the second floor. There is some parking for the restaurant in the back (down a back alley), but you may want to park either at base or Nagasikya's and walk from there.

The Swan Restaurant: Chinese dishes, various prices. The specials are a good buy, ranging from Y850 - Y1200, and include a drink. Open 1100 - 2200.
Getting there: park at the BX or at the contracting office. The restaurant is located right outside of the Main gate, on the second floor.

Royal Restaurant: another Chinese restaurant popular with Americans. There are lunch specials for reasonable prices as well as many-course dinners. Hours for lunch are 1100 - 1400 and for dinner, 1630 - 2100.
Getting there: Go out the POL gate and turn left at the first traffic light. Royal's is just before the Misawa Air Port, on the right if you're coming from base. There is free parking available.

Grill Ohmiya this restaurant serves pizza toast and other snacks but is known primarily for its curry rice dishes. You can decide how hot you want the curry. Be warned - anything much past number 10 is HOT! There's a reason for those big water carafes at each table! Hours are 1000 - 2030, closed Tuesdays.
Getting there: Grill Ohmiya is located catty-corner across the intersection in front of Nagasikiya. In fact, the best place to park is at Nagasikiya's.

Noodle House Marumiya: Known as the "Cheeseroll Noodle" shop, this restaurant offers cheese and meat gyozas, ramen, and various kinds of yakisoba. Hours are 1100 - 2000, closed Sundays.
Getting there: you can walk there from the Main gate, going down Green Pole street, and then turn left at the large Nakai liquor store. You'll see the orange and yellow sign of a little guy holding up a plate of food. If you're driving, you can go out the Main gate, turn right at the second light, then turn right at the fourth road, going down a few blocks towards Green Pole Street. The restaurant will be on your right, parking is available across the street.

HAKAMADA: Tel: 0176-59-2886
Need a reservation and there is no English menu available. Course dinner only. From 3,500yen. Closed on Mondays

There is no menu at *Hakamada*. At the time of reservation, tell the reservationist what you can and cannot eat, what you prefer to eat, etc. This restaurant has only four private rooms all of which are Japanese style. The atmosphere and the food were excellent.
Getting There: Going out from the main base, turn to left at the first traffic light. Keep going straight until you get to Route 338. Turn left and keep driving until you see a big red sign for Rikio, a ramen noodle shop. This ramen noodle shop is at the corner of route 338 and a road; take a right turn when you see the red sign. *Hakamada* is across from the *Rikio* ramen shop.

SPANISH RESTAURANT "*ESPANA*"
Tel: 0176-25-2524
A la carte menu, from 400 yen.
English menu is available.
This restaurant is more like a snack bar. The paella is very tasty.
Getting There: Go to Towada city using Route 10. When you get to Highway 4 (Not Highway 4 bypass), turn left. At the intersection of Highway 4 and the civic center road, turn left. There are about 4-5 stores before you see the restaurant. There are many good restaurants on this street.

HACHINOHE

Hachinohe is the second largest city in Aomori Prefecture, located just 15-20 minutes south of Misawa. Hachinohe was one of two castle towns belonging to the Nambu clan, which controlled all of the area between Morioka and Misawa. Today it is a busy international port city. Hachinohe's old waterfront districts contrast with its modern downtown. It offers museums, colorful festivals, beautiful parks and plenty of restaurants and shopping. With a population of over 240,000, Hachinohe is a growing and dynamic city - and it doesn't take all day to get there!

General directions: there are several different ways to get to Hachinohe. Probably the fastest and simplest way is to go out the POL gate, going straight through the sixth light, and continuing on until you see the entrance to the toll road. Enter the toll road, which will take you straight into Rte. 45 in Hachinohe. You will have to stop at two toll booths. The first costs Y200, and the second will be just before you exit the toll road, and costs Y150. After exiting the toll road, you'll come to a traffic light. Turn left at the light and you will be on Rte. 45, heading into Hachinohe.
Another way to get there is to go out the POL gate to the sixth light, turn left, continue on past the next light and the Misawa Ice Rink, and turn right at the light by the Esso station. Stay on this road until you come to the intersection where you can see the Shimoda Mall on your right. Turn left, going away from the mall. When you reach Rte. 338, turn right. Stay on Rte. 338 until you get to an obvious right turn at a light. There will be a blue sign saying Rte. 45/Miyako and Kuji. Turn right and continue on into Hachinohe - you will be on Rte. 45.

SHOPPING:

Hachinohe offers a wide range of shopping opportunities. There are large modern department stores, little specialty shops, cd and electronic stores, and many more. The main downtown shopping street is Rte. 340, going one-way from Rte. 104 to Rte. 45. In addition to the many stores and shops, it offers restaurants, Mr. Donut, coffee shops, bakeries, etc. There are several parking garages which usually charge about Y200 for an hour or so. If you park at one of the department store garages you can get a discount for parking if you spent Y1000 or so at that store. Just show your receipt to the garage attendant.

LAPIA MALL/FANTASY DOME:

The Lapia Mall has a large Nagasakiya department store, a grocery store, pet store, shoe store, florist, jewelry store, and various other little shops. There is also an indoor amusement park known as the Fantasy Dome. It is open daily from 1000 - 1900. Admission is free. Inside the main entrance are card machines where you can buy either a Dome 100 card (Y1000) or a Dome 200 card (Y2000). A Dome 100 card is good for 110 credits and a Dome 200 card is worth 240 credits. Rides and games range from 10-30 credits. At each ride, an attendant takes the card and charges the cost to it. There is an information board at each ride which shows how much it will cost in credits. Certain rides, such as the Space Commander rollercoaster, have height restrictions. Children 3 years old and younger can ride free, but must be accompanied by an adult. There is a merry-go-round, train, small rides, and game machines. In the children's play corner, children up to 6 can play for up to 30 minutes for 10 credits. Near the amusements are several snack bars which sell hotdogs, yakisoba, ice

cream cones, popcorn, etc. Children under 2 are not allowed in the ball area, and shoes must be removed before entering. There are no refunds for remaining credits, but the cards have no expiration date. On the bottom floor of the Lapia Mall there are several Japanese restaurants, a Chinese restaurant, a Baskin Robbins, a Dom-Dom burger place, and an Indian restaurant.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. As you come in on Rte. 45, you'll pass Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, etc. Stay in the left lane. Eventually you'll come to a large T-intersection. Make a left turn at the "T". Turn right at the next light. The Lapia Mall and the Fantasy Dome will be straight ahead. Turn left at the light to get to a big, FREE parking lot on the left, a bit past the mall.

CHILDRENS' LAND AND BOTANICAL PARK:

Children's Land is a nice amusement park just a bit past downtown Hachinohe. It features rides, playgrounds, and a petting zoo. It is adjacent to a beautiful botanical park. Admission to the park and children's land is free, but you have to buy tickets for the rides. You can buy snacks there, such as yakisoba, ice-cream, corndogs, churros, etc. or you can bring a lunch and a blanket and have a picnic. Children's Land is open from 1 April to 1 November. Children's Land and the Botanical Park are open every day except Monday, from 0900 - 1700.

Getting there: Follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Follow Rte. 45 into Hachinohe, over the river, to where the road comes to a T-intersection and Rte. 45 goes right. Staying in the right lane, go through the tunnel. At the second traffic light past the tunnel, turn right. Proceed past the planetarium (on your left) to the second traffic light. Turn right. Follow this road to the T-intersection, turn left. At the next traffic light, the road forks into a Y, take the right turn or fork. Follow this road to the stop sign and turn left. Follow this road across the narrow bridge, up the hill and through the traffic light. The Botanical Gardens will be on the left. There is one parking lot at the Botanical Gardens and two more just down the road. If you are bringing a picnic with you, you might want to park in the third lot down, which is the closest to the amusement park and picnic area.

MARINE SCIENCE HALL/AQUARIUM/SEAGULL ISLAND::

The Marine Science Hall features displays of local sea life, a video, and a small aquarium. It's a popular school field trip destination. It is open year-round, except for December 31st and January 1st, from 0900 - 1700. During the summer months of July and August, the hours are extended to 0900 - 1800. The cost is Y500 for adults, Y350 for high school students, and Y200 for elementary school students. Seagull Island, or Kabushima, is a nesting ground for thousands of seagulls, which arrive there to breed each March from the south. There is a large shrine located at the entrance to the island.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Turn left off of Rte. 45 just before the overpass. At the traffic light at the bottom of the hill, at the overpass, turn left. Staying in the left lane, follow the road to where the left lane goes straight and the other 2 lanes turn right. (there will be a sign for the ferry port at this point.) Go straight, through the tunnel, over the overpass, and turn right at the traffic light. Follow this road over the big bridge to the T-intersection and turn left. Turn right at the next light, the very next intersection. Follow this road to the last road to the right. (this is where the center markings in the road end and there are fishing ports to your left and ahead of you.) Turn right onto this last road to the right. Turn Island (Kabushima) will be on your left and the aquarium will be the blue building on your right and ahead of you a little bit. Turn right and follow the road to the parking lot.

HACHINOHE HORSE FACTORY:

The Yawata Uma, or Hachinohe Horse, as we call it, is one of the oldest and most famous local folk toys. It is one of only three types of horse-shaped folk crafts found in Japan. During the Shokyu era (1219-1222), a ceremony was held once a year that was dedicated to the God of War. This ceremony, known as Yabusame, involved shooting a bow from horseback. It was held on the premises of the Hachiman-gu, also known as the Yawata shrine. Each rider was only allowed one shot. Many participants gathered from far and near to attend the ceremony. In ancient times, a woodworker and producer of lacquer ware came to settle in Tenguzawa, an area about two miles southeast of Hachinohe. He began to make wooden horses modeled after the gallant chargers of the Yabusame ceremony. He used only a hatchet and chisel to make his toys. Later, farmers in the Hachinohe area began to make the Yawata Uma during the winter leisure season. Many changes have been made, but the toys are still hand-carved and hand-painted. Each year on the 15th of August of the lunar calendar, the festival of the Yawata shrine is celebrated. Yawata Yari (spears), and Matoi (banners) are set up, and Yawata Uma are available at scores of souvenir stands for worshippers to buy. Today Yawata Umas are for sale at most gift shops throughout Japan. The factory is closed on weekends. The manager is Mr. Minoru Takahashi. Telephone: 0178-22-5729.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Stay on Rte. 45, over the over-pass and the first bridge. Turn right at the first traffic light after the bridge. Turn left at the next traffic light. Follow this road straight, through the stop sign. The Horse Factory will be on the right, with two large Hachinohe Horses out in front. Park in the lot just before the Factory.

NEJO CASTLE PLAZA:

Located in Hachinohe, the historic Nejo Plaza is a fascinating look at life at a Japanese castle during the Middle Ages. The Plaza features a complete reconstruction of buildings as they probably were during the 1590's. The castle was originally built on the site in 1334 by Lord Moroyuki Nanbu. The buildings include the main living areas, stables, workshops, a smithy, a wooden storeroom and 3 thatched-roof storerooms. Many of the buildings feature replicas of articles used at the time, as well as displays of period costumes and weaponry. For a nominal fee, Y250 for adults and Y50 for elementary school students, you can tour the castle grounds and buildings. (Group rates are a bit cheaper). English-language guidebooks are available.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Take the first left exit off of Rte. 45, going past the Fish Market on your left and continuing on this road over the first bridge. Just after crossing the bridge you'll come to a big intersection, with a huge Pachinko parlor to your right. Turn left at this intersection. The Nejo Plaza will be on your left. About 1/4 mile from the intersection you'll come to a traffic light. Turn left. The parking lot will be on your left. There is also a small art museum located off of the parking lot. You will walk across the Plaza to the hill where the castle is located. There is a ticket booth where you purchase the entrance tickets. Parking is free!

TANESASHI SEASIDE:

Along the coast just south of Hachinohe, there is a beautiful stretch of rocky coastline, sandy beach, and grassy picnic areas. Starting just past Kabushima or "Seagull Island", you can hike or drive the 5.2 kilometers along the rocky shore and sandy beach to the Tanesashi natural grass area. The Shirahama beach is covered with white sand and is safe for swim-

ming. The Tanesashi area has a small campground and a large grassy area for picnics. You can enjoy a beautiful hike through the pine trees along the rocky shore. The trail starts at the Ashigezaki Observatory, a small stone tower which overlooks the sea, continues all the way to the Shirahama beach and then on through a tiny fishing village and ends up at the Tanesashi seaside. You can access the trail anywhere along its route. Also located near Shirahama is the Playpia amusement park, which features a variety of rides, including go-carts. At theObservatory, there is also a small restaurant which offers snacks, drinks and ice-cream cones. There are snack and souvenir booths at Shirahama beach, which are open only during the summer season.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Stay on Rte. 45, keeping in the left lane, until you see the blue sign for Kabushima, distinguished by a white seagull design. Turn left at the sign, following the directions for Kabushima and/or the Marine Science Hall. The road gets very narrow right before you cross a set of railroad tracks in front of the Marine Science Hall. Turn right, continuing on along the coast. Eventually you'll see a parking lot on the left and the stone tower. You can park free here, and walk along the beginning of the trail or you can continue driving south along the coast, past Shirahama beach, all the way to the Tanesashi seaside.

Another way of getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Take the first exit off of Rte. 45, on the left. At the traffic light at the bottom of the hill, turn left. Staying in the left lane, follow the road to where the left goes straight and the other two lanes turn right. Go straight through the tunnel, over the overpass, and turn right at the traffic light. Follow this road over the big bridge to the T-intersection. Turn right. Follow this road to the T-intersection and turn left. Follow this road to the fourth traffic light and turn right. Follow this road for awhile until you come to a 10% downgrade hill that turns to the right at the bottom. At the bottom of the hill there will be a stop sign. (look up) Go straight, past the stop sign and Shirahama beach will be on your left. Cross the railroad tracks and continue down this road. The beach will be on your left. You can park at the gravel lots on the beach side of the road.

Still another way of getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Stay on Rte. 45. After you cross the second bridge (over the Niida River), you'll want to stay in the left lane. At the fifth traffic light after the bridge, turn left. Continue straight on this road until it reaches the coastal road. Turn left onto this road. About a 1/4 mile down you'll see the Tanesashi Natural Grass area on your right and on your left there will be a big gravel parking lot. You can park here for free.

WATERPARK NEAR HACHINOHE:

Not far from Hachinohe is a little known water park. It only takes about forty minutes to get there from Misawa. The cost is Y1300 for adults and Y600 for kids 6 and older. The park includes: a warm, shallow kiddy pool, a larger warm pool with a Jacuzzi, a sauna, a steam room, a large water slide (for Y50 a slide), a warm pool about 3 ft. deep for the older kids, a lap pool for kids and one for adults, hot and cold pools and two pools that lead outside. There is a separate hot bath. You may bring your own lunch and eat it in a room with tatami mats and tables. (tea and water are free) Or you can eat in the restaurant which overlooks the pool. There are relaxation rooms, a fitness room, game room, and a small store where you can buy snacks, souvenirs, or even a bathing suit. All you need to bring is your bathing suit...the entrance fee includes 2 towels, a cover-up, and a bag to keep it in. Soap, shampoo,

conditioner, moisturizer and hair dryers are also provided free of charge. This is a great place to bring the kids!

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Take the first left exit off of Rte. 45. Turn right at the traffic light, going under the overpass. Continue on this road past the Fish Market (a big yellow building on your left), past the big spa on your right, until you cross a bridge and get to a large intersection, with a huge Pachinko Parlor on your right. Turn right here. You will be on Rte. 104. Continue on, past the Kentucky Fried Chicken on your left. Staying on Rte. 104, you'll eventually come to a small bridge and the road will come to a T-intersection. Turn left here. Continue on this road (still 104) until you see a sign with a kind of U with a small circle in the middle (depicting a swimmer's arms and head). There will be a big sign with a red arrow pointing right...turn right at the NEXT sign. Go up a small hill, then make a quick left. There are signs for the waterpark along the way. When you get to the rice paddies you'll see a large building. This is the waterpark. There is also an ice arena which shares the parking lot. Parking is free!

FESTIVALS:

Enburi: held February 17-20. This colorful folk festival is held by the local farmers to ensure a good harvest in the coming year. There are ceremonies held at the downtown shrines and a large parade of dancers and drummers makes its way down the main shopping street in Hachinohe. Be sure to dress warmly for this festival!

