

Outside Tokyo

Away for the Weekend

What can a foreigner do when he or she must spend a weekend in Tokyo between, for instance, business engagements on Friday afternoon and Monday morning?

What not to do: Nikko and Hakone

Well-meaning Japanese friends may suggest a visit to Nikko or Hakone, but a visit to either place is not worth doing. Nikko, the temple complex erected in memory of the first Tokugawa Shogun, Iyasu, was glitz when it was built in the 17th century and is still glitz. Nothing is particularly distinguished in its architecture or art.

Hakone must have been a beautiful mountain area before it was overbuilt, but now it has about as much charm as Miami Beach, unless you are an avid golfer and a Japanese friend

has invited you to play on one of Hakone's excellent courses.

Kamakura

The best short weekend trip from Tokyo, in my opinion, is to Kamakura, which served as the headquarters city of the Shogunate controlled by the Hojo family in the 13th century. The town is now a wealthy suburban community nestled among hills near the sea, filled with architecturally significant temples and artistic national treasures. It can be reached by an express train from Tokyo Station in about one hour.

The first step in an excursion to Kamakura should be to your hotel bookshop to buy Michael Cooper's *Exploring Kamakura* (¥1,200). The second step is to put on comfortable walking shoes. With Cooper's volume in hand, on Saturday or Sunday morning proceed to Tokyo Station and board the express train for Kamakura. (English language assistance is available at the station if you can't figure out how to buy the tickets or how to board the train).

Get off the train at Kita-Kamakura (Northern Kamakura) Station to see Engaku-ji, a major Zen Buddhist temple founded in 1282. Follow

Cooper's advice about what to see at Engaku-ji, one of the most peaceful places in Japan, and then proceed across the road from the station to the Tokei-ji or Kakekomi-dera, a Buddhist convent where a wife could obtain a divorce in feudal times by living with the nuns for three (later two) years. Tokei-ji is best in late February or March when the plum blossoms bloom. After visiting Tokei-ji, follow Cooper's advice on the other sights of Kita-Kamakura.

From Kita-Kamakura take the "hiking course" (really a wooded path requiring no special hiking skill) from Kita-Kamakura to the famous Great Buddha (Daibutsu), stopping on the way to see Zeni-arai Benten, a charming temple and grotto complex set among wooded hills. Money washed in the temple spring is supposed to double in value. All the washing facilities are provided, and you might as well try your luck with whatever money you are carrying.

On the hiking course you are likely to get lost once or twice. Keep looking for signs which use the Japanese characters for Zeni-arai Benten and Great Buddha set forth in Cooper's book (pages 102 and 144). Don't hesitate to ask and to point to the names of the two temples in English and Japanese. You will find that Japanese travelers will be eager to help, even if they don't speak English.



After the Great Buddha and hopefully before 6:00 p.m., take a taxi or bus to Kamakura Station (the next stop after Kita-Kamakura) and proceed one stop to Zushi, a seaside suburban town. At Zushi Station board a taxi for Hayama (a five-minute ride) and treat yourself to a dinner at the best French restaurant in Japan (in my opinion), La Marée de Chaya (0468-75-6683). La Marée is in a French Riviera style building on a pier overlooking the bay at Zushi, with terrace dining available in warmer months. On clear days the sunset highlights a silhouette of Mt. Fuji looming over the coast. After dinner take the train back to Tokyo.

Izu

The Izu Peninsula juts into the Pacific southwest of Tokyo. The mountains and cliffs of its southern and western coasts are as spectacular as the Big Sur and Carmel areas of California and the water is a lot warmer.

There are three possibilities which I recommend for Izu.

The first is an overnight stay on Saturday night at Osawa Onsen Hotel (05584-3-0121), which, despite the name, is a quaint Japanese hot springs inn near Matsuzaki. Parts of the inn date from the 17th century. To get to Osawa take the Kodama bullet train from Tokyo Station, get off at Mishima and take a taxi or bus to the hydrofoil pier at Numazu. Take the hydrofoil to Matsuzaki and a taxi or bus from Matsuzaki to Osawa.

The second possibility is an overnight stay at the Kawana Hotel, an improbable but beautiful hotel at the top of the Izu cliffs near the town of Ito. Externally, the Kawana is reminiscent of the Biltmore at Santa Barbara. Internally, it resembles a German hunting lodge. It is impeccably managed by the Okura chain and features golf on one of the best courses in Japan, walks along the cliffs, tennis and a swimming pool.

To get to the Kawana Hotel, take the Kodama bullet train from Tokyo to Atami and switch to the local Izu line, getting off at the Kawana Station.

