

(including service) and making today's choices based on today's situation. As a result, companies that have long dominated their sectors are having to step lively if they want to avoid getting overtaken by the new entrants. It should be noted here that market-leader Kirin Brewery, which Fields cites several times as having been stung by the "dry" beer craze, has unleashed a powerful blitzkrieg of new labels this year and seems to be making up for lost time.

In this connection, Fields rails at the

continuing inhibitions against the use of coupons. Here I would disagree. While coupons may be one of the most powerful sales promotion tools in the American marketer's arsenal, my experience has been that they will not attain that kind of prominence in Japan.

Underlying all of this book is the discussion of Japan's "internationalization"—and underlying that the question of what internationalization means. While Japanese markets are becoming more like those in other industrial countries, there

are, as he documents, still numerous differences. Thus the reader is forced to conclude that we are seeing Japanese-style internationalization.

This book has much to recommend it. Fields draws on a lifelong expertise on Japan to link the past with the present, and in so doing he gives us a glimpse of the future.

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Outside Tokyo

Hagi: History and Charm

In the northwest of Yamaguchi Prefecture in Western Honshu, along the Japan Sea coast, lies Hagi. The city is built on a delta where the Hashimoto and Matsumoto Rivers reach the sea and has historic connections with the Meiji Restoration (1868). Surrounded on three sides by mountains, Hagi is worth visiting not only for its historic ties, but also for its scenic setting and understated charm.

Perhaps the main attraction in Hagi is the ruins of Hagi Castle, built in 1604 by Mori Terumoto and toppled in 1874. Today

some gray stone walls and the moat, complete with turtles and lily pads, are all that remain of the Mori clan castle.

The ruins lie in Shizuki-koen Park, which also includes Shizuki Shrine and the Hananoe Tea House. The park is lined with cherry trees which in the early spring make Hagi a well-known spot for *hanami*, or cherry blossom viewing. It is pleasant to stroll around the park, climbing the castle ruins to admire the view of the mountains or winding one's way around to the edge of the park to look out over the sea.

Horiuchi, near the castle, is a district containing many old traditional buildings which can be appreciated for their distinctive Japanese architecture: high white walls and latticework along the facades of the buildings. Many of these buildings were once home to samurai warriors, wealthy merchants and former politicians, as well as some of those instrumental in the Meiji Restoration.

Hagi is a very flat city and the best way to explore it is by bicycle. There are numerous places where bicycles can be rented (usually the cost is around ¥500 per day), including the youth hostel near the castle or from a number of hotels and shops around town. It is easy to get lost in the maze of narrow streets but one is never lost for long, and pedaling around is the best way to stumble across something interesting and to appreciate the tranquil, charming ambience of the old town.

In May and June the air is perfumed with the scent of *natsu-mikan* blossoms.

These summer oranges, a special product of Hagi, with their green leaves against the high white walls, are a colorful sight, enhanced by the delicate fragrance of the blossoms in season. The *natsu-mikan* are quite sour and are often made into marmalade which can be purchased in various shops around the city.

Hagi boasts a lovely beach, Kikugahama, near the castle. The water is clear and warm and while the swimming season "officially" begins in July and ends early in September, the season can be extended due to the warmth of the water. In summer the beach is never crowded with swimmers or sunbathers, but if one seeks solitude, the further one wanders along the beach and away from the castle, the fewer people one is likely to encounter.

Tickling delicacy

There are a few hotels situated along the beach and all have gift shops good for browsing. The street running parallel to the beach has many coffee shops and restaurants, and the hotel on the beach, nearest the castle, has a rooftop beer garden open until 10 p.m. in July and August. Here one can enjoy a drink while watching the light fade over the sea.

Hagi being a port, fishing is an important part of life there. At night one can watch the lights of the fishing fleet out at sea, pulling in the nets which are set out in the morning.

In March the *shiro-uo* or whitebait fish is in season. At this time, during the Shiro-uo Festival, one can sample this Hagi del-





icacy in a unique way: the tiny fish are swallowed whole while still alive. The sensation produced is rather like having the throat tickled from the inside.