Hachinohe Sansha Taisai is held July 31-August 3. This traditional festival has been held for over two hundred years. A Shinto-style parade is held on the main streets of Hachinohe on August 1st. Probably the best place to view the parade would be Rte. 340, the big, one-way shopping street. This parade includes colorful portable altars from the three main shrines in Hachinohe, floats from over twenty sections of the city, as well as participants dressed as samurai, royal retainers, etc.

Kagamiryu Kiba Dakyu is held August 2nd. This is an ancient form of polo, played at the Chojasan Shinra Shrine. It is one of only three locations in Japan where this game is still played. The Chojasan Shrine is located just a few blocks from Rte. 340.

RESTAURANTS:

The Golden Palki Indian Restaurant: Located on the 6th floor of the Yonekura Hotel in Hachinohe, the Golden Palki Restaurant serves delicious, authentic Indian food in a clean, comfortable, and surprisingly spacious setting. The restaurant boasts a spectacular view of the city of Hachinohe, which is particularly beautiful at night. Prices are reasonable. Most entrees cost between Y1000-Y1200. Extras such as soup, appetizers, salads and side dishes cost around Y300-Y500. One of the most popular side orders is the Indian bread, nan. Entrees vary from grilled chicken or mutton, to a wide variety of curries. The Golden Palki Butter Chicken curry, made from chicken, tomatoes, butter and cream, is excellent. Each curry has its own characteristics - all are worth trying. Beverages run from Y250 for fruit juices to Y500 for beer. Mixed drinks and wine are more expensive. Water is served with the meal and replenished often. Desserts include mango ice cream, fruit salad, and several other choices. Desserts cost about Y400. If you really want to go all out, there are several "special course" menus which feature soup, salad, appetizers, various entrees, nan, rice, and tea or

coffee for Y2500-Y4500. Lunch specials are offered between 11:30-14:30 daily and range between Y1000-Y1350. There are no child booster seats/highchairs available. There are a few items on the menu, such as yogurt, that might appeal to some children, but in general, it's more of an adult setting. On the ground floor of the hotel, you can go out into a Japanese garden, complete with a waterfall. At night the garden is illuminated with hidden spotlights and is quite pretty.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. Take the first exit off of Rte. 45, as though you were going to the Fish Market. Stay on this road for quite awhile, going past the Fish Market, over the bridge, straight through the big intersection, and on, staying in the right lane. Eventually you'll come to an intersection with Rte. 340 crossing in front of you. On the right you'll see a shop with a red heart--shaped neon sign. Turn right here, continuing up a steep hill. As you near the top, you'll see the Yonekura Hotel on the left. Turn left into the parking lot. You can either park in the indoor (but tiny) parking lot or park outside. Parking is free. The hotel staff will greet you when you go into the lobby, and often escort you to the elevator. On the left you'll see the elevators - the restaurant is located on the 6th floor.

Notes

The “Big Buddha” in Aomori

The Nebuta Festival

AOMORI CITY

Aomori City is not only the capital, but also the political and transportation center of Aomori Prefecture. Aomori City is perfect for a day trip from Misawa. The drive takes about an hour and a half each way, through the beautiful Hakkoda mountains. Once there, you can see the giant statue of Buddha, tour the ASPAM, or visit one of the many local museums. Aomori City has many things to see and do. There are many stores and shops to browse through, and many restaurants to choose from. There are several nice city parks in the area, and a few camping destinations nearby which are included in the Sports and Recreation chapter.

General directions: Go out the Main gate, turn right at the second traffic light. Turn right at the intersection in front of the Nagasikiya department store. Turn left at the next traffic light, onto Route 8. Follow Route 8 for 17.4 km to the traffic light, turn left, going over the bridge. After .7 km, turn right. Continue straight on this road. At 5.7 km you'll cross Route 4. Continue straight. You'll go through several tunnels. After 20 km, you'll see a rest area on your left. The toll gate is just past the rest area. A regular car costs about Y860. After the toll gate, Route 123 begins. In 10 km Route. 123 ends at a T-intersection. Turn left at the T-intersection. Proceed straight down Route 4 to the Y-intersection, about 1.3 km. Turn onto the right fork of the "Y", go about .4 km then turn left onto Route 4. Route 4 is the main road into Aomori.

AOMORI FORESTRY MUSEUM:

The museum is housed in a renaissance-style building made from local Aomori cypress. There are exhibits and visual displays which explain the local environment and the role of forestry in Aomori.
Tel: 0177-66-7800
Admission: Y200
Hours: 0900-1630
Closed: Mondays, holidays, last day of each month, and December 28 through January 4.

AOMORI PREFECTURE CENTER FOR TOURISM AND INDUSTRY (ASPAM):

The ASPAM offers visitors a comprehensive introduction to the sight-seeing attractions and souvenirs of Aomori Prefecture. Don't miss the 360 degree panoramic view from the 13th floor Observation Lounge. The view of Mutsu Bay and the Hakkoda Mountain Range is unbeatable. There is a free indoor playground for children located on the 2nd floor. It's a great place to bring the kids when the weather's not cooperating for outdoor activities.
Admission: free, except for the movie shown in the 2nd floor viewing room and the price of going to the Observation Lounge. Tickets for both can be purchased from a machine near the information booth on the first floor.
Hours: 0900-1800, closed: December 31- January 1, and also the 4th Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of January.
Getting there: follow the general directions to Aomori. Once you are on Route 4 , go 5.9 km. then turn right - the large NTT building will be on your left, before you turn. There will be a blue sign that says "Ferry Port". Go .6 km, then turn left. Staying in the left lane, proceed alongside the bridge. At .5 km, turn right, going under the bridge. Turn left at the stop sign, and then right into the parking lot. (there is a fee for parking here).

ASAMUSHI AQUARIUM:

Not far from Aomori is the Asamushi Aquarium and Marine Park. The Aquarium features dolphin shows and a wide variety of sea life. The cost is Y1550 for adults and Y510 for elementary school children. Right across the street from the Aquarium is an amusement park, complete with rides and snacks.

Getting there: Follow the general directions to Aomori. When you get to the T-intersection where Rte. 123 ends, proceed 7 k on Route 4, turn right across from the Amusement Park. Follow this road to the left and then back around to the right. The Aquarium will be on the left. There are several parking lots. There is a small fee for parking.

THE BIG BUDDHA:

It is the largest bronze statue of Buddha in Japan! For a small admission fee (Y400 for adults and Y200 for children) you can walk along the temple grounds and also tour the inside of the Buddha. Be sure to remove your shoes before entering the Buddha. Parking is free!

Getting there: follow the general directions to Aomori. After the toll gate, Rte. 123 begins. When Rte. 123 ends in a T-Intersection, turn left. Proceed straight down Rte. 44 for 2.5 km. Turn left, and take the following left turn, into the parking lot.

THE NEBUTA NO SATO DISPLAY AND RECREATION AREA:

Located in the foothills of the Hakkodas, about 15 minutes from downtown Aomori, the Nebuta no Sato Display and Recreation Area features every aspect of the Aomori Nebuta festival. Here you can see ten actual floats from previous years' Nebuta parades, watch dancers and drummers recreate the festival celebration and also enjoy a beautiful walk through the tall pine forest. If you visit in the early summer, you can also watch a Nebuta artist working on a float for the coming August festival. The cost is Y620 for adults, Y410 for high school students and Y210 for elementary school children.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Aomori. Once you're in Aomori (on Rte. 4) look for signs for Lake Towada/Route 103. Turn left onto Route 103, and follow it up into the foothills. On your left you will see a small fruit stand and a sign showing a Nebuta float-style samurai. Turn left here, onto a narrow dirt road. You'll think you made a wrong turn, but you haven't! Less than a 1/4 mile from the turn, you'll go down a small hill into a large parking area. Parking is free! There are souvenir and food shops here. You'll see a large entrance area. Tickets are purchased just to the left of the entrance.

AOMORI PREFECTURAL MUSEUM:

Relief maps and auditory displays highlight the nature, history, industry and culture of Aomori Prefecture. Located at 2-18-14, Honcho, Aomori City, Tel: 0177-11-1585 Admission: Y310 Hours: April-September 0930 - 1630, October - March 0930 -1600. Closed: Mondays, public holidays, the last day of each month, and December 28 to January 4.

Getting there: from JR Aomori Station: 10 min. bus ride then a 2 minute walk or 10 min taxi ride.

SHIKO MUNAKATA MEMORIAL MUSEUM:

this museum features early and mid-period work by Munakata, an Aomori artist who engraved the Japanese heart and mind into the surface of his woodblock prints. 2-1-2, Matsubara, Aomori City Tel: 0177-77-4567 Admission: Y310 Hours: April - September

0930 - 1630, October - March 0930 - 1600. Closed: Mondays, holidays, the last day of each month, and Dec. 27,-Jan. 4
Getting there: from JR Aomori Station: 10 minutes by bus or taxi

FESTIVALS:
Nebuta Festival: the most famous festival in Aomori. It is one of the most colorful and exciting festivals of the season. Large floats made of wire, Japanese paper, wood and bamboo are pulled through the main shopping streets. Thousands of dancers accompany the floats wearing colorful costumes decorated with paper flowers and little bells. The dance is unique to the festival. The dancers will stop here and there to give some of their bells to children along the way. They dance joyfully around the floats shouting “Rasse-ra!” The festival is held during the first week of August and lasts about 5 days.

HIROSAKI

Hirosaki, located about 3 hours from Misawa, is famous throughout Japan for its castle, particularly during cherry blossom time. The castle was the fortress of many generations of the Tsugaru clan. The original castle was destroyed during a fire in 1627. The version now standing was built in 1810. The cherry blossom festival is usually held during the last week of April/first week of May. There is a small fee to tour the castle museum (Y300 for adults and Y100 for children) but the castle grounds and park are free. The park contains over 5000 cherry trees, truly a spectacular sight in the Spring! The castle museum is open 9:00-17:00 from April 1 to November 23. There are plenty of other things to see in Hirosaki, all of which are located in the central downtown area. If you stop at the Hirosaki City Sightseeing Information Center (located just off the castle park), you can pick up a sightseeing map and guide in English. Almost everything is located within walking distance of everything else.

SAISHOIN GOJU-NO-TO:
This is a 5-storied pagoda, built to appease the souls of warriors who died in the service of the Tsugaru clan. The building was started in 1656, and completed in 1667. The pagoda is about 100 feet tall.

THE CHOSHOJI TEMPLE:
The Choshoji Temple, the family temple of the Tsugaru clan, was built in 1629. Its name means Temple of Great Victory. There are statues of the 500 disciples of Buddha, a large temple bell, and other features. The temple has been designated an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government. Admission is Y300 for adults and Y250 for children. Hours are 0800-1700 April-October and 0900-1600 November-March.

NEPUTA VILLAGE:
Another place to visit is the Neputa Village (Tsugaru Neputa Mura). Here are many exhibits of floats used in the Neputa Festival. There are also demonstrations of local folk crafts. Admission is Y500 for Adults, Y300 for Jr. and Sr. High School students and Y200 for Elementary students. Hours are 0900-1600 from mid-November through March, and 0900-1700 the rest of the year.

Getting there: follow the general directions to Aomori. When you reach the T-intersection at the end of the toll road, turn left onto Rte. 44. Stay on Rte. 44 for .6 miles to the second traffic light at the Y-intersection by the Circle K. Take the right fork of the Y and proceed to Rte. 4 in .3 miles. Turn left onto Rte 4. Proceed through Aomori to where Rte. 4 ends and Rte. 7 begins, 6.3 miles. You will follow Rte. 7 all the way to Hirosaki. In 2.2 miles Rte. 7 splits into two directions, proceed straight. In another 9.8 miles Rte 7 turns right, then left. In another 8.8 miles, once in Hirosaki City, there will be an off-ramp to the left, proceed down it and then turn right, under Rte. 7. Follow the signs to Hirosaki Castle. Pass by the first sign that tells you to turn right to the castle and proceed down to the T-intersection. Turn right here and follow this road to the T-intersection. Turn left at the T-intersection and follow the road around the castle grounds. Parking is fairly limited near the castle - you may end up parking a few blocks away and walking to the castle. The parking lots near the castle will charge you a few hundred yen to park.

TSUGARU IWAKI SKYLINE ROAD: from its starting point at Dake Spa, this toll road twists and turns in countless hairpin bends as it climbs through Mt. Iwaki's beech groves to its destination high up the mountain. Mt. Iwaki is nearly a mile high. The tortuous drive covers approximately 10 kilometers and takes about 30 minutes. A short lift ride followed by a 20-minute walk will take you to the very top of the mountain, where you will be rewarded with an unequaled vista of the Sea of Japan and the Tsugaru Plain. You can also hike up from the parking lot near the chairlift. Cost: starts at Y1750 per car.
Getting there: follow the directions to Hirosaki. Once you get to the city, you'll see blue signs pointing you to Mt. Iwaki. Follow the signs out of town towards the mountain. You can't miss Mt. Iwaki...it is clearly visible from Hirosaki.

HIROSAKI'S IWAKISAN SHRINE: the spiritual heart of the Tsugaru area, this shrine has been designated a National Important Cultural Property. It dates back to the 16th century. It contains numerous priceless treasures of the prefecture. The walk up to the shrine is beautiful, up a walkway through several large Toriis. The Shrine is located on the road to Mt. Iwaki, on the right-hand side as you head from Hirosaki to the mountain. You can't miss it. There is a free parking lot at the Shrine.

FESTIVALS

THE CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL: held from April 25 through May 6. Tourists from all over Japan come to see the 5000 cherry trees burst into blossom. There are food and drink booths, however, you may want to celebrate Japanese-style and bring your own picnic. Travel Time offers a special train trip to Hirosaki just to see the festival. Some units on base organize their own trips as well.

NEPUTA: held between the 1st and 7th of August. This spectacular festival consists of an illuminated-float parade. There are tiny lanterns for children and huge lantern-floats that are pulled by hundreds of people. The large floats have fan-shaped lanterns, decorated with brilliantly colored scenes of warriers and maidens from ancient legends. The Neputa festival dates back to 1713, when the people paraded through the streets with lighted lanterns and prayed for a good harvest.

TOKYO

Tokyo is truly one of the greatest cities in the world. Not only does it offer a huge range of activities, sights to see, restaurants, etc. but it is clean, relatively crime-free, and with its modern subways and trains, fairly easy to get around in. It can be a very expensive city to visit, but you can stay at the New Sanno Hotel or the Hardy Barracks and be right downtown, close to the sights, for a fraction of the usual accomodation costs. Don't leave Japan without at least one trip to Tokyo!

GINZA

Visitors to Japan should not miss the Ginza experience. Ginza, literally "silver theater", supports the area's worldwide reputation for being expensive. However, many people go to the Ginza simply to sightsee. Art galleries/exhibits, photo galleries and exhibits are displayed at nearly every corner. The exhibits change weekly. Each department store on the Ginza has many different things to see and do. Exhibits from all over the world, from the furniture of Denmark to an antique collection from England, can be seen. English-language Japanese newspapers provide schedules of various activities. You're guaranteed to find something interesting no matter when you go. Compare Japan's finest department stores with Neiman-Marcus and marvel at the variety and the prices of the merchandise. The Ginza features many types of restaurants as well. There are expensive restaurants, but also many reasonably- priced ones, as well as the fastfood outlets familiar to every American. Bookstores have the latest in foreign magazines and newspapers. In addition, there are countless small shops that feature pearls, diamonds, lamps, and other specialty items. Sunday is a special day because the Ginza comes alive. Streets are filled with thousands of people: models and photographers, shoppers and just about any type of people you can think of. Chuo Dori is a closed street on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

ROPPONGI

The Roppongi district is a "must see" place. It's definitely a night clubber's dream, and a favorite among the younger foreign crowd. Here you will find coffee shops, bars, discos, and restaurants for people with different cultural backgrounds and tastes. There are the Hard Rock Cafe, Tony Roma's, Raja, Moti (my favorite Indian restaurant), and many more. Here you will enjoy a multinational environment. The weekend is when everything happens. All the trendy, sophisticated people come out to liven up the area. Roppongi is not only for the party goer. It also provides an atmosphere for the those with an interest in theater and museums. Shopping is expensive, but there are some shops that are reasonable. Many of the clothing store prices are based on the latest fashion trends. It's just a 30 minute walk from the New Sanno (less if you use the subway), and 10 minutes from Hardy Barracks.

UCHIDA

For a unique shop and gallery with a wide array of art and artifacts from all over the world, visit Uchida, located in Azabu. Indonesian baskets, Japanese lacquerware, clay figures, textiles from all over, and much more. The earthen floor, which is worn into an ochre-colored powder and the dun-colored mud and wattle wall facing the entrance reflects the Japanese countryside. Uchida provides a showcase for a collection of art and a gallery space for artists and is open Wednesdays until 1900.

