

Let's play! How modern sports came to Tokyo

Kanda, Imperial Palace, & Korakuen walking map

Kanda Sports Goods District
Imperial Palace Running Facilities
Nippon Budokan
Tokyo Dome
Yushima Seido

Old Tokyo Walking Guide No.4 English



Learn how sports were introduced to and adopted in Japan

Explore the roots of sports in Tokyo

This map introduces the cultural heritage of sports that can be found in an area of Tokyo closely connected to the introduction and spread of modern sports in Japan. Many sports known and loved today, such as baseball, football, tennis, track and field, table tennis, golf, rugby, volleyball, swimming, skiing, and skating, were introduced to Japan from the West during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). These sports were brought to Japan by foreign instructors and returning Japanese exchange students, and spread thanks to the institutions such as an athletics academy for training instructors and university athletic programs. Moreover, influenced by the entry of foreign sports, traditional Japanese martial arts were gradually modernized into sports such as judo and kendo. The area shown on this map from Ochanomizu to Kudanshita was home to many schools and universities in the Meiji Period, where instructors and students of modern sports gathered. Let's look at how new sports were absorbed and grew in this area during Japan's modernization.

Watch and play

We enjoy sports today as entertainment and leisure activities, and this area is home to facilities where baseball, martial arts, and other sports can be watched, as well as places to play sports and sports shops where equipment can be bought. This guide introduces not only the history of sports, but also many places where sports can be seen and experienced.

The cover image is an explanation of the triple jump in "Methods of Outdoor Play" (1888), edited by Gendo Tsuboi and Seigyō Tanaka. The method was introduced at the time as "hop, step, jump."

Explore Tokyo's sporting heritage

Learn the history of sports

The places introduced in this map are divided into three areas. The first stretches from Ochanomizu's Yushima Seido through Surugadai to Kanda Nishikicho, home to many locations related to the emergence of modern sports in the Meiji Period. The second area is Korakuen, where Tokyo Dome stands at the center of a large entertainment and leisure zone. The third area contains numerous facilities related to playing sports, from the sports goods stores of Kanda Ogawamachi to the running course around the Imperial Palace.

Transit available at nearby stations

- Ochanomizu Station (JR Sobu Line, Chuo Line, Tokyo Metro Marunouchi Line)
- Kanda Station (JR Keihin Tohoku Line, Chuo Line, Yamanote Line, Tokyo Metro Ginza Line)
- Ogawamachi Station (Toei Shinjuku Line)
- Jimbocho Station (Tokyo Metro Hanzomon Line, Toei Mita Line, Shinjuku Line)
- Kudanshita Station (Tokyo Metro Hanzomon Line, Tozai Line, Toei Shinjuku Line)
- Suidobashi Station (JR Chuo Line, Toei Mita Line)



Enjoying "funny ball" at the Kanda Sports Festival. Children, the elderly, and disabled people play together.

Major events in the introduction and spread of sports

1877	The University of Tokyo is founded on campuses in Kanda Nishikicho and Hongo.
1878	The Ministry of Education establishes an athletics academy (taisō denshūjo) in Kanda Hitotsubashi
1880	Tokyo YMCA established
1882	Jigoro Kano establishes Kodokan
1886	The athletics academy is reorganized as the athletics department of the Higher Normal School.
1894	The first Tokyo YMCA building is opened in Kanda
1902	Higher Normal School renamed Tokyo Higher Normal School
1903	The Tokyo Higher Normal School moves from Yushima Seido to Otsuka
1912	Mizuno opens its Tokyo branch in Kanda/Stockholm Olympics are held. Shizo Kanaguri (Tokyo Higher Normal School student, men's marathon) and Yahiko Mishima (Tokyo Imperial University student, men's 100 and 200 meters) represent Japan for the first time
1917	Tokyo YMCA completes new gymnasium with Japan's first indoor pool
1923	Great Kanto Earthquake
1928	Amsterdam Olympics held, Mikio Oda became the first Japanese gold medalist in the men's triple jump/Kinue Hitomi became the first Japanese female medalist with a bronze medal in the women's 800 meters.
1937	Korakuen Stadium opened
1955	Korakuen Amusement Park opened
1964	Tokyo Olympics held, Nippon Budokan opened
1972	Sapporo Olympics held
1988	Tokyo Dome opened
1995	Kanda Sports Festival started
1998	Nagano Olympics & Paralympics held
2007	Tokyo Marathon started