There are two large temples in Hagi, located a short distance from the center of town. Tokoji Temple, built in 1691, has some 500 stone lanterns erected in the temple grounds. During the Bon festival on August 15, these lanterns make a most impressive sight when each is lit with a single candle: a stunning sight against the inky night sky. Tokoji Temple is near Shoin Shrine and can be reached by bus from Higashi-Hagi Station.

Garden sanctuary

Daishoin Temple, not far from Hagi Station, was built in 1656 and is known for its beautiful garden and sanctuary. It is shaded by expansive wisteria trees. Here one can see the tombstones of many members of the Mori clan.

About 5 kilometers outside Hagi, heading east from Higashi-Hagi Station, is Kasayama, a small extinct volcano whose crater is thick with dense foliage, providing a cool respite from the sun on a hot day. From atop Kasayama, rising 112 meters up from the sea, one has a commanding view of the many islands off Hagi's shore, among them Aishima (famed locally for its watermelons) and Oshima. Both islands are serviced daily

by ferries leaving from Hagi harbor. The view from Kasayama is superb, a just reward for the walk up from the base of the volcano. The road to the top is winding and steep, and pedaling to the top is recommended only for the energetic.

Kasayama is home to some 10,000 *tsubaki* (camellia) trees of several varieties. When these are in bloom, the profusion of red flowers is a display to rival the view. The camellia blossoms are in their full glory throughout March and during the *Tsubaki-matsuri*, and Kasayama is a famed spot for viewing them.

At the base of Kasayama is Myojin-ike, a small lake connected to the sea and following the ebb and flow of its tides. The lake contains many species of saltwater fish, and in this serene setting the Mori clan established a retreat.

Heading back to Hagi from Kasayama one can stop to look at *Hanshoro*, a reverberatory furnace once used to manufacture metals for shipbuilding and arms production. Built about 130 years ago, this specimen of industrial technology from the past is one of two such furnaces still in existence in Japan today.

For those interested in pottery, Hagi is the home of *Hagi-yaki*, prized for its classic simplicity and subtle glazing. There are a number of potteries in the city, some of which welcome visitors. Near the castle is Jozan Kamamoto, where

one can watch pottery-making and even receive instruction. *Washi* (Japanese handmade paper), lanterns and parasols are also produced here and demonstrations are available. The telephone number is (08382) 5-1666.

There is another pottery which can be visited to see how *Hagi-yaki* is made: Tenpozan is located at Oaza Chintoh 6509, in the vicinity of *Hanshoro*. The telephone number is (08382) 5-0126.

A plethora of shops specializing in the sale of *Hagi-yaki* exists, and most gift shops in the city offer a selection of this famous pottery. Those with a serious interest in Japanese pottery should visit the Saitoan Gallery (next to Kikuya House, a well-preserved example of a wealthy merchant's house from the Edo period). Here, one can find works by master craftsmen as well as pieces created by talented young potters.

Menacing kites

Another item unique to the Hagi area is the Mishima kite. Made on Mishima Island, off Hagi's shore, these paper kites are painted with menacing faces and come in a number of sizes. A seafood restaurant near the Hagi Bridge leading to Higashi-Hagi Station (the restaurant is easy to spot because of its lighthouse) has a massive Mishima kite glaring down on patrons, and is worth visiting if only

to have a look at this magnificent kite. Mishima kites are sold in a few gift shops around town or can be purchased in the toy shop in Tamachi Arcade.

There are a number of large hotels in Hagi, as well as moderately priced *ryokan* and *minshuku*. The Grand Hotel is centrally located and offers rooms for about ¥13,000 per night. The telephone number is (08382) 5-1211. One of the oldest and most traditional *ryokan* in Hagi is Tomitaya, located at Hashimoto 61. Rooms are available from ¥8,000 to ¥12,000 per night. The telephone number is (08382) 2-0025.