Getting there: depart the Roppongi Subway Station using the Roppongi Crossing exit, turn down the side street to your right. Follow this street past the Swedish Center and HomeWorks. Turn right at the gas station and at the second corner turn right again. By the way, it's only about a block from the Blue and White store.

HACHIOJI

Within thirty minutes of Yokota are two small art museums with very complete permanent collections and changing shows from around the world. The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Hachioji changes exhibits about every three months.

Tokyo Fuji Art Museum: is open 1000 - 1700 daily, except for Japanese holidays and for a week or two between exhibits. Admission varies from Y600-Y900, depending on the show. A six month pass is available for Y2000, and a one-year pass is Y3500. It is best to call first to make sure they are open on the day you plan to visit. The phone number is 0426 (91) 4511. However, someone who speaks Japanese should call since no one at the museum speaks enough English to answer questions on the phone. There is also a gift shop where you can purchase prints, show catalogues, post cards, and other items. A bright and spacious coffee shop beckons to those tired feet—come and rest awhile.

Murauchi Art Museum: is only five minutes from the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum. The Murauchi Art Museum also has an interesting permanent collection as well as various exhibits changing from time to time. They seem to concentrate more on 19th century, and later, French artists with works by Rousseau, Courbet, Millet, Corot, Renoir, Picasso, and Gauguin. One and a half flights down is an auction gallery where works of art are sold from time to time. Admission to the museum varies from 300-800 yen. Call 0426 (91) 6301 for details. You might catch someone here with a good command of English, but it is recommended that you ask someone who speaks Japanese to help you call.

MEIJI SHRINE

The Meiji Shrine is an amazing 175 acres of peace and tranquillity completely surrounded by urban Tokyo. The Meiji Shrine was built to honor the Emperor Meiji (1815-1912), revered by the Japanese for transforming feudal Japan into a modern nation. The Emperor moved Japan's capital from ancient Kyoto, the traditional seat of national government, to Tokyo. Built to honor the Emperor and his Empress Shoken and to commemorate the Emperor's progressive reign of Japan, the shrine was completed in 1920, after the Emperor's death. The original shrine was destroyed in a 1945 Allied air raid of Tokyo. The current shrine was rebuilt in 1958. The Meiji Shrine is the most popular shrine in Tokyo. During 1992's New Year celebration, 4,827,000 people came to make their hatsumode - the first prayer of the New Year. Worshippers dress in their finest. Many women wear the traditional kimono. Long lines of worshippers pass under enormous toriis (entrance gates or arches) made of 1500 year old Taiwanese Cypress. As they pass under the torii, many stop to shoot a picture of their family posing under a giant ema (wooden prayer plaque). Inside the torii is the shrine's main courtyard. The shrine is built in the Nagare (flowing) architectural style, one of the four main styles of Shinto architecture. When the worshippers finally reach the shrine's altar, which sits behind sliding doors in the Shrine's outer wall, the first few rows of worshippers launch a shower of silver and gold coins towards altar collection boxes, clap their hands to attract the attention of the gods, and make their prayers for good health and happiness in the coming year. Worshippers may carry symbols of their good luck home with them by purchasing a variety of religious mementos from the booths which flank the shrine. On sale are New Year's good

luck arrows, smaller emas, talismans of different sorts, and waka poems of the Emperor and Empress. The Emperor wrote about 100,000 of these 31 syllable poems and the Empress, about 30,000. So many of these poems are sold and tied onto bushes inside the Shrine for luck that the bushes appear from a distance covered with snow. The Treasure Museum contains the clothes, personal belongings, Imperial documents, paintings, and the Imperial horse-drawn carriage. Visitors may visit the iris garden planted on the banks of an old river bed. The garden is well known for its profusion of blooms of many subtle shades spectacular in the late spring. You can see gorgeous huge irises in blue, pink, white and every shade of purple that you can possibly imagine. The beds of flowers stretch as far as the eye can see in early to mid June. After a full day of worship and homage to the Emperor, visitors head for home, content that they have made a good beginning to the New Year. Entry to the Meiji Shrine itself is free. Inside the compound there is a stand where you can buy charms and souvenirs or get your "Stampu book" stamped. Entry fee to the garden is Y300 for adults, less for children.

Getting there: take the Ome Line for Tachikawa at either Fussa or Akishima Station. At Tachikawa, take the Chuo Line for Shinjuku Station (track 4 & 5). At Shinjuku, change to the green Yamanote Line on track 10, and go two stops to Harajuku Station. When you come out of the station you will be facing a street. Turn right and walk to the wide, gravel covered street. Turn right again when you see the large wooden Torii gate or arch. Walk under the torii gate and follow the street. It will come to a place where you can go straight ahead or follow the street to the left. Follow the street to the left, a little while later it will curve to the right. Shortly thereafter, you will see the entrance to the shrine. Just outside the entrance to the left, there is a fountain with some wooden dippers. If you wish, you can use the dippers to cleanse your hands before entering the shrine. The entrance to the garden is on the gravel-covered street mentioned above, the entrance sign is in both English and Japanese. Try to visit the Meiji Shrine during the week as it is a popular spot for Japanese on the weekends and can be quite crowded at this time, especially during the iris blooming season.

YUUSHUUKAN

Japan opened a museum in 1985 at the Yasukuni Shrine to commemorate the wars that Japan has fought and to the soldiers who died for Imperial Japan. Many countries, especially Japan's Asian neighbors, strongly disagree with Japan's interpretation of history and unfortunately the museum does nothing to change the situation. However, for those interested in the history of Imperial Japan, a visit to the Yuushuukan is interesting and it is an opportunity to see the uniforms, hardware and artifacts left behind by a Japanese military power that influenced, and for a while, dominated most of Asia. Each room of the Museum is dedicated to a different campaign or war in Japanese military history. Japanese Civil War soldiers wore hats similar to U.S. Civil War soldiers. There are displays on Japan's Civil War, the Seinan War in 1877, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, the Hokushin "incident" in 1900, the Russo-Japanese war from 1904 to 1905, and Japan's role in World War I. However, the largest of the exhibits is on the "Great Asian Pacific War" (better known to Americans as World War II) and Japan's war in China from 1937 to 1945. There is a "Judy" bomber aircraft on display and the one-man-torpedo-submarine (called a Kaiten) that was captured in the mouth of Pearl Harbor was permanently loaned to the museum by the U.S. Army.

Getting there: To get to the Yasukuni Shrine and the Yashukan War Museum: Take the Shinjuku Line on the subway from Shinjuku Station and get off at Kudanshita Station. Exit the station at the west end and walk up the hill towards the largest torii in Japan. It is made of

bronze, and very old. Walk through the second (smaller) bronze torii and go right through a grove of cherry blossoms, just before the main shrine. Beyond the trees you will see a Japanese naval gun, an air defense gun and an old steam locomotive. The building behind the outdoor exhibit is the museum. The admission fee is Y100 for students and children and Y200 for adults.

THE JAPANESE SWORD MUSEUM

The Japanese Sword Museum offers an opportunity to see some of Japan's ancient samurai swords and national treasures. The museum has over 120 swords and sword fittings on display, some dating back to the 10th Century. In addition to swords, there are many examples of exquisitely created sword fittings that have been inlayed with precious metals and semiprecious stones. The sword fittings are intricate works of art that rival the blades themselves. There are also periodic displays of samurai armor and ancient weapons. Opened in 1968, the Japanese Sword Museum is part of the Nihon Bijutsu Token Hozon Kyokai (The Society for the Preservation of Japanese Art Swords). The Society has an international membership of over 9000 members and they publish a quarterly journal in English entitled Token Bijutsu. For those not familiar with Japanese swords, a visit to the museum provides a basic background of the types of different Japanese swords and how they relate to Japan's history. You will come away with a deep appreciation of the cultural significance of the Japanese sword. Following World War II, Japan's post-war military laws prohibited the ownership of weapons and many Japanese swords were confiscated and destroyed. It was during this period that the Japanese sword faced its greatest crisis - the art of sword-making was forbidden - and many priceless ancient swords were in danger of being destroyed. Some of Japan's most important swords were hidden or taken out of the country so that they could be preserved. When Japan's post-war laws were changed, many of these swords were removed from hiding and returned to Japan. Some of the swords on display in the Japanese Sword Museum fall into one of three categories - important art objects, valuable cultural properties or National Treasures. The Japanese Sword Museum is open 0900 - 1600. Closed on Mondays and December 28 through January 4.

Getting there: to get to the Sword Museum: Take the Odakyu Line from Shinjuku Station to the second stop, Sangubashi Station. From there, the museum is a short 10-minute walk. Go left out of the station, up the hill and follow the sidewalk along the east side of the Shuto Expressway towards Shinjuku. After about 200 meters, you will see a street leading through a parking lot under the expressway. Turn left on this street under the underpass. Turn right just past the parking lot and follow the street as it winds left. The museum building is a short distance ahead on the left side of the street. The admission fee is Y200 for students and children and Y500 for adults.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CASTLE

A visit to the National Children's Castle is the perfect rainy day activity because most activities are inside. Children will want to come back again, and the admission fee is so reasonable: Y400 for adults, Y300 for children. Children under six are FREE. An English brochure describes the numerous unique activities on the first five floors. A hotel and restaurant are on the upper levels. Highlights include the roof garden where riding vehicles, climbing, nets, plus other equipment are in great supply. Entry is on the fifth floor. The roof garden is closed on wet and rainy days. The fourth floor has an audio visual library and music studios. The

third floor offers a computer room, almost hidden toward the back of that floor. Reservations are required to use a computer, so go here first to reserve a time slot if your interest is in this area. Children who use computers must be of school age. They are given a printout with their choice of color of their computer work. Also, on the third floor is an arts and crafts room that offers a hands-on activity appropriate for each age level. Activity themes for the Arts and Craft Room change often. An entire huge wall invites young artists to paint. The third floor also has an excellent play hall with many educational toys and equipment for a variety of ages. Weekdays are less crowded. The hours are 1230 - 1730. Saturday, Sunday and holiday hours are 1000 - 1730. Closed Mondays. From mid-April to mid-September the closing hour is extended to 1830. Remember to check the Japanese school holidays when planning your visit.

Getting there: To get there from the New Sanno: Take the Hibiya Subway from Hiroo Station to Ebisu Station. Change to the JR Yamanote Line and go one stop to Shibuya. From Shibuya Station, exit out towards the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, a huge department store. Proceed up the Miyamasuzaka Street (it slopes upward). This street will turn into Aoyama Dori. The castle will be on Aoyama Dori on your left after a ten to fifteen minute walk (near the overhead street crossing).

"SEE, TOUCH & DO" at JIDO KAIKAN (Children's Hall)

Jido Kaikan, Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Hall, is a see, touch and do center with a variety of activities for children of all ages. Many of the activities are designed for pre-schoolers. There is NO CHARGE for this center. In the basement is a wood craft center, and rides such as cars and airplanes. Tickets cost Y10 each. Pick up an English brochure on the first floor so you won't miss anything! Second floor: Family Corner and Athletic Space for the wee ones.

Third floor: Scientific displays ranging from a human body to a moon station; even a meteorological room, which actually gathers weather information. There's a small food and drink stand or you can bring your own lunch. There's also a counter for getting materials for creative activities. Fourth floor: Fine arts corner, crafts corner, and a music room where children can bang drums, cymbals, triangles, pianos, organs, kotos etc. The art room is well supplied for budding artists with crayons, charcoal, origami, pottery and finger-painting. Fifth floor: A library with a few preschool books in English. Children's Hall is open daily 0900 - 1645. It is closed December 29 - January 3. Telephone: 03-3409-6361.

Getting there: take the Ome Line to Tachikawa and transfer to the Chuo Line to Shinjuku. Transfer at Shinjuku Station to the Yamanote Line toward Yoyogi. Get off at Shibuya, the third stop. Exit towards the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan. There are white and blue direction signs for the Hall at the major intersection of Meiji-Dori on the right hand side of the street for two blocks and there will be another sign directing you to the right, 100 meters.

UENO'S ZOO & MUSEUMS

Ueno Park is one of the most popular attractions in the city of Tokyo and one of the livelier sites during the annual Cherry Blossom season in early April. Ueno has many things to offer and should be visited at least once during a stay in Japan. It has one of the largest zoos in the world and attracts "kids" of all ages. The animal names are written in English and as a special attraction, the zoo houses pandas from China. The monorail connects the main zoo area with the Africa section on the west side. You can also cross a bridge over historic Shinobazu Lake where thousands of ducks and cormorants swim. The Shinto shrine on an island in the lake makes a striking picture. Rowboats are available for rent. Also, next to the lake is the

Ueno Zoo aquarium with more than 500 species of fish exhibited on four levels. In the park there are numerous museums that are nice during the winter months when it is too cold to be outside. Tokyo's National Museum is an imposing structure built in 1936 in modern oriental style. It displays many of the important national treasures and cultural properties of Japan, including ancient tapestries, screens, samurai armor, swords, scrolls, kimonos, ceramics, and more than 100,000 works of Japanese, Chinese and Indian art. Ueno has a very good National Science Museum with special sections on zoology, botany, geology, science and engineering, and astronomy. Children will be awed by dinosaur and whale skeletons, by the collection of clocks and stuffed animals. Even Mexican mummies and shrunken heads can be found here. Athough very little is in English and adults may not be impressed, the museum can be a good learning tool for children. The National Museum of Western Art is also located in Ueno Park. It was built in 1959 and exhibits works of French artists. Many are from a collection assembled by Kojiro Matsukata during his visit to Europe early in this century. This exhibit features masterpieces by such famous artists as Monet, Renoir, Picasso, Van Gogh, and Rodin. All of these attractions are open daily 0900 - 1600, and are closed Mondays and from December 29 - January 3, during the Japanese New Year. Entrance fees for each of the attractions range from Y200 to Y400 for adults, Y100 for 13 and up, Y50 yen for 3-12, and those under 3 and over 65 are free. You may also want to explore the Okachimachi shopping district across from the Ueno train station at the foot of the hill. Famous for hundreds of tiny discount shops, second-hand motorcycle dealers, and open air markets. It offers countless small inexpensive restaurants where you can make a good lunch of noodles, tempura, yakitori, or other specialties. (The museum and zoo cafeterias are not recommended — too expensive!) A picnic is a nice alternative because there are numerous places in the Ueno Park area where you can sit, relax and watch all the people. To get to Ueno Park from the New Sanno is not difficult, just check your subway map.

DISNEYLAND

Situated on 111 acres, Tokyo Disneyland's entertainment area is larger than the stateside parks. Its parking lot, however, is the smallest! Can anyone who doesn't speak Japanese enjoy Tokyo Disneyland? No problem. Most employees in the theme park speak a little English, but do bring a phrase book! Foreign visitors receive a free guide map in English when they get their tickets, and all the signs in the park are in English. What you will find is a Magic Kingdom that's pure Disney. Hours of operation vary, depending on the season and day of the week. Usual hours are 0800 - 2100-2200. The Information Center at Tokyo Disneyland can be helpful in scheduling your trip. Telephone: (0473) 54-0001 or (03) 3366-5600. Discount membership cards may be obtained at Travel Time or at the New Sanno Tour Desk (for free). The General Admission Passport is an all-inclusive ticket good for admission and use of all attractions for one day (regular days only). The cost is about Y5000 for adults, Y4000 for ages 12-17, and Y3100 for ages 4-11 WITH THE DISCOUNT MEMBERSHIP CARD. Please double check these prices. The Starlight Passport is a passport good on Starlight evenings only, for arrival after 1600. Its cost is about Y3300 for adults, Y3000 for 12-17, and Y2200 for ages 4-11. Individual attraction tickets may be purchased on the grounds, but not with a credit card (any type).

Getting there: a combination of subway and a short train ride from the New Sanno can be arranged at the Tour Desk. The fare is Y880 one way for adults, Y440 for kids. To make your return a little less anxious, buy your return ticket at Maihama as soon as you arrive because when Disneyland closes, a huge mass of humanity will be purchasing tickets. OR, Travel

Time (here at Misawa) arranges several trips with bus to the New Sanno, overnight stays, bus from the hotel to Disneyland and back to the hotel and then home.