A third possibility is a stay at Shimoda, the principal town of Izu, where Commodore Perry first landed in 1853. The Prince Hotel is on a good beach near Shimoda and, though bizarre in architecture, is a comfortable place to stay. Shimoda is a good walking town with many opportunities to view Japanese life in a town setting.

To get to Shimoda, take the Kodama bullet train from Tokyo to Atami and switch to the local Izu line, getting off at Shimoda, the last stop.

From any of the above hotels you are within reach by bus or taxi of Southern Izu, where the seacoast is most spectacular. Go by bus to Iihama, Ochiai or Iruma and walk along the sea. In summer the snorkeling is spectacular (you can buy a mask, snorkel, fins, and bathing suit at the sports department at Daimaru Department Store above Tokyo Station). The walking

is good at all times, except the dead of winter when winds are annoyingly strong.

Weekend people watching

Tokyo is a very good city for people watching, especially on Sundays. Go to Omotesando near Harajuku Station to see the young and bizarre. In warm weather stop at the Key West Club about halfway down Omotesando and eat lunch outside on their terrace overlooking the sidewalk. The salads are acceptable, the wines are drinkable, and a mellow Sunday can be well spent watching the crowds pass.

Outdoor weekend dining

For good cuisine outdoors on Saturday or Sunday try the garden of Queen Alice Restaurant (405-9039), reviewed in the Jan/Feb issue of this magazine, or the terrace of A Tantôt, the French restaurant in the futuristic Axis Building in Roppongi, where there is a collection of shops interesting enough to have merited a several page rave review in the *New York Times*.

For a Saturday or Sunday picnic in the city, go to Olympia Supermarket near Harajuku Station on Omotesando, buy wine, cheese, fruit and other food, and proceed into the Meiji shrine. Near the back of the shrine's park, there are attractive meadows where you can picnic happily in quiet nature, framed at a great distance by the skyscrapers of Shinjuku. The effect is something like the Sheep Meadow in New York's Central Park.

Traditional Tokyo

Finally, for those who want to sense the character of traditional Tokyo, spend several weekend hours on the walks described in Sumiko Embutsu's *Discover Shitamachi*, also available in your hotel bookstore (¥1,500). One of my favorite areas is Tsukudajima, a neighborhood across the Sumida River which escaped destruction in the Great Earthquake of 1923 and in the firebombings of World War II because it was an island. Tsukudajima retains the atmosphere of old Tokyo. Another favorite area is Kanda and its bookstores, an excellent place to buy old Japanese prints, rare Japanese or foreign books, and antiques. Follow Embutsu's advice on walking routes.

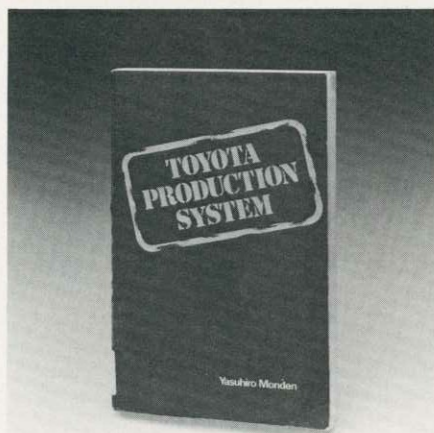
A weekend in Tokyo can be a great deal of fun. If you discover any other interesting things to do, please describe them in a letter to my friend, Mr. Yoshimichi Hori, Editor-in-Chief of this magazine, so that they can form the subject of later articles in this column.

Charles Stevens, senior partner of
the East Asian Group of
Coudert Brothers

Bookshelf

Toyota Production System: Practical Approach to Production Management

By Yasuhiro Monden
Published by Industrial Engineering and
Management Press
1983, Atlanta, Georgia
246 pages; \$31.00



As the title indicates, the focus of this book is Toyota's production management system which has gained such wide-spread fame and been adopted by so many Japanese manufacturing firms that it is now almost synonymous with Japanese production management itself. Last November, University of Tsukuba Professor Monden's book was awarded the "Nikkei Prize for Excellent Books in Economic Science," sponsored jointly by Nihon Keizai Shimbun Inc. and the Japan Economic Research Center.

For operations managers who have hopes of imitating Japanese success stories, and teachers of production operations management who want to integrate Japanese management concepts into their curricula, Professor Monden's book provides a timely and comprehensive coverage of the subject.

Monden first gives us an overview of the goals of Toyota's production management system and then explains in detail the goals. Considerable time is devoted to a discussion of *kanban*, which has been given such big media play in the West. Various types of *kanban* used by Toyota, the basic "pull" operation of a *kanban* system, and several rules to follow are set forth. It becomes clear from the discussion that the *kanban* system actually represents a clever implementation of the traditional reorder point system. However, it differs from the reorder point system by its