There are hundreds of eating establish-

ments throughout the city, offering a wide range of dishes for various budgets. Highly recommended is Ajiro, Hagi's most famous seafood restaurant. Located just north of the Grand Hotel in Imafuru-Hagi, Ajiro offers a varied menu of dishes from the sea. The specialties of the house include *uni-meshi* (from ¥1,500 to ¥2,500), *okoze-ryori* (about ¥6,000) and *fugu-ryori* (from ¥12,000 to ¥15,000).

Hagi is easily reached from Tokyo. The *Shinkansen* stops at Ogori, the journey from Tokyo taking about five-and-a-half hours. From Ogori one can take a bus to Hagi. The trip takes approximately 90 minutes and costs about ¥2,000, one

way. For those approaching Hagi from Matsue, a special express train service is available to Higashi-Hagi Station. The journey from Matsue follows the coast and takes three-and-a-half hours.

For further information about Hagi, please call the Hagi City Tourist Bureau at (08382) 5-1750. The office is located at Emukai 433, near the bus center, and can provide a brief guide to the city, complete with a map in English showing places of interest.

Ethna Gillespie

Assistant English Teacher
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Table Talk

Sushi Restaurant Ojime

Kagurazaka, a sloping street in what used to be a red-light district in Tokyo's Shinjuku subcenter, boasts a number of cosy restaurants offering food at reasonable prices. Ojime is just such a shop, but has the added attraction of offering real Osaka-style *sushi*, a rarity in Tokyo.

The owner, Kenjiro Kato, had a salaried job in one of Japan's top corporations until he gave in to pleas to take over the family business. The condition he set for carrying on the family business, I understand, was that he be allowed to run the business in the way he wished.

He says, "Only those people who appreciate the taste of my food qualify as my customers." This rather uncompromising approach—similar to that of long-established restaurants in France and Italy—is rare in Japan. As far as I know, there are no other shops which have so boldly and tenaciously stuck to the owner's philosophy of "maintaining the standard of taste."

The shop is open only from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The proprietor, who uses the same cook as his father did, himself supervises the business every day wearing an apron. He believes that opening sev-

en-and-a-half hours a day is enough. Working longer hours would be a strain and would lower the quality, which would let down customers, he says.

The restaurant makes it a rule to use only fresh ingredients obtained the same day. It stocks only enough for each day and carries nothing over to the next day. If it runs out of food before the day is over, it simply closes. It does not undertake home delivery. One reason, according to the proprietor, is that "there is no assurance that the food will be kept in good condition."

No flavoring is placed on the table for the use of diners. The only time the shop provides flavoring is when the order is *saba-zushi*. Even then, it is a mere three drops of soy sauce in a tiny dish. It is said that once when a customer asked for more soy sauce, he was abruptly told to leave.

The *chirashi-zushi*, at ¥2,850, is excellent, as well as being pleasing to the eye. The *hako-zushi* and *mushi-zushi* are also beautiful in appearance as well as being delicious. There is nothing, however, to beat the *saba-zushi* from fall to winter. I think it must be one of the best restaurants of its kind in Japan for the taste that is created out of fish and rice. Going into the summer, the item to enjoy is *aji-zushi*.

The rice is always fluffy and lightly vinegar-flavored. It is the work of an artist who takes pains to do the small things right. With *suzume-zushi*, for example, priced

at ¥2,050, the faintly pink color and shape of a small sea-bream topping are beautiful, and the lightly salted flavor is refined.

One reason regular customers like the restaurant is that it does not have the smell of fish and vinegar which is noticeable in most *sushi* restaurants. At Ojime, the *sushi* preparation counter and the customer's table are partitioned with a pane of glass. There is a strong air of cleanliness.

A typical meal for two costs ¥5,000–¥7,000 (\$33–\$47 at the rate of ¥150/\$). German, Italian and French wines, which go well with such *sushi*, are available at reasonable prices.

(Yoshimichi Hori, editor-in-chief)

Address: 6-8 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku-ku
Tel: (03) 260-2568

Business hours: 10:30 a.m.–6 p.m.

Noon–3 p.m. on Wednesdays

Closed Tuesdays

For parties of five or more people, it is best to make a reservation.