SHINJUKU GYOEN

Shinjuku Gyoen is a beautiful park in central Tokyo. Stroll along shaded paths, around ponds, or through large open grassy areas. Bridges cross the ponds in several places so options are varied. The park is well known for its cherry trees. They are spectacular in April. Along with the cherry trees are hundreds of azaleas. The gardens contain several greenhouses. Here you will see many varieties of orchids, cacti, water lilies, and tropical plants. During cherry blossom season, the park is crowded, but beautiful. You can either buy food from the stands or bring a picnic. The entrance fee is Y200 for adults, Y100 for students, and Y50 for children. The greenhouse fee is Y100 for adults and Y50 for children. The park is open 0900 - 1600 in winter and 0900 - 1700 during the spring and summer. It is closed on Mondays.
Getting there: by train: take the Ome Line to Tachikawa. Change to the Chuo Line (orange) going into Tokyo. Once on the Chuo Line, you have several options. If you are not in a hurry, get off at Mitaka (seventh stop). Transfer to the Sobu Line. Since Mitaka is at the end of the Sobu Line, you have a good chance of getting a seat. Stay on the Sobu Line to Sendagaya (eleventh stop). As you leave Sendaygaya Station, turn right. Go just past the end of the station. There is a small street on the right that crosses under the tracks. Follow this street to the entrance of the gardens. You may also stay on the Chuo Line into Shinjuku Station, and transfer to the Sobu Line heading toward Funabashi, then get off at Sendagaya. Also in Shinjuku Station, you may change to the Marunouchi subway line, heading toward Ikebukuro. Go two stops to Shinjuku Gyoenmae. As you exit the subway, look for the exit to Shinjuku Gyoen. Go out the exit, and the park is just across the street.

TOKYO TOWER:

Climb to the observatory levels of Tokyo Tower. The main observatory platform is 150 meters high, and the special observatory gives you a panoramic view including the harbor and bay from a height of 250 meters. Either level offers a stupendous look at the greater Tokyo are, and on a clear day you will even see Mt. Fuji rising majestically to the sky. At 333 meters, Tokyo Tower is the city's tallest structure and visible from just about everywhere. All eight television stations and all three FM radio stations in the Tokyo area broadcast from antennas installed at the top of Tokyo Tower. Two AM radio waves are also sent from the tower, and the government uses the tower for radio communications. Instruments mounted in the tower monitor atmospheric conditions, and the police department has also mounted cameras to provide information needed for traffic control on surrounding expressways and other main arteries. Construction of Tokyo Tower began in June 1957 and was completed in December 1958. Although it is higher than the Eiffel Tower, it is much lighter with 4,000 tons of steel as compared with 7,000 tons needed to build the older structure. Even so, Tokyo Tower is solid enough to withstand both the strongest earthquake and 90-meter-per-second winds. Under the tower, Tokyo Tower Building houses exhibits and offers a variety of entertaining as well as educational features. An aquarium on the first floor (1F) is Japan's largest with 8,000 fish representing 700 species from all over the world. Included are examples of Japan's renowned carp and goldfish. The 3,500 square-meter, two story tourist area includes souvenir shops, restaurants, coffee shops and a game corner. On the third floor (3F), see the first wax museum built in the Orient. One hundred lifelike figures of famous persons are presented and dramatic scenes enhanced by special lighting and sound effects. If you are interested in

learning about “Japan today,” don’t miss the fourth floor (4F). Numerous showrooms feature exhibits by the government as well as Japan’s leading companies. Advances in Technology are displayed in the form of up-to-date examples of cars, computers and kitchens. The showroom of Japan Automobile Federation offers exhibits full of information useful to drivers interested in improving their driving skills. The Tokyo Tower is open from year round but at varying hours. Approximate fees to the main observatory are: Adults -Y600; middle/primary school age - Y50; kindergarten - Y200. To see the wax museum: Adult - Y750; child Y400. For the aquarium: Adult - Y600; child Y400.
Getting there: get on the Hibiya Line bound for Kamiyacho Station. Get off the subway and exit the station either way. Turn left and walk one block. Turn left again, and Tokyo Tower is right in front of you.

IMPERIAL PALACE:

The Imperial Palace, home of the Imperial family, stands on the former site of Edo Castle. Located in the heart of Tokyo, the Palace grounds are vast, replete with gardens, moat, and high stone walls. The gardens, Kokyo Gaien and Higashi Gyoen, provide the primary sights since the remaining grounds are usually closed to the public. A walk alongside the moat, particularly during the cherry blossom season, is an attraction as well. The Nijubashi double bridge is a copy of Kyoto’s Fushimi Castle bridge. It spans the moat at the entrance to the Palace and provides the only good view into the grounds. Built where Edo Castle stood during the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Imperial Palace was completed in the late 1890’s. Destroyed by air raids during World War II, the Palace was rebuilt in 1968. Ordinarily, it is impossible to enter the grounds without an invitation. However, on the Emperor’s Birthday (Dec 23) and on Jan 2 each year, the gates are opened. Tens of thousands of visitors take advantage of this opportunity to see the royal family. Tours are available for groups of ten or more people over 20 years old. The following information will be required: 1) Full name; 2) Age; 3) Occupation; 4) Home address; 5) Address in Japan. Call the Imperial Palace Tour Office at 03-3213-1111 a minimum of one month prior to the desired date. Before telephoning, have ready the name of your organization, the representative’s name and the number of people in your tour group.
Getting there: take any one of several subway lines to the main station. Head out the north or west exit toward the Palace and moat. (You can’t miss it.)

RESTAURANTS

Sunday in Harajuku/L’ Orangerie: On the first and third Sundays of the month there is an antique flea market at the Togo Shrine. The best reason for being in Harajuku on Sunday is the bargain (Y3500) all-you-can-eat brunch buffet at L’Orangerie in the Hanae Mori Building. L’Orangerie is a French restaurant owned by a world famous designer and is considered to be one of the finest restaurants in the city. This is mostly a lunch brunch but you will find juice, fresh fruit, cereal, sweet rolls plus a couple of egg dishes. The lunch dishes change from week to week. There are garden salads, pasta salads and meat to choose from, sometimes including a delicious lamb couscous or deep-fried crab claws. One or two kinds of chicken, and soup are part of the selection. The assortment of French cheeses alone is worth the Y3500. Then there are the sinful desserts: mousse, homemade ice cream, tortes, cakes and others. By the time you have sampled some of each, a new dessert appears on the table. No complimentary drinks are given but your coffee cup is constantly refilled and

each, a new dessert appears on the table. No complimentary drinks are given but your coffee cup is constantly refilled and there are pitchers of juice and wine punch available.
Sunday brunch is from 1100 - 1430. Reservations are recommended. Dress is more formal than casual - about half of the men are in coat and tie. Tel. (03) 3407-7461. Address: Hanae Mori Bldg., 5th floor OmoteSando Dori.
Getting there: Exit A1 from the Omote-sando station on the Ginza, Chiyoda and Hanzomon Subway Lines. Take time to browse through Hanai Mori's beautiful clothes and visit the many antique shops in the basement.

The Bamboo Sandwich Shop:
If after shopping, you are in a hurry to get home and just want to grab a quick bite, try one or move of the many interesting sandwiches at the Bamboo Sandwich Shop. This is a cafeteria-style restaurant with the various sandwich fillings on display. You pick your filling and choose brown or white bread. All the old standbys are there - tuna, B.L.T., ham and chicken. The more unusual fillings are Mexican, ethnic tuna, mushroom and oriental curry. I was told that the roast pork is very popular as is cream cheese with fruit. Prices start at Y450. Roast beef is the most expensive at Y700. There are always two homemade soups. The varieties change, but the price is usually about Y300. Also offered are at least four kinds of salad and an equal number of desserts. Japanese beer sells for Y450, foreign beer costs Y500. Coffee is Y220. There is also fresh fruit juice, plus tea, regular or green, hot or cold.
Getting there: The Bamboo is easy to find. As you leave the Oriental bazaar, go right to the second alley. You will be in front of the Jubilee Palace. Turn right and you will see the Bamboo on the right a few doors down. The hours are 1100 - 2100 daily.

HOTELS/BILLETING

Because of the high prices of most "civilian" hotels in Tokyo, most military visitors try to get reservations at the New Sanno Hotel or try to stay in billeting at one of the nearby military bases. From Misawa, you can go with a package tour from Travel Time, which for one price includes 3 nights' stay at the New Sanno, plus round-trip transportation. If you want to go on your own, advance planning is the key to hassle-free accomodations.

The New Sanno Hotel: the New Sanno hotel is available to all SOFA status ID-card holders and their guests. It is located right in the heart of downtown Tokyo! Room rates are scaled according to rank and provide all of the modern conveniences. A full-service hotel, the New Sanno offers a includes a snack bar, Japanese-style restaurant, fine dining restaurant and a family restaurant. Reservations are a must, weekends are usually booked well in advance. About once a month or so the New Sanno advertises reservation availability in the Pacific Stars and Stripes, but it's a good idea to call and check - people do cancel, and sometimes you can "luck into" a room with short notice. A reservation must be accompanied by a one-night's rate deposit fee. Deposits can be made by check, money order or major credit card. To make reservations, call (DSN) 229-7121/7122. Their DSN fax number is 229-7102. The commercial number is 03-3440-7871 (ext. 7021/7022) and commercial fax is 03-3440-7824. You can also make reservations via email address: navjntse@zama-emh1.army.mil.

The Hardy Barracks: the Hardy Barracks is located within the Pacific Stars and Stripes compound. It offers comfortable accomodations at very reasonable rates. Although it doesn't boast of all the extras offered by the New Sanno, it's clean, recently renovated, and just as convenient for sightseeing. There are 19 single rooms which share a bathroom, and two suites. The single rooms have two twin beds and cost $17 for the first person and $2 for the second. The suites have one double bed in the bedroom and a sofa bed in the living room. They are $20 for the first person and $5 for each additional person. All rooms include a refrigerator, microwave, TV and VCR. Videos can be rented from the Hardy Barracks Navy Exchange, which also sells groceries and liquor. The major drawback to staying at the Hardy Barracks is that you can't make reservations any earlier than 15 days before your intended arrival, since TDY/TAD personnel have priority. The Hardy Barracks doesn't have any restaurants, but there is a cafeteria on the fourth floor of the Stars and Stripes building that's open 6 days a week for breakfast and lunch. A kitchen and (free) laundry room are also available. If you'd rather eat at the New Sanno, it's a 25-minute walk from Hardy Barracks (literally around the corner and up a block). The 97 bus stops in front of Hardy Barracks and will take you to the New Sanno and Shinagawa station. There are two subway lines within a 10-minute walk - Nogizaka Station on the Chiyoda Line and Roppongi Station on the Hibiya Line. To make reservations at Hardy Barracks, call DSN 229-3270/3345. The billeting office is on the fourth floor and is open 24 hours a day.
Other base billeting options: Yokosuka, Atsugi, and Yokota are all located about an hour's train ride from downtown Tokyo.

Yokota Billeting: billeting at Yokota is available by making a reservation 24 hours in advance IF they have rooms or on a Space-A basis. Summertime is the peak season and most difficult time to get a room there, however, it's always worth giving them a call to see if there will be any rooms available. The cost for a single room is $12, for a married couple $17, and for a family, $35. For reservations/information, call DSN 225-9270/7326.

Atsugi Navy Lodge: though a bit far from downtown, Atsugi is close to the Yokohama area of Tokyo. The Navy Lodge there is very nice, and unless the fleet is in, usually has available rooms. It has thirty units with one or two double beds and private bath. Amenities include: TV/VCR, hair dryers, irons and ironing boards, microwave, futons, refrigerator, as well as an on-site laundromat. There is a nice Navy Exchange at Atsugi, as well as a McDonald's and other fast-food options. For reservations/information, call DSN 264-6880/6881.

Yokosuka Navy Lodge: Yokosuka has 165 rooms available, 110 with kitchenettes. The cost is $35/night without a kitchenette, $42-$48 with a kitchenette. There is a small convenience store (open and a small restaurant on the premises. Yokosuka also has a McDonald's, Pizza Inn, Main Street Deli, as well as a food court at the Navy Exchange mall. Reservation re-

TRAVELING TO TOKYO: HARDY BARRACKS

You're planning a trip to Tokyo and the New Sanno is booked. What do you do? Staying in a Japanese hotel is extremely expensive, but there's a low cost alternative in central Tokyo a short distance from the New Sanno.

Hardy Barracks, located in the Pacific Stars and Stripes compound, offers comfortable accommodations at very reasonable rates. It's not the Ritz, but it's clean, recently upgraded, and in a very convenient location for sightseeing.

There are 19 single rooms, which share a bathroom, and 2 suites. Single rooms have two twin beds and run $17 for the first person and $2 for the second. The suites have one double bed in the bedroom and a sofa bed in the living room. They are $20 for the first person and $5 for each additional person. All rooms have a refrigerator, microwave, TV and VCR. Video tapes can be rented a the Hardy Barracks Navy Exchange, which also sells groceries and liquor. It's up the hill from the Stars and Stripes building.

The major drawback to staying at the Hardy Barracks is that you can't make reservations earlier than 15 days before your intended arrival, as TAD/TDY personnel have priority.

Hardy Barracks doesn't have any restaurants, but there's a cafeteria on the fourth floor of the Stars and Stripes that's open 6 days a week for breakfast and lunch. A kitchen and laundry room (free use) are also available.

There are two subway lines within a 10-minute walk - Nogizaka Station on the Chiyoda Line (Green Line) and Roppongi Station on the Hibiya Line (Silver Line). Roppongi is the entertainment district of Tokyo and it has some fabulous restaurants, such as Hard Rock Café, Victoria Station, and Tony Roma's.

If you'd rather eat at the New Sanno, it's a 25 minute walk from Hardy Barracks (literally around the corner and up a block). The 97 bus stops in front of Hardy Barracks and will take you to the New Sanno and Shinagawa station (where you can catch a train to Yokosuka).

For reservations, call Hardy Barracks at DSN 229-3270/3345. The billeting office is on the fourth floor and is manned 24 hours a day.

OTHER DESTINATIONS

SINGAPORE

There are regularly scheduled flights in and out of Singapore almost daily. Making hotel arrangements through the Sembawang Naval Base (750-2451/2539) will eliminate waiting once in Singapore. Many hotels offer a military discount. Rates run about about $100US/ night for a nice hotel with 2 king-size beds. Many hotels have a swimming pool, and are located near the subway station and shopping. Singapore is clean and beautiful with a lush, warm, tropical environment. English is spoken and written everywhere. Taxis and MRT or subways are cheap and easy to use. Money changers offer a better exchange rate than banks and the hotel rate of exchange is awful.

SHOPPING

Large department stores have fixed prices, but bartering is the name of the game for most purchases. Large shopping complexes are everywhere. Variety and inexpensive merchandise is available. A few places with best buys are: Queenway (sporting goods), Funan Center (computer software), Malay Village (batik fabric), and Little India (luggage). Singapore has deals on almost everything and most shopping begins along Orchard Road. Toys R US and K-mart are also located in Singapore.

DINING

Great food can be found everywhere, especially Indian, Chinese, and Thai, to name a few. Some familiar American restaurants include TGIFridays, Tony Roma's and Pizza Hut. An excellent meal, Tiger Chili Prawns, for those who enjoy spice and seafood can be found at Hawker's Market called Newton Circus for about $30. Many other food selections are available at Newton Circus with an added bonus of local atmosphere and people.

SIGHTSEEING

Visit historic Raffles Hotel - home of the Singapore Sling, Sentosa Island (allow a full day here), China Town, Clarke Quay, Zoo… to name of few highlights. There are a lot of nightclubs and evening entertainment for those with energy left after a long day of shopping or sightseeing. Most attractions and shops do not open before 10:00 A.M. so there's no hurry to get up early. Prices vary dramatically on all goods and we found alcohol to be consistently expensive…local beer was $3-$6 for a draft. Sodas were $2-$4 (although we found a K-Mart nearby and stocked up on Diet Pepsi, etc. for the room).

HONG KONG

There are very few AMC flights to Hong Kong. We traveled commercial and purchased tickets through Camp Zama ITT 263-4059. We paid $509.00 per adult and $82.00 for the baby, however, the price does vary. We stayed at the BP International in Kowloon, and made our reservations through Corporate Travel. The hotel charges about $140.00 per night. We purchased their 4 day/3 night package and added additional nights. The hotel was very satisfactory, however, we would also recommend trying the YMCA in Kowloon. To make a reservation contact MWR in Hong Kong or Johnson and Co. Johnson and Co is a local company which has a very good reputation among the military. They sell tailored products, jewelry and electronics, and will help arrange travel plans.

Hong Kong is a shoppers paradise. I did a lot of reading prior to going to Hong Kong and found Granville Road to be the best shopping for clothing. Most prices were fixed, and it was not possible to try on clothing. It is possible to find a few deals but be sure to look for flaws. Overall, most prices in Hong Kong are comparable to the States. Coming from Japan it was great for our Christmas shopping. Uniforms were tailor made at Fu Shing Co. in the fleet arcade. We would also recommend Johnson & Co. for tailoring. Tailored dress shirts are about $49.00 in Hong Kong, compared to only $25.00 in Korea. We bought a Chinese carpet from Royal Rug, also in the fleet arcade. I'm not sure that it was the "best" price in Hong Kong, but it was easy to carry it next door to Pack and Wrap and ship it home. I bought some pearls and had a ring made by Johnson & Co. We shopped around for pearls and saw a huge variation in quality and price. We bought several silk items at the Temple Street Night Market and Haiphong Road in Kowloon. Bargain hard! There are also the many chain stores in the malls, including Ocean Terminal, Ocean Gallery etc. We were thrilled to find a Disney Store and Toys R Us.

SIGHTSEEING

We also took a half-day city tour. The tour went to Victoria Peak, Aberdeen where we had time to take a Sampan ride, a jewelry factory and Stanley Market. After 1 hour at Stanley Market you could take the tour bus back to the hotel or stay at Stanley to shop and take public transportation back (easy).

DINING

We found an Indian restaurant (the Curry Pot) near Stanley Market, a great German bar on D'Aguilar St. and an excellent "California" type restaurant (Deco) on the top of Victoria Peak. D'Aguilar St. has a variety of ethnic restaurants which looked good. (by Marion Speranzo)

HAKODATE

Getting there: follow the directions in the Aomori chaper to get to the Aomori Ferry terminal. Once there, park in the oversized parking area, lock your car and enter the terminal. Go to one of the windows that does not have a line and say, "Eigo, kudasai" (eggo, koo-da-sigh) which translates into "English, please." Someone will come to your aid. You want the "ferry" ride to Hokkaido, round-trip. The cost for adults is approximately Y1400 per adult one way and half price for children 4 and up to 12. Younger children are free! (It is important to specify "ferry" as opposed to the "hydrofoil". Although it is much faster it will cost you three times as much!) If you are taking a car, plan to spend a week. The cost is according to vehicle size but start at around Y300,000; the driver's fare is included. The fee is good for a one week stay in Hokkaido. You must park in a special section at the terminal. It might be better for you to find the section and have someone stay with the car, you go in and get the tickets. NOTE: The person who gets the tickets MUST submit all of the papers on the car to the ticket desk. They will check insurance papers, driver's licenses, JCI, tax and registration. If these items are not up-to-date and valid, you will NOT be permitted to transport the vehicle. There are NO exceptions! Once you get your ticket, proceed to the ship which are designated by numbers. If you stand at the pier you will be able to board BEFORE the cars start embarking. You will proceed upstairs to the berthing area which consists of great big rooms that are sectioned and carpeted. Space is taken on a free for all, first come-first taken basis. So stake your area

quickly by sitting down and don't move again until the ship has set sail. This will establish your territory which is necessary if you want adequate space on a crowded cruise. There are vending machines and a snack bar on board but the items can be expensive. If you bring food with you, bring enough to share - nothing breaks the ice better than a few American chips or drinks that are shared. After the ship leaves the dock, most people will either settle down, take a walk or watch television (each compartment has a set) , take a nap, or eat. It is fascinating to watch the group dynamics and the children. If you do lay down you will be amazed at the sense of peace amid all of the chaos! The ride is almost four hours long so you have plenty of time to explore, talk, nap, read, eat or listen to a walkman. Just sit back and enjoy. You will know when the ship is about to dock by the commotion. The engines of the ship get louder, the ship will rock more, people will stir and prepare for disembarking, and then a loud message will blare out from the speakers (the message is in Japanese, of course) announcing its arrival to Hakodate! There is no need to rush…you have about thirty minutes before pulling into port. When you disembark, there will be a terminal ahead of you. Right outside is a taxi stand . If you leave the area while there are still people disembarking you will be able to get a waiting taxi. Otherwise, you will have to phone for one inside the terminal and wait a while. You are about five miles away from the town itself, which will cost you about Y1500 in cab fare. For the adventurous, there is a bus system, which costs about Y500. There are many hotels, hostels, minshukus and ryokans which accommodate every taste and budget. I do suggest that you make reservations in advance, especially during the Summer and Fall. You can either go to the library and get a travel book that gives a listing of accommodations or contact Travel Time at 226-3555. If you arrive without any reservations, and it is before 1600, you can stop by the Hakodate Information Center, located beside the Hakodate JR Train Station. They do speak English and have a lot of information about Hakodate, its shopping, sights, history and onsens - all in English, all free! The Nice Day Inn, (0138) 22-5919 is owned by Mr. Shigeko Saito and his wife. He speaks English extremely well and enjoys having people of many diverse backgrounds, ethnic groups, religions and cultures stay at his minshuku. There is a book of records which guests have signed that he loves to share with newcomers. There is great information about where to eat and places to see. The inn is located within a ten minute walk from anything that might be of interest to you, whether it is the huge farmers' market, grand hotels, the renovated warehouse shopping district, downtown, the bus depot or the JR train station! Best of all, it is very affordable - about Y3000 per adult per night in dormitory style rooms with two sets of bunk beds. The toilet and shower is separate for men and women but communal. There is a family room equipped with a television, table and futons, but it is located upstairs away from the restroom facilities. The inn Is very clean. Mr. and Mrs. Saito can answer any question you may have about the area, nightlife, restaurants and places to see. Mr. Saito enjoys karaoke and often invites the boarders to join him. Mrs. Saito will fix you a Japanese style-breakfast for about Y500, but do ask her the night before so she can do her food shopping at dawn when the market opens. Her cooking is wonderful and she is used to preparing foods for western tastes, so each meal is a treat! Her fried squid, noodles and eggs are delicious! If there are no rooms available at the inn, Mr. Saito will recommend several other places within your budget. However, if you can, please do stop by and introduce yourself. Don't be surprised if you stay longer than you intended! Do call first, to be sure that he will be home. There is plenty to do in Hakodate. There are tours (both public and private), excellent shopping for unique products that can only be found in that part of the country, unusual restaurants and many places of cultural and/or historical interest. There are even trolley cars that will take you on leisure rides throughout

the city. Whether you are seeking a hideaway for a few days, or as a first stop to exploring Hokkaido, Hakodate is a place where treasures abound for anyone seeking them!

KYOTO

The capital of Japan from 794 until 188, Kyoto is "quintessential Japan." Thanks to its relative unattractiveness as a military target and persuasive, foresighted scholars who recognized Kyoto and nearby Nara as invaluable cultural and historical treasures, the two cities were spared Allied attacks in WW II. Thus, today, we can visit these ancient cities and immerse ourselves in art, architecture, religions and culture dating back to the 7th and 8th centuries. Civil wars of the 15th and 16th centuries destroyed a number of ancient sites, but many were rebuilt and today are three and four hundred years old. Such places preserve the workmanship of artisans during one of Japan's longest eras of peace and cultural achievement.

Kyoto retains much of the ancient charm difficult to find in modern Tokyo. It is home to over 200 Shinto shrines, 1,500 Buddhist temples, some outstanding museums and many other buildings of historical significance. Its geographic setting, in a valley surrounded by mountains, provides both relief from the summer heat and some stunning scenery. Kyoto is also an artistic and intellectual center. Many crafts which have passed into obscurity elsewhere are nurtured and prospering there. Since it is obviously impossible to provide a concise, comprehensive guide for a city about which hundreds of books have been written, this article will focus on the major attractions for those having only a few days to spend. For those with specialized interests, references and other resources are recommended. There are accommodations available in Kyoto to meet every taste and budget, including minshuku, business hotels, ryokan, and a Holiday Inn. You will want to select accommodations which take into account your mode of transportation and the places you wish to visit. In addition to travel guidebook suggestions, the Japan National Tourist Organization publishes two excellent guides annually: "Hotels in Japan" and "Japan Ryokan Guide." Kyoto is a big city! It has only one subway line, which is of little use to tourists. The City Buses are good for reaching places within the city, while the Kyoto Buses will take you to outlying destinations. Consult a good map for bus routes and station locations. Parking within the city is difficult to find and expensive. Only a few major tourist destinations in the city have parking lots. Driving in Kyoto is fairly easy with a good map, so you could use your car. to reach outlying destinations. As with most places, the best way to see Kyoto is on foot. Take comfortable, sturdy walking shoes-there are hills to climb and endless stairways!

SHOPPING & RESTAURANTS

Kyoto can be a shopping paradise, depending on your taste and budget. As previously mentioned, many traditional craft items are available here that are difficult to find elsewhere. These included paper lanterns & umbrellas, textile weaving, dying and painting; hair ornaments, pottery & ceramics, several local specialty dolls, bamboo ware, joinery, lacquer-ware, shikishi & tamzaku paper, washi, fans, damascene, cutlery, woodblock prints, metalwork and stone carving. There are hundreds of shops and restaurants - something for everyone. The main areas for shopping, dining and night life are around the Kamogawa River along Shijo-dori. Gion is on the eastern side; Pontocho and Shinkyogoku on the western side. Kyoto Station is home to a large underground shopping complex. Also of interest are the art and

antique areas along Shinmonzen-dor (in Gion), and the many pottery shops along Kiyomizuzaka enroute to Kiyomizu Temple. Most organized tours stop at the Kyoto Handicraft Center accordingly tourist and commercial. For a more subdued experience and an opportunity to see the work of many excellent artisans, I suggest the Kyoto Craft Center (Open 11:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.; Tel. 561-9660). Minamiza is the oldest theater in Japan and the site of the first kabuki performances. Kabuki programs are given three or four times annually, each lasting about three weeks. Gion corner, a popular stop on night tours, offers a one-hour capsule of traditional dance, bunraku, music and tea ceremony. Consult the local Tourist Information Center for a current schedule of events.

Getting there: Kyoto is easily accessible by Japan Rail Shinkansen (Hikari and Kodama trains from Tokyo; round trip about Y24,000), and is a reasonably easy drive from Yokota. Take the Chuo Expressway west towards Kofu. Just before Nagoya, the Chuo and Tomei expressways join the Meishin Expressway at the Komaki Junction. Follow the signs onto the Meishin and on to Kyoto. The distance from Yokota is roughly 475 km., and tolls are about Y10,000 one way. Driving time is a minimum of six hours, and can be much longer depending upon traffic and weather. Be sure your hotel has parking available.

Notes

Sapporo Snow Festival

Kappa Festival in Misawa

Notes

Festival Dancers

FESTIVALS

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVALS

Although southern Japan celebrates the beginning of spring with the budding of the cherry blossoms (sakura) in late March and early April, northern Japan generally must wait until the last week in April - the first week in May. The most famous cherry blossom festival is held in Hirosaki. Smaller, but still dramatically beautiful displays of these blossoms can also be seen closer to Misawa AB. In fact, Misawa City has its own festival at Kitamura Park which is just off the pole road to the south. There are a number of other towns that hold festivals celebrating the blossoming of the cherry.

SANNOHE: festival is held in Shiroyama Park. Take Rte. 4 south to the intersection of Rte. 104; then on toward Sannohe.

AOMORI: festival is held at Gappo Park. Follow the general directions to Aomori, coming into the city on Rte. 4. Gappo Park is located on the right.

TOWADA CITY: festival is held at the City Central Park. Drive past Nagasakiya's and train station on Rte. 10, and continue on until you reach the city.

ROKUNOHE: along Rte. 45 between Hachinohe and Rokunohe, holds their festival at Tateno Park. You can also reach it by passing the Misawa train station on Rte. 10 and turning left at the sign that indicates Rokunohe. You will pass through farmland, but it is well marked.

HACHINOHE: has a small festival in a complex known as the Chojasan, which is near the train station. From Rte 45 south, follow the signs which indicate where to turn for the station. Time required to drive depends on traffic, but is usually 45 minutes.

GONOHE: has their festivities at Hibarino Park. Gonohe is south of Towada City on Rte. 4

To ask the specific locations or directions to any of these parks, the general phrase,
"Name of park" koen doko desu ka?" will help you along the way. Substitute the name of the park and finish the phrase. People are always helpful (and pleased) when they see you are trying to fit into their culture and language.

HIROSAKI The castle was used in the film "Shogun", and is a pay-to-visit musuem. It contains numerous relics dating from the Edo period and brings to life what must have been an arduous time. Once in the city, parking is often difficult to find. Patience will lead you to a number of lots and/or parking garages near the castle. Costs will run between Y800 - Y1200 depending on where and how long you stay. Dress in layers since the weather usually changes throughout the day. You will have to carry any picnic gear with you through the moat area and into the castle grounds. The view from the top floor is photo-worthy because of the hundreds of cherry trees within range. If you forget your film, it can be purchased from walking vendors throughout the park. There is a small zoo for children near a pond complete with carp.

Getting there: can take anywhere from 3 1/2 to 6 hours, depending on what day and what time you travel. There are numerous routes including driving through Aomori. Either way, you should prepare for stops to stretch and and eat along the way.

ENBURI

After a long winter, the snow can become a little tiresome by February. If you are a farmer, there is still a waiting period before the spring tilling and planting activities resume. Enburi, named after a cultivating tool, is a late winter festival. The purpose of this festival is to celebrate the previous year's harvest and to pray for a good harvest in the coming year. In Hachinohe, Sannohe and Kamikita, Enburi is celebrated between 17 - 20 February. The custom is nearly a century old and is recognized by the Japanese national government as an historical cultural heritage. In past years the dancers were women dressed as men. Now men play the roles of leader, lord stewards, dancers, and flag bearer. There are also two of each of the following: drummer, flute player, and cymbal player. Eboshi hats, which used to be worn only by nobles, are worn during the festivities. Today they are painted to show farming scenes and are quite tall. Hat wearers must wear chin straps to keep them from toppling. These hats resemble a horse's head and are decorated with colorful streamers that represent the horse's mane. During the festival, a parade travels through parts of the town while songs and chanting can be heard in the background. After the parade, participants return to their neighbors and continue the party. They dance and chant in front of stores and homes. This tradition is similar to Christmas caroling because people inside the buildings come outside. Instead of cocoa and cookies, paper-wrapped money is offered for a prosperous farming season.

HINOMATSURI AND TANO-NO-SEKKU

HINOMATSURI is the doll festival, also known as Momo-no-sekku, the Peach Blossom Festival. It is celebrated on March 3rd to pray for good health and growth in the families' daughters. Hina dolls are collected over the years, or in wealthier families, all at once. These are displayed for two weeks in the homes and businesses of Japan. In local department stores, entire sets are displayed for sale. Traditionally, the custom was called Nagashibina, meaning "paper doll floating down the river". The custom involved casting misfortune into the paper doll and floating it downriver. This act would then rid the home and body of evil. Nagashibina is still celebrated in the more rural areas of Japan. The Emperor in power during the early 1600's decided to formalize the custom and make it more sophisticated. Today the dolls for the Hinamatsuri can be very beautiful, intricate, and costly. They are typically displayed on a hinadan, which is a 7-tiered stand that holds the different levels of dolls. The first and highest tier holds two dolls that represent the Emperor and his wife. Beneath them three hand maidens are placed to tend to their needs. On the third tier, a five-piece band provides entertainment to the court. Miniature food platters, rice cakes, peach blossoms and sake are placed on the next tier as a sacrifice. The dolls on the fifth tier represent the gods while the sixth tier is saved for the girls themselves. Girls place coveted personal items such as jewelry, brushes, and mirrors on this tier. The seventh and final tier represents the agricultural roots of the land with oxen-drawn carts. At the end of two weeks, the dolls are very carefully and lovingly packaged up and stored until the next year.

TANO-NO-SEKKU or Boys' Day, is celebrated on March 5th. This tradition involves hanging brightly colored carp kites in front of the home. Initially the kites only represented a boy in the

family. Today the carp banners are still hung. However, along with a carp for each boy in the family, there is typically one hung for each girl. The first and largest carp (black) represents the father. The second and slightly smaller (red) carp represents the mother. The size decreases as the number of children's carps are added to the pole. The carp are ranked by age, not by gender. The colors are vivid and sometimes include golden fabrics. At the very top, a windmill-type streamer of many colors embellishes the entire array.

WINTER ICE FESTIVALS

SAPPORO: the largest snow festival is held in Sapporo during the early part of February. The Sapporo ice festival began as a local expression of artisans. It has expanded to include ice carvers from around the world. Competition for beauty, difficulty and expression of art form are judged. There are also "fun" carvings for children and adults to play and slide on. It takes nearly the entire month of January, 25,000 tons of snow, and close to 24,000 workers to create the 200 sculptures in this winter wonderland. Sapporo is located on the island of Hokkaido, north of Honshu. It can be reached by car via an undersea tunnel, or by ferry. A ferry can be taken from various ports around Misawa. The Sapporo festival is the most lavish, as well as, the most expensive ice festival to attend. Travel Time offers a selection of packages and dates to choose from, or you can opt to make your own travel arrangements Overnight accomodations vary from moderate to expensive, so use experienced advice when making reservations.
Getting there: follow the directions in the Hachinohe chapter to get to the ferry terminal. The terminal is a large, pink building on the left. The ferry leaves Hachinohe at 2230; boarding begins an hour prior to departure. You'll arrive in Hokkaido around 0630 the next morning. The return ferry leaves Hokkaido at midnight and arrives in Hachinohe about 0930. You can take a bus from the Sapporo ferry terminal for about Y1025 each way to downtown. (school-age children are half-price and younger children are free) It's about a 90-minute bus ride. The bus station is about a 10-minute walk from the festival area. You'll want to make overnight reservations and ferry reservations WELL ahead of time - by November/December, everything is usually booked. Plan for snow, i.e. dress warmly, but try to travel as lightly as possible since you'll be hauling everything around. A knapsack is a good idea. The ferry has drink and snack machines and some of the older ferries even have a hot bath on board!
There are lots of things to do in Sapporo besides the winter sports and seeing the Snow Festival. You can shop, mostly in the Suskino area south of Odori Park, which includes an underground mall called Poletown (with a McDonald's) and a four-block shopping arcade on the street level. Items unique to the region include wood carvings of foxes and bears, weavings and dairy products. There are wonderful restaurants in the area including Ramen Alley. The Hokkaido ramen has thicker noodles. Another local specialty is crab in all forms. At the Sapporo Beer Brewery (upstairs) there's an all-you-can-eat Mongolian barbecue dinner for Y4000, with all the beer you can drink. Downstairs was the same menu in set portions for less money. You can rent cross-country skis in Nakajima Park, visit the Clock and TV towers, Botanical Gardens, and University. Day trips include an Ainu village, observatory, and hot springs.

HIROSAKI: closer to home, the grounds around Hirosaki Castle display fine ice carvings. Numerous candle lit ice towers create the Snow Lantern Festival. Sheets of translucent paper are painted with elaborate designs and placed in the openings of the tower for the

candlelight to shine through. Small igloo-like caves are also lit by candles and glimmer along the margins of the river which flow around the castle. Be sure to stay until dusk so you can enjoy the transition from sun reflecting off the ice crystals to the mellow illumination of candle-light. Not to be outdone by Sapporo's festival, Hirosaki also exhibits large ice carvings. The subjects range from Samurai warriors and pagodas to overgrown panda bears and Mickey Mouse. A long sliding ramp is available with sliding rugs provided at no charge. For a fee of about 300 yen, the children or the whole family can ride on a horse drawn ice sleigh. Food choices range from simple ice cream and coffee to yakisoba, mochi dumplings, ramen and soba noodle soups. Prices are slightly higher than in the Misawa markets. When attending either festival, be prepared for the cold. Long underwear, lined boots, hats, scarves, mittens and layering are the rule. Strong winds can often turn a nice day into a very cold one.

TANABATA FESTIVAL

The Tanabata festival celebrates the legend of two star-crossed lovers. It is celebrated in many towns in the local area. The story originated in China during the 7th century. The largest and most celebrated Tanabata occurs in Sendai during the first week of August. It takes about 3 1/2 hrs to drive to Sendai, but you can experience the Tanabata festival right here in Misawa. The legend is about two stars that were very enthralled with each other. They let their emotions interfere with their astral duties, so they were banished by the King of Stars to opposite sides of the galaxy. They are allowed to come together once a year during the seventh month. The stars are called Altair (the cow-herder) and Vega (the weaver-princess). The Festival is a dedication to this annual meeting of the loving stars. Romantic poems are written and hung upon bamboo poles all around the city. Children are encouraged to write wishes and hang them up. Decorations are larger than in traditional times. They are huge dangling streamer-type street ornaments of origami kimonos and cranes. The ornaments symbolize the hope of improving weaving skills and experiencing a long life. This brillantly colored festival provides a rare opportunity to photograph an old Japanese tradition. The festival is held on Green Pole road and is three days long. Food and shopping bargains abound. Games of skill and chance can also be found along the thoroughfare. Even though many Japanese wear a yukata (summer kimono), any casual clothing is acceptable. The atmosphere is friendly. Perhaps the best time to go is in the evening, when temperatures have cooled off and the decorations are shown to best advantage. Tanabata in Misawa is one festival you won't want to miss!

Notes

2

SPORTS AND RECREATION

CAMPING

There are many places to go camping in Northern Japan. Campgrounds range from having pay showers and other amenities to being rather primitive. Most campgrounds offer some kind of shelter/cabin camping as well as places for tent camping. The shelters/cabins are usually a simple - four walls and a roof, costing about 3 times as much as a tent space. However, given the often frequent chance of rain, you may want to play it safe and opt for a shelter. Most campgrounds do not sell ice, so bring what you need from base or try to plan meals around foods that don't require refridgeration. Some campgrounds allow open fires, but many do not. Most campgrounds are either near a regular onsen (hot bath) or a resort onsen. If you haven't tried a hot bath yet, camping is a great opportunity to try it. Most Japanese prefer to take their bath in the evening, so if you arrive at the hot bath in the morning, you can often have the whole place to yourself. It's a relaxing way to get clean and ready for another day's hiking or exploring. Plus, some of the resort onsens are located in scenic settings.

LAKE TOWADA: around the beautiful Lake Towada area there are six campgrounds, located within 30 minutes of each other. Utarube, Nenokuchi, Kachokeikoku and Oide are located near the lake itself, and Sukayu and Tashirotai campgrounds are located up in the mountains near Mt. Hakkoda, slightly north of the lake. Lake Towada is located about 54 km from Misawa.

Getting there: go out the Main gate to the second stoplight and turn right. When you come to a Y-intersection, bear right. Either turn left at the intersection by Nagasikiya department store, or go straight - either way, you'll end up on the road in front of the Misawa train station. This street turns into Rte. 10. Follow Rte. 10 to Towada City until you cross railroad tracks. The train station and Daiei department store will be on your left. Continue straight until you come to a stoplight. There will be a yellow jeans store on your right and a large pachinko parlor in front of you. Turn left onto Rte. 4. Pass over the bridge and proceed to the second stoplight (not counting the one at the bridge). Turn right on Rte. 102. (There will be a big blue sign indicating Rte. 102.) Proceed on this road for about 20 minutes. You are near the lake when you reach a caution light with a gas station on your right. Turn left here and proceed across the bridge. Follow this road through the Oirase Gorge until you reach the lake. At the lake, you may turn left (Rte. 103) or right (Rte. 102) at the caution light. Nenokuchi Campground is off Rte. 103 about 1.6 km.

KACHOKEIKI: Located off Rte. 102. Turn left at the caution light and proceed about 3.4 km. There will be a boating dock on your right, just after leaving the wooded area. Continue around a curve and over a small bridge until you see a large parking lot on your left. This is your destination. This campground is large, beautiful and clean. Kachokeikoku campground is also known as the Rose Garden. Near the camping area are a few small portable toilets, but the toilets near the main office are more user-friendly.

UTARUBE: From the Rose Garden, turn left onto Rte. 103 and continue through a small village with a stop light. Once you go around a curve (with a gas station on the right) you'll see a wooded area. Past the entrance to the wooded area, there will be a path on the right. The

path leads to the campsite, which is close to the water. The fishing is decent in this area as well.

OIDE: this is probably the cleanest and best site in this area. Oide, pronounced (or-i-day) is about 11 km from Utarube campsite. They have new toilets, new showers (Y100 for three minutes) and new coin laundry units. Fishing is allowed. Oide campground is within walking distance from Yasumiya. The fee for camping is Y300 per person, plus Y200 per tent.
Getting there: from Utarube continue straight on Rte. 103 towards Yasumiya. After about 8 km you will come to a small village. You will see a blue sign that says Orate to the left on Rte. 103. The town of Yasumiya is on the right. Yasumiya is where they have the Lake Towada fireworks festival in July. Past the blue sign, there will be a fork in the road, keep to the left. Go approximately 3 km; Oide will be on your left.

SUKAYU: this is an onsen resort near Mt. Hakkoda. The campground is set among beech and maple glades and makes a perfect basecamp for walking the Jogakura Valley or hiking up Mt. Odake. Bathing facilities at Sukayu Spa are available until 2000. The campsite has 4 large bungalows, 6 small bungalows and space for 100 tents. Rental rates are available. The season runs from June - October 31.
Getting there: at the caution light at the Yakeyama Ski Resort, proceed straight through the intersection. Follow this road about 20 minutes until you come to the Hakkoda Hotel. Just after the hotel, there will be a large parking lot on your left with toilets available. Behind the parking lot is a dirt road that leads to the camping sites.

TASHIROTAI: this campground is located on the backside of Mr. Hakkoda. Facilities at the campground are not the cleanest, but just down the road about 1/2 mile on the right is a fairly new, clean rest area.
Getting there: at Sukayu Onsen, follow the blue sign pointing to the right toward Shichinohe. This road will lead to the campsite. Driving time is approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

TASHIRO PLATEAU/TASHIRO CAMPGROUND: the Tashiro Plateau stretches out at the base of Mt. Odake and Mt. Hinadake. The grandeur of the mountains and the refreshing breeze that blows across the grassy highlands are unequalled. In early June you can see a profusion of *rhodendron japonicum*. There is plenty of space to lay out your picnic and to play games. The campground includes cooking facilities as well as a campfire area. This is a good starting point either for climbing Mt Hinadake or for hiking to Gudari Marsh. Season: June - September. For information, call 0177-38-0066 (summer), 0176-26-2203 (winter)

RYUSENDO: located in Iwate Prefecture, in Ryusendo National Park. The campground is a very short walk from the famous Ryusendo Cave. The Ryusendo Cave is one of the three largest stalactite caves in Japan. It is huge! So far, the explored length of the cave is about 2500 meters. For the entrance fee, Y800 for adults and Y400 for children, you can visit the old Cave museum as well, which is the oldest cave science museum in the world. as well as tour the larger area. A gushing spring flows throughout the cave, and there are beautiful turquoise-colored pools that can be 80 meters or more in depth. The pools contain some of the clearest cave waters in the world. In addition to the Caves, there are several nice walking trails nearby. At the large parking lot adjacent to the campground, there is a modern bathroom facility, which is open all night. The campground has rather primitive facilities, although they do have coin showers. Be aware - they lock the showers at night until about 1000 the

next day. Just down the road, there is a nice hotel which has a hot bath that is open to the public. You pay for the hot bath at the hotel check-in counter. It costs Y500 for adults, less for children. The cabins cost about Y2500/night. Tent sites cost Y600/night. There is a Japanese convenience and souvenir store across the large parking lot from the campground. There are also many small souvenir shops near the Cave entrance.
Getting there: follow the general directions to Hachinohe. When you get on Rte. 45, stay on it, all the way through Hachinohe, Hashikami, and Kuji. (You'll be heading towards, though not all the way to, Miyaki). After you go through the Fudai tunnel, the road will dead-end at a T-intersection. Go right, (west), on Rte. 45. After 31.5 km, there will be a stop light with a gas station on the right. Turn right onto Rte. 445. Go 17 km to a stop light with a blue sign directing you to Ryusendo. Go another 2.1 km and turn left at the white sign. After you cross a small bridge, you will see a parking lot and tennis courts. The campground is located beside the tennis courts. (You will have driven past the Cave already). Driving time is about 3 hours. There are several large rest areas along the way.

FUDAI: Fudai Beach is a popular camping spot for Americans. The beach is beautiful and somewhat protected for swimming. The cost is only Y300/night. A man will come around on a bike in the evening to collect the money. Bathrooms are Japanese-style pit toilets - be sure to bring your own toilet paper! The showers are cold, but there is a very inexpensive swimming pool right next door. There are no marked campsites. The Cave makes a nice day trip from here.
Getting there: follow the same general directions that you would for going to Ryusendo, BUT, after Fudai tunnel, turn LEFT! The road winds right, then left, and goes under a bridge. Turn left after the bridge - this road dead-ends at the beach.

YAGEN: This is a place for the true outdoors-person. They have decent restrooms, a large camping area, trails for hiking and several outdoor hot springs. There is also a river nearby that is great for fishing. The area is beautiful, with tall evergreen trees and rushing mountain streams. The fee for camping is Y300 for adults, Y200 for children. They are open from April through November. The onsen costs Y500 per person.
Getting there: driving time is approximately 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Go out the POL gate and make a left at the first light. Go about 2 km to the second stoplight and turn left. Go about 19 km and turn again onto Rte. 338. Stay on Rte. 338 until you reach Mutsu City. Turn right at the first stoplight in Mutsu City. There will be a blue sign that says Rte. 279 to Oma. Go about 15 km and turn left onto Rte. 279 toward Oma and Yagen (there will be a blue sign). Go through 2 stoplights and turn right. Go over the bridge and through a stoplight. Cross Rte. 279 and continue straight until you get to Yagen.

MONKEY CAMP: The fishing village of Wakinosawa is located about 42 KM past the town of Mutsu. This area is known for its snow monkeys. There is a rest area and a monkey zoo in case you aren't lucky enough to see them in the wild. There are cabins available at the Wakinosawa rest area. They cost Y3000/night and comfortably sleep six in an upstairs sleeping loft. The downstairs has a low table and lots of storage space. Each cabin also has a covered porch, which would work well as an area to cook in bad weather. There are some tables, but no chairs. There is a large sink area, including an area with a pay stove that costs Y100 for 15 minutes. There are pit toilets, but flush toilets are available when the refreshment center is open. There are also cabins with beds for six, a fridge and an indoor flush toilet for Y7800/night and cabins for 15 for Y15,000/night. There is a local hot bath located across the

street. For reservations call 0175-44-3252. (they do not speak much English) Umizuri Park is at the beach in town. It includes some small water slides, a refreshment area, a playground, and warm showers. About 7 km from Wakinosawa is the fishing village of Kusodoman. There is a wide walkway along the ocean leading to a campground about a mile down the coast. This is a great place to explore tidepools and look for wild monkeys and goats. There is also a traditional fishing boat on display in a cedar boathouse. To get to the beach or tide pools, head back into town and turn right at the post office (red T sign). At the end of the road, turn left and continue to the beach/park and eventually the end of road, where the hike along the coast begins.
Getting there: go toward Noheji and then take Rte. 279 north to Mutsu, then take Rte. 338 to Wakinosawa, OR take Rte. 338 north (Go out the POL gate, turn left at the first light and head past the airport, until you run into Rte. 338) all the way to Mutsu (very scenic, some narrow stretches), and on to Wakinosawa. In Wakinosawa, Rte. 338 winds through town and then out of town. About 3 KM down the road is the rest stop and refreshment area, where you check in. (Look for the giant blue rest stop sign over the road).

MISS VEEDOL BEACH: located just 10 minutes from Misawa AB. This location is a great place to camp, walk along the beach and learn a little history. Newly renovated bathrooms, a remote control airplane pad and a replica of the original Miss Veedol airplane are on site.
Getting there: Go out the POL gate and turn left at the first stoplight. Continue straight until you reach Rte. 338, continue 5 km until you see signs.

LAKE OGAWARA: located behind the base North Area. This recreation complex includes wooded nature trails, obstacle course, athletic fields, pony rides, a beach, onsen, camp sites and the Misawa Historical Museum.
Getting there: go out the POL gate. Take a left at the first traffic light. Continue straight, past the airport. You'll come to a light where there is a sign advertising the Hotel Daydream. Turn left here, continuing straight until you see a white sign on the left. The sign illustrates local wildlife and birds. There is also a sign for the Forestry Park. Turn left here, continuing on until you come to a fork, turn right here. Follow this road until you get to the lake. You'll pass the museum road first, then as you continue you'll pass the athletic area on your left and the obstacle course on your right.

TOGA NATIONAL PARK, OGA PENINSULA: You can rent cabins for Y3000 a night or pitch your own tent for Y1000. Pay for camping at the Information Desk in the hotel. The campground is beautiful and sits right on the Sea of Japan. The clear blue waters are breathtaking and pretty good for scuba diving. The campground has Western-style bathrooms, a shower, outdoor hot baths, a playground, grills, outdoor sinks, and a walking path. There's a lighthouse and a shrine nearby, as well as souvenir shops and restaurants. The hotel has a restaurant and a hot bath that is open to campers. There is an aquarium and white, sandy beaches within walking distance. The coastal roads are great for biking.
Getting there: follow the directions to Lake Towada. Once you reach the lake, turn left. Follow this road around the lake, then turn left onto Rte. 103. Take Rte. 103 to Odate, once in downtown Odate, turn left onto Rte. 7. Stay on Rte. 7 until you see the signs for Hachiryu. Turn right onto Rte. 101. Follow signs to Toga National Park. DO NOT follow the signs to Oga Hot Springs! Rte. 101 will turn into Rte. 55. Stay on Rte. 55 until you see Rte. 59. Turn left onto Rte. 59. Follow the winding coastal road until you see the hotel below. Turn right into the park. Driving time is about 5 and 1/2 hours.

NAKANOHAMA CAMPING GROUND: also located in the Rikuchu Kaigan area, Miyako has many points of interests. This campground is right next to Meyunoto Beach. The walkway runs through the seaside to Jodogahama Beach. Along this trail, there is “Candle Rock,” which is shaped like a candle and is 40 meters tall; “Shiofuki Hole,” which shoots up seawater as high as 30 meters every time rough waves hit the rock, and Anagsaki Cliff which is a 60 meter high Rias-style cliff. The name of “Jodogahama “ comes from a story about 300 years old. A Buddhist priest was so moved by this white beach that he called it the “shore of paradise.” An interesting characteristic of this beach is that there is no sand; the beach is filled with white rocks and pebbles. You can enjoy swimming or take a sightseeing boat from this beach.
You probably need to make a reservation for weekends during a Japanese summer vacation. There are some flush toilets and coin showers available. Another beautiful area is the Jodogahama Beach. There are several trails, tour boats, as well as a white stone beach protected by unique rock formations. Kids will love to go wading here! There are restaurants and picnic areas also.
Getting there: follow the directions to Hachinohe. Continue south on Rte. 45 all the way to Miyako city. Right after the second tunnel, turn left. The road is very narrow. If you drive a little farther, you will get to the beach or camp site. Jodogahama Beach is about a half hour farthur south of Kitayamazaki.

RIKUCHU KAIGAN NATIONAL PARK: this beautiful park runs almost the entire length of the east coast of Iwate Prefecture, a total of 180 km or 112 miles. Kitayamasaki Coast is known for its natural rock arches. The park area at Kitayamasaki offers a spectacular view, with steps that lead down to the ocean near the bottom of the first arch. Rikuchu Kaigan offers both primitive and better-equipped camping and picnic areas. South of Kitayamasaki, there is a resort hotel as well as a tour boat, the Rikuchumaru, which only costs Y100 a person for a one-hour cruise.
Getting there: follow the directions to Hachinohe. Continue south on Rte. 45, past Hachinohe, Hashikami, and Kuji. You’ll be heading south towards Miyako. Look for the green signs that point out entrances to the park. Take the first one you see and follow it to the coast. Once there, you’ll be on a loop that goes both north and south, both ends of which end up back on Rte. 45. To get to the rock formations at Kitayamasaki, follow the coastal road south until you see a “three diamond” gas station. Turn left just before the gas station, and you’re there. Leaving the Kitayamasaki coast and continuing on the coastal road south about 13 km.

CAPE TAPPI: located at the tip of the Tsugaru peninsula, weather is often very harsh with strong winds. There is a windmill that makes electricity there. If the weather is nice, you can see Hokkaido. The ocean is very clear and blue. Seikan Tunnel Museum displays the big machine which actually dug the under-the-sea tunnel. You can also take a ride into one of the side tunnels dug during the construction of the tunnel; it takes about 45 minutes. Once or twice a day, a one hour trip is offered through the under-the-sea tunnel station. The scenery from the cape is very beautiful as long as the weather is nice.
Getting there: follow the general directions to Aomori city. In Aomori city, Rte. 4 turns into Rte. 7 and Rte. 280. Take Rte. 280 all the way. Rte. 280 turns into Highway 339 at the cape. There is a camping ground, but even on the nicest day, the strong wind may pick up in the evening. The Kanranzan Family park is located just south of the cape. It has two camping sites; one along the beach and another behind the hill. The behind-the-hill site is small but very nice. The toilets were Japanese style, but they were very clean. Just like any other

place, it is best to make a reservation if you go during a peak period. Keep in mind however, they do not speak English. Tel: 0174-22-3815.

BEACHES

NOHEJI BEACH: approximately 600 meter sandy beach with breakers, located in Noheji. **Getting there:** take a train on the JR Tohoku Line to Noheji Station. Then take a Shimokita Kotsu bus bound for Tanabu and get off at Noheji Shucchou-sho. By car, it is one hour from the Tohoku Highway Interchange (I.C.)

GAPPO PARK: this beach is 150 meters long, located in Aomori city. The park is lined with pine trees and other greenery. **Getting there:** by car, it is 25 minutes from the Tohoku Highway Aomori I.C.

TSUBAKIYAMA BEACH: this man-made beach has beautiful white sand and is lined with pine trees, located in Hiranai Town. **Getting there:** take a JR Tohoku Line train to Kominato Station. From there, take an Aomori Shi-ei bus bound for Natsudomari and get off at Tazawa. By car, one hour from Tohoku Highway Aomori I.C.

AJIGASAWA TOWN BEACH: a beautiful 350 meter beach with white sand and green grass, located in Tanaka-machi, Ajigasawa Town. **Getting there:** a 5-minute walk from JR Ajigasawa Station. Or by car, 1 1/2 hours from Tohoku Highway Owani/Hirosaki I.C.

TAIRADATE BEACH: clear blue water and Hottokegawa (the Buddhist Coast Line) can be seen in the distance, in Tarou Uemonzawa, Tairadate Village. **Getting there:** Take a Tsugaru Strait Line train and get off at Kanita Station. Or take a Aomori Shi-ei bus bound for Kamiiso and get off at Tairadate Toudai. By car, it is 1 1/2 hours from the Tohoku Highway Aomori I.C.

HIKING

Always have water, warm clothing, sturdy footwear, high energy snacks, sunscreen, first aid kit, bug repellant, matches, rain gear, compass, map, etc. Plan your route beforehand, never hike alone, and tell someone of your intended trail and time of return. Know of dangerous or poisonous bugs, plants and or snakes in the area and how to treat an injury. Basic first aid is recommended for everyone.

MT. IWAKI:
This one-hour hike is accessed by chairlift. Breathtaking views of Aomori's tallest mountain (1625m). **Getting there:** follow the general directions to Hirosaki. As you come into Hirosake on Rte. 7, you'll see signs for Mt. Iwaki. Follow Iwaki Machi (street) past Dake Onsen and up to the Iwaki Skyline to the chairlift. There is a fee of about Y1500 to drive up the Skyline.

SHIRAKAMIDAKE WORLD HERITAGE SITE:
About a 6-hour very challenging hike through Aomori's famous beech wood forest. Great 360-degree view at the top. Located about 5 km south of Juniko along Route 101. At the Cosmo gas station, turn east, keep right and follow road to parking lot at end.

KUROKUMA NO TAKI (Black Bear Falls):
A 20-minute walk in Aomori's famous beech wood forest leads to this beautiful waterfall. It's a 50-minute drive south of Ajigasawa on Route101.

HAKKODASAN, KODAKE & TAKADA ODAKE:
A very challenging and beautiful 8-hour hike that takes you to the peaks of Kodake and Takada Odake. Starts at Sukayu Onsen, (on the road between Aomori and Lake Towada on Highway #103, and ends at Yachi Onsen so you will need 2 cars; 1 to drop off and 1 to pick up.

FUKKOSHI EBOSHITOZAN:
A tough but beautiful (508m) trail that offers a variety of terrain, from open rocky areas to dense forest. Surrounded with plants, flowers and wild life: snakes, foxes and even bears.
Getting there: take a Shimokita Kotsu Bus from JR Ominato Fukkoshi Station to Eboshitaira. It's a 30-minute walk from there.

NUIDOUISHIYAMA:
A 6-hour steep, advanced trail on a huge rock formation from the top of which is a spectacular view of the Shimokita Peninsula.
Getting there: from Kawauchi, turn left at Hata Town to Kawauchi Dam and past the plateau. Right after the small bridge, follow the twisting road up, about 10 minutes, and park at the fire prevention sign. The beginning of the trail is marked with blue cloth. The trail is easy to follow once you find it.

CLIMBING

Mount Fuji: it is impossible to live in the Kanto Plain and ignore Fuji-san. This nearly perfect symmetrical form has come to be a symbol of Japanese culture. Despite the beauty of Mt. Fuji, it is a challenging climb which requires preparation and caution to ensure a safe, enjoyable trip. First, look at yourself objectively. Are you up to a fairly demanding climb involving several hours of steady exertion? If you are in moderately good condition, you should be able to make it. The official climbing season is from 1 July until 31 August. For the recreational climber, this is the best time to go since all facilities will be open. Weather can ruin your climb and make things extremely dangerous on the slope. Storms and plunging temperatures are fairly common, particularly at night. Keep track of the weather and have extra clothing and rain gear. Use the forecasts and postpone your trip during marginal conditions. There is a fine line between adequate clothing and equipment and over-preparation. Too much gear will make a tough climb even tougher. We used the following list from the Recreation Center and it seemed to provide the necessities without being overloaded.

* Hiking boots
* Medium-sized backpack (no frame)
* Rain gear
* Two canteens with belt
Sunglasses
Sun lotion
Jacket for the top of the mountain

Utility gloves
* Flashlight with extra batteries and bulb
Band aids and ace bandage
High protein foods and aspirin

10-15,000 yen for expenses
5,400 yen round trip tolls (includes 2,200 yen round trip Fuji admission)
Walking stick 1,000 yen (stamps for the stick are available at each station for 100 yen)
Station huts: for overnight stay or weather emergency; about 4,000 yen admission
* These items can be rented from MWR

Getting there: Travel Time offers at least one or two "climbing Mt. Fuji" trips during the summer. If you're going on your own (from Tokyo), take the Ome Line from Fussa to Tachikawa and switch to the Chuo Line. Ride to Shinjuku Station. From there, Kawaguchi-ko Station can be reached in around two hours by express train or by express bus. If going by car, be sure to have a GOOD road map of the area. From Yokota, get on the Chuo Expressway and drive toward Kofu (away from Shinjuku & Tokyo). About 45 km after the Hachioji entrance, start watching for the Otsuki Junction-interchange where the Chuo splits. Bear left towards Kawaguchi-ko. Continue on the expressway to Exit 2, about 11 km. You will see a large amusement park (Fujikyu Highlands) to your left. The one-way toll will be about 2000 yen. After the toll gate you will reach a T-intersection. Go left on Route 138 to reach Lake Yamanaka. A right turn will take you towards the town of Kawaguchi-ko, the other four lakes and the road to Mt. Fuji.

THE HAKKODA MOUNTAINS

The Hakkoda mountains are part of the larger Nasu Volcanic System. It can be divided into two parts - North and South Hakkoda. Ten mountains comprise the North Hakkodas: Odake (1585m); Takada-Odake, Idodake, Akakuradake, Maedake, Tamoyachidake, Kodake, Iodake, Ishikuradake and Hinadake. Six mountains make up the South Hakkodas, Kushigamine being the foremost among them. The various mountains have their own distinctive shapes, some conical, some table-top. The three evenly-spaced and craterless peaks of Kodake, Takada-Odake and Hinadake are particularly rare for a volcanic range. The foothills of the Hakkoda Mountains spread beautifully in all four directions. As a result, there are numerous rivers. Their upper stretches contain many canyons and waterfalls. Vestiges of the mountains' volcanic origins can be found everywhere in the hot springs and the steaming fissures of places like Jogokunuma. Beech forests line the hills up to an average height of 1000 meters above sea level, above which the vegetation changes to coniferous trees such as the Aomori Todomatsu fir. In the high mountain areas more than 1400 meters above sea level, there is a wealth of creeping pine and a mixture of shrubs such as rowan and mountain alder. Also, with vast areas of wetlands, there is a rich abundance of wetland vegetation. A large part of the Hakkoda district falls within the Towada-Hachimantai Naito National Park. Off-road driving is not permitted in the mountains. You may only use designated sites when making a fire or camping. Although the Hakkoda Mountains are well equipped with tourist facilities, the climate can be extreme. Hikers and climbers should allow plenty of time when planning their schedule and should be fully prepared in case of rain or snow.

HAKKODA REST PASTURE:
Japanese short-horn cattle are raised on this farm, grazing the fresh mountain grass and breathing the cool highland air. The resulting - " Hakkoda Beef" is a brand which enjoys a very good reputation. A barbeque is held during the "Hakkoda Farm Festival" in July.

MOYA PLATEAU:
The panoramic view of Aomori City is not the only attraction of the Moya Plateau. In September, you can enjoy one of the largest fields of Cosmos flowers to be found in Japan. In winter, the ski area is a short drive from downtown Aomori and attracts crowds of young people and families. In olden times, the Moya Plateau is also said to have been the home of Oyasu, the female tribal leader who led the resistance against General Sakanoue Tamuramaro. Tamuramaro himself, during his campaign against the Ezo tribe, is attributed with having originated the nebuta**,** now celebrated in Aomori's famous summer festival.

JOGAKURA MOUNTAIN STREAM PASS: the Jogakura river valley is a rough-hewn gorge, surrounded by towering columns of rock. Its water flows fast and deep and there are many beautiful waterfalls. You can sometimes glimpse Japanese mountain goats on the precipitous slopes. Approximate hiking time from the Hotel Jogakura to Sukayu: 4 hrs. 40 min. The season: mid June - late October. Before hiking the valley, please register with administration staff at either Jogakura or Sukayu. Helmets are loaned free of charge. When walking the Jogakura Valley, you should equip yourself as you would for mountain hiking.

MT IWAKI VIEWPOINT: Mt Iwaki is often called the "Mt Fuji of Tsugaru," and this viewpoint affords a full view of its spreading foothills. Sunrise and sunset, in particular, create a breathtaking silhouette.

KANYANO PLATEAU: spreading out at the foot of the Hakkoda Range, this plateau is a popular recreation spot. In autumn, the spacious plateau is the perfect place to relax and gaze at the fall colors of the nearby Hakkoda Mountains.

JIGOKUNUMA (HELL'S MARSH): orginally a volcanic explosion resulted in this crater where nearby hot-spring water later accumulated. A number of blow holes exist as remnants of volcanic activity in the area. Sulfurous gases and hot mineral water spurt from below.

MANJUFUKASHI KONSEIDOW (STEAMED BUNS/KONSEIDO): hot-spring steam is channeled up into wooden boxes; seat yourself on one of these and warm your bones (literally "steam your buns!") . A visit to the nearby Konseido temple is said to bless you with children and restore lost youth.

MT ODAKE: at an elevation of 1585 meters above sea level, is the highest peak in the Hakkoda Mountain Range and offers a 360-degree panoramic view. Many flowers can be found near the summit. Near the summit, Kagaminuma ("Mirror Marsh") is home to the black salamander and the green forest frog.

SECHU-KOGEN (HAKKODA SNOW MARCH) MEMORIAL/KOBATA ARMY CEMETERY: in preparation for the war with Russia, a military snow march was held in the Hakkoda Mountains January 23-25, 1902, to accustom the troops to severe winter conditions. During the

harsh weather, 197 of the 210 members of the 5th Infantry Regiment perished in one of Japan's worst military disasters. The memorial contains exhibits of photographs and articles documenting the disaster. The army cemetery at nearby Kobata contains the graves of 199 victims of the disaster. Open: April - September (0800-1800), October, November (0900-1700), closed: Tuesdays, December - March.

HAKKODA SNOW MARCH MEMORIAL STATUE: in January 1902, disaster befell the 210 soldiers of the 5th Infantry Regiment's 2nd Battalion while on maneuvers in the Hakkoda Mountains. Rescuers came upon the rigid form of a soldier frozen in the snow. The soldier was Corporal Fusanosuke Goto and he was on his way to get help. Officers from all over Japan gave donations and commissioned sculptor Ujihiro Okuma (known for his statue of Masujiro Omura in Yasakuni Shrine) to make the memorial statue for the 5th Infantry Regiment which stands today (at a height of 7 meters) in recognition of the fallen soldiers. From here, you can look out over Tashiro Plateau, or back over the downtown Aomori area.

RYUGIN MARSH / TASHIROTAI WETLANDS: located alongside the walking path at the start of the Tashirotai Wetlands, the water of Ryuginnuma is crystal clear. There are three wooden walkways through the Tashirotai Wetlands. The area is also home to badgers and foxes. Visitors should wear appropriate, i.e. waterproof, footwear.

AOMORI CITY TASHIROTAI YOUTH CAMP: in addition to a sports and games area, there are outdoor cooking facilities and a campfire. The facility is designed to allow schools and other youth groups to enjoy the great outdoors. Season: June 1 - October 31 (reservation necessary) For information, call 0177-34-1111.

Komagome River Source & Gudarinuma (Gudari Marsh): Char live in the small stream and in June the whole area is covered in *rhodendron japonicum.* Everywhere you can feel the breath of nature. There's a mysterious atmosphere to this little-known marsh. You can fish here, and it's a 20 minute walk from the main Tashiro Plateau road.

SKI RESORTS

For the skier, Northern Japan offers a lot of excellent skiing. Outdoor Recreation offers ski trips and rentals in the winter. There is also the very popular Mogul Mashers Ski Club on base. ContactOutdoor Recreation at 226-9378.

HAKKODA SKI RESORT:

This has always been one of the most exciting places to ski. Mt. Tamoyachidake (1,324m) is one of the mountains that make up the Hakkoda Chain. It takes about 10 minutes to the top of the mountain by ropeway. This resort is very big, and the natural attributes of the mountain are used advantageously. The scenery is excellent. In winter, one 3.5 km direct course and one 5 km forest course are open. In spring, other courses are open that are closed during winter. This resort is mostly for intermediate and advanced skiers. There are only a few beginners' slopes. The courses are sign-posted with boards, poles, and tape, and the area is toured by the ski patrol regularly. If this is your first time going, you should go with someone who has already skied here before. One of the best things about Hakkoda is its spring skiing from April on. On days when the weather is great, you can feel really refreshed. At the bottom of the mountain next to the ropeway is a lift which leads to a run which is suitable for practicing. Tel.: 0177-38-0343

Getting there: one hour by bus from the JR Aomori Train Station

YAKUSAWA SKI RESORT:
Although this is a small ski area, the views of the Tsugaru Plain are wonderful. The amount of time waiting for lifts is minimal. This resort has trails for all levels, and is a good place to practice. The length is 2,000m. Snowboards are allowed on all trails, and there is a half-pipe. This resort is very economical because you can buy lift tickets by the hour.
Phone: 0172-83-2224
Getting there: 40 minutes by bus from the JR Hirosaki Station

KAMAFUSEYAMA SKI RESORT:
This resort has very beautiful scenery. With Mutsu Bay laid out in front of you, it feels like you will land in the water as you ski down the mountain. There are many types of trails here suitable for all levels of skiers. The length is 1,500m. Snow boards are allowed on all trails.
Phone: 0175-24-1881
Getting there: 10 minutes by bus from the JR Ominato Station.

AJIGASAWA SKI RESORT:
This is a resort with a versatile layout. There is a gondola as well as high-speed lifts and a restaurant, making this a resort with great facilities. The resort has few advanced runs, mostly beginning and intermediate. Snow boards are allowed, but not on all runs. There is a snow boards-only run. Expect it to be crowded on the weekends.
Phone: 0173-72-1011
Getting there: 40 minutes by bus from the JR Hirosaki Station.

OWANI SKI RESORT:
This is the biggest resort in Aomori. Actually composed of two resorts, (you can use your lift ticket at both) there are 17 courses comprising all skill levels, including super-advanced runs. Snowboards are ok on all runs, and there is a half-pipe and board park.
Phone: 0172-47-5251 (Kokusai), 0172-47-6800 (Ajarakogen)
Getting there: 5 minutes by car from Owani Onsen Station

JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS

The strategy in combative sports in Japan is to passively take advantage of an opponent's power by making it work against him. The principal technique of the martial arts is that of pulling: the tugging of one's opponent in judo, the pulling motion on the sword in kendo, the pulling actions in karate, etc. It is supposedly the same motion used when tilling a field with a hoe. It is also contrary to the Western approach of charging aggressively forward: the lancing of the sword in fencing, the thrusting of the fists in boxing, etc. The latter motion is used by men and animals when they fight. Judo, kendo, archery, karate and other Japanese martial arts were originally to protect oneself from personal attack. Later they developed into disciplines of the mind and body under the influences of Buddhism and Confucianism. These martial arts thus possess both a physical, practical aspect - the techniques and methods of defense - and a spiritual aspect - ethics and morals. As in all sports, martial arts teach the meaning and importance of fair play, loyalty, and honor. They have now come to be enjoyed like most other sports.

AKIDO: originated by Morihei Ueshiba. It places great emphasis on the spiritual aspect and has been called “Zen in motion.” Aikido, while a martial art, is not merely a matter of technique. It also teaches correct breathing and meditation, and is a way of “encountering the enery of the universe.” The movements are similar to those of Buyo, a classical Japanese dance. Ki, or “life force” emanates from the practitioner’s fingertips.

Classes available:
Practice: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 1830 - 2000
Place: Misawa City Gymnasium
Fee: Initial - 3000 yen, Monthly - 2000 yen
Sports Insurance 1300 yen (per year)
Contact: Naomitsu Miyano, 52-4075

JUDO: is a self-defense art in which no weapons are used. It is a system of punches, kicks, throws and holds by which one subdues one’s opponent. The basic principle of Judo is “strength and softness.” It is a sport which trains both the body and mind, and since 1882 when it became organized, it has attained great popularity throughout the world.

Classes available:
Youth Group (Elementary, Junior High and High School students)
Practice: Monday through Friday, 1700 - 1900
Sunday and 2nd & 4th Saturday, 0900 - 1100
1st, 3rd & 5th Saturday, 1400 -1600
Place: Misawa City Martial Arts Center
Fees: Initial - 2000 yen, monthly - 1500 yen
Contact: Katsushi Nakamura, 53-5111

Adult Group (Junior High School students and above)
Practice: Monday through Friday, 1700 - 1900
Sunday and 2nd & 4th Saturday, 0900 - 1100
1st, 3rd & 5th Saturday, 1400 - 1600
Place: Misawa City Judo Hall
Fees: Initial - 3000 yen, monthly - 2000 yen
Contact: Katsushi Nakamura, 53-5111

KARATE: was originally thought to have been developed as a means of attack and defense by the people of Okinawa, who at one time were forbidden to carry weapons. It is generally considered to be extremely aggressive, but the famous karate master, Gichin Funakoshi taught the maxim that “there is no first strike in karate.” When two or more people practice karate together, this is called kata, or formal exercise.

Classes available: Seidokan
Practice: Monday, Wednesday, 1900 - 2100
Saturday - 1800 - 1930
Place: Misawa City Gymnasium Martial Arts Hall
Fee: Monthly - 5000 yen
Contact: Kunio Tachizaki, 59-2956

Misawa Karate Association
Practice: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 1800 ~ 1930
Place: Misawa City Martial Arts Center
Fee: Initial - 2000 yen, Monthly - 2000 yen
Contact: Takashi Suzuki, 57-1375

KENDO: is the art of Japanese sworsmandship practiced by the samuri together with their philosophy of life. The body is protected by a mask, arm padding, and a chest plate. A bamboo sword is used in place of a real weapon during the training period. The winner wins by striking his opponent's mask, arm or body with the correct combination of force (physical and spiritual), bodily posture and sword position.

Classes available:
Youth Group (Elementary School students)
Practice: Monday through Friday, 1700 - 1830
Place: Misawa City Working Women's Hall
Fee: Monthly - 2000 yen
Contact: Tadaaki Koori, 53-3387

Asagumo Group (Elementary School students)
Practice: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 1800 - 1930
Place: Misawa City Martial Arts Center
Fee: Monthly - 3000 yen
Contact: Yasuji Nakao, 57-0875

Misawa City Kendo Association (all ages)
Practice: Wednesday, 1930 - 2100
Place: Misawa High School
Fee: Free
Contact: Tadaaki Koori, 53-3387

SUMO: (or Japanese wrestling), is Japan's national sport. In olden times, sumo was associated with the art of divination; the winner's village was supposedly favored with a good harvest. Nowadays, sumo is a sport only. Over the past two decades a handful of foreign participants have climbed into the sumo ring. Akebono, a native of Hawaii, attained the highest rank in sumo, and became the first foreign yokozuna. The unique combination of ancient ceremony and the tremendous power of the wrestlers themselves makes it a marvelous and exciting spectacle.

Terms used in Sumo:

Shiore: salt container. Before each bout, the wrestlers scatter salt in the ring to purify it. About thirty kilograms of salt is used in this way every day during a tournament.

Chikaramizu: this is the special name for the water the sumo wrestlers refresh themselves with before each bout. The winner of the previous bout and one of the wrestlers from the following bout serve it in ladles to the wrestlers in the ring.

Sonkyo: this squatting posture was a way of showing respect in the olden days.

Shiko: when the wrestlers raise their legs high and stamp them down onto the ring, they are symbolically crushing any evil spirits that may still be lurking there.

Chirichozu or chiri: when the wrestlers clap their hands twice and spread out their arms with their palms visible, they are showing that they are carrying no concealed weapons.

Shikiri: this is when the wrestlers squat down on their marks and glare at each other, trying to "psych each other out." This action is repeated along with the stamping and scattering the salt.

Basic rules: the winner is the one who first makes his opponent step outside the ring or touch the ground (in or out of the ring) with any part of his body except the soles of his feet.

Sumo ceremonies:
Dohyoiri: this ceremony takes place before each tournament begins. The yokozuna, or grand champions, enter the ring one by one, accompanied by their herald, tsuyuharai and swordbearer, tachimochi, and give a special performance with actions unique to sumo.

Yumitori, or bow dance: performed at the end of the tournament after all the matches are over. It is done to purify the ring, and is usually carried out by a wrestler from a lower division.

Sumo ranking: Sumo wrestlers all belong to training stables called heya, and a wrestler never fights another from the same heya. Yokuzuna is the highest rank a wrestler can achieve, and even if he records a makekoshi (eight or more losses) in a tournament, he cannot be demoted. However, yokuzuna always retire as soon as their performance starts to become unworthy of their rank. Ozeki wrestlers are demoted if they record two successive makekoshi. A wrestler is promoted if he wins eight or more of the fifteen bouts that make up one tournament. Sumo ranks, beginning at the top, are as follows: Yokozuna, Ozeki, Sekiwake, Komusubi, Maegashira, and Juryo.

Off base classes:
Practice: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 1730 ~ 1930
Place: Misawa City Martial Arts Center
Fee: Free
Contact: Kunio Yamazaki, 53-5111

Local amateur events: In various cities throughout Northern Japan, amateur Sumo wrestlers participate in tournaments, normally in the summer months (June - Sept.) Cities where these tournaments take place include Towada, Hachinohe, Sannohe, Tojohi and Takko-machi. You'll be able to complete the round-trip to these tournaments on a tank of gas or less. The events are normally held outdoors so you are encouraged to bring adequate clothing for local weather conditions. These events are usually in conjunction with a local festival, so food and refreshments should be available. Admission to the tournaments is free. To receive more information on upcoming events, or if you're interested in becoming an amateur Sumo, please contact TSgt. Tom Zabel at DP 226-4130 or HP 222-5403.

TOWADA MOTOCROSS TRACK: Memberships available: Summer: Y5000, daily: Y1000 Races are held weekly/monthly. Toilets and cookout area available.
Getting there: go past the train station, continue left at light after Jetski shop. Continue until you come to the Rokunohe Apple Orchard sign on the left, a small red apple. Turn left at sign. Follow road until it ends at a busy intersection. Take a right at the stop sign. Take a left at the "TCM" building. Follow that road through a small town, you'll come out in a rice paddy. Look for big blue/green machinery on left and take the right directly across from it. Follow road until it comes to a stop light. Take a left. Pass Circle K, go through light and up a hill. Look for a big ugly fish sign on right, and turn right at the fish sign. Follow road until it ends. You will pass a 4-way intersection, see a boat, then the road turns to gravel. Veer left through the woods and there you will find the track. Length of drive: 30-40 minutes from Misawa.

HOT SPRING RESORTS/SPAS

There are many great spas in Northern Japan, ranging from old-world rustic to luxurioius modern facilities. Be aware that there may be language difficulties if you try to telephone.

ASAMUSHI SPA RESORT:
Beautiful view of Mutsu Bay; famous throughout Tohoku
Location: Asamushi, Aomori Telephone: 0177-52-3259

JOGAKURA SPA RESORT:
In the Hakkoda Mountains - beautiful rose garden; try the rainbow trout
Location: Arakawa, Aomori Telephone: 0177-38-0658

SUKAYA SPA:
Perfect base for hiking and skiing; grand bathing chamber
Location: Mt. Hakkoda, Aomori Telephone: 0177-38-6400

KANSUIZAWA SPA:
Located in the Hakkoda Mountains, popular with skiers and hikers
Location: Aomori Telephone: 0177-38-2233

TASHIRO MOTOYU SPA:
Tashirotai Heights, on the far side of Hakkoda, medicinal waters
Location: Aomori Telephone: 0177-66-0506

HAKKODA SPA:
Surrounded by livestock farms and wetlands
Location: Aomori Telephone: 0177-38-8288

MIDORIGAOKA SPA:
Elevated location offers a great view of Hirosaki
Location: Hirosaki Telephone: 0172-32-6258

KUNIYOSHI SPA:
Perfect view of Mt. Iwaki; gateway to the Shirakami Mountains. Beech forest.
Location: Hirosaki Telephone: 0172-86-2005

KOZAWA RYUJIN SPA:
Near Kudoji Temple, first of Tsugaru's 33 Kannon temples
Location: Hirosaki Telephone: 0172-88-2268

AONI SPA:
This lovely Japanese inn is nestled in the mountains beside the Aoni Stream. There is no electricity, the rooms are lit by oil lamps in the evening. The hot baths are open 24/hours a day. Towels and soap are provided, but bring your own shampoo. You can check-in after 1500. A traditional Japanese dinner is served in the main dining room at 1800. You can order beer or soft drinks; they will be charged to your room. A Japanese breakfast is served at 0730. If you visit Aoni in the winter, the inn can only be reached by snowmobile. After parking in a lot on Rte. 102, you hop a snowmobile for a 20 minute ride through the

mountains. In the summer, the cost for an overnight stay is Y7500, plus tax, per person. In the winter, the charge is Y100,000, plus tax, per person. Children cost slightly less.
Getting there: in summer, follow the general directions to Lake Towada, then continue on Rte. 102 around the east side of the lake, heading towards Kuroishi and Hirosaki. About 10 miles before Kuroishi, there will be a sign, in English, for Aoni Onsen on the right. Turn right, the onsen is about 5 km from Rte. 102. Look carefully for the onsen signs. In the winter, take the toll road to Aomori, then get on the Tohoku Expressway heading south. Exit at Kuroishi. Shortly after the exit, there will be a sign for Aoni. There is a parking lot just off Rte. 102, where the snowmobile will pick you up.
Location: Kuroishi Telephone: 0172-54-8588

ITADOME SPA:
A beautiful view; close to Aseishi Dam
Location: Kuroishi Telephone: 0172-54-8622

OCHIAI SPA:
On the outskirts of the city in the mountain foothills
Location: Kuroishi Telephone: 0172-54-8211

CHOJU SPA:
Family resort
Location: Kuroishi Telephone: 0172-54-8437

NURUYU SPA:
Overnight accommodation; public baths; medicinal benefits
Location: Kuroishi Telephone: 0172-54-8622

SAMBONYANAGI SPA:
No-frills medicinal bathing in a rustic setting
Location: Iwaki Telephone: 0172-83-2508

Dake Spa:
Medicinal waters; self-catering accommodation available
Location: Iwaki Telephone: 0172-83-2130

HYAKUZAWA SPA:
Next to Mt. Iwaki Shrine; large public bath
Location: Iwaki Telephone: 0172-83-2226

YUDAN SPA:
Quiet location, perfect for recuperating or relaxing
Location: Iwaki Telephone: 0172-83-2234

APPLELAND MINAMIDA SPA RESORT:
All-around leisure facilities featuring Japan’s only Kannon statue in a spa setting
Location: Hiraka Telephone: 0172-44-3711