The roots of modern sports in Tokyo

Kanda, Imperial Palace, & Korakuen walking map



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Locations introduced in this guide

Kanda Sports Goods District

Address...Kanda Ogawamachi-Jimbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
WEB...<http://www.sports-kanda.com/>

Imperial Palace Running Facilities

•Kanoya Athlete Restaurant
Address...3-21 Kanda Nishikicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Phone...03-3233-1555
Hours...M-F 11:00-22:00, weekends and holidays 10:00-20:00
WEB...<https://asushoku.com/>

•Inari-yu
Address...1-7-3 Uchikanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Phone...03-3294-0670
Entry...¥460 for adults, ¥180 for children
Hours...M-Sat. 14:50-24:00, Sun. and holidays 14:50-22:30

Nippon Budokan

Address...2-3 Kitonomarukoen, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
Phone...03-3216-5100
WEB...<http://www.nipponbudokan.or.jp/>

Tokyo Dome

Address...1-3-61 Korakuen, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
Phone...03-5800-9999
Hours...differ depending on facilities
WEB...<https://www.tokyo-dome.co.jp/>

Yushima Seido

Address...1-4-25 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
Phone...03-3251-4606
Admission...free
Hours...9:30-17:00 (16:00 in winter)
*Interior of Taiseiden open from 10:00 on weekends and holidays
WEB...<http://www.seido.or.jp/>

"Old Tokyo" Walking Guide #4: Let's play! How modern sports came to Tokyo: Kanda, Imperial Palace & Korakuen

Publisher and contact: the Tokyo Cultural Heritage Alliance
[Address] 2-1 Kanda Nishikicho, Chiyoda, Tokyo 101-0054
[Phone] 03-5224-5450 [FAX] 03-5244-5452
[E-mail] info@tohbun.jp [Web] <http://tohbun.jp>

Text and photos: Sam Holden, Mengfei Pan, Yukiko Osaka, Yoshio Yanagi Design: Studio Pot Published September 25, 2018/4,000 units/2-sided 4-color/Matte coat 90 kg



Discover the roots and development of modern sports in Tokyo

Since the 19th century, various sports were brought to Tokyo from the West. This is how they developed in the city.

1 Sports as cultural heritage

►The introduction of sporting culture in the city's history

Many of the sports people enjoy today came to Japan as part of the country's modernization during the Meiji Period (1868-1912). Western sports such as baseball, football, tennis, track and field, rugby, and boxing were already brought to Japan by the early Meiji Period, and soon became a part of physical education as Japan developed a modern education system. Soon afterward, sports such as baseball found wide popularity among the people.

The roots of many familiar sports can be found in Kanda. Universities were clustered in the surrounding area, leading to the creation of a used book district and sports goods district. Korakuen has long been a center for watching sports at Tokyo Dome, Korakuen Hall, and the old Korakuen Velodrome, and also contributed to the popularity of playing sports such as ice skating, roller skating, bowling, and batting. And as runners around the Imperial Palace have increased, so have facilities catering to them. Let's look at how these sporting cultures are connected to the neighborhood.

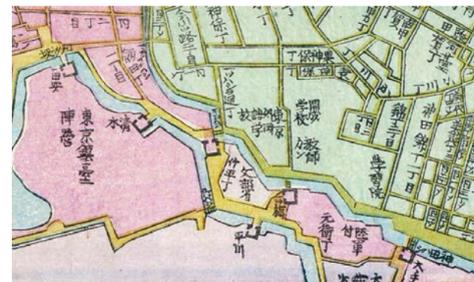
2 The roots of modern sports in Kanda

►Emergence of a student town

In the Edo Period, much of the Kanda area was filled with large samurai estates interspersed with commoner districts. Near what is now Jimbocho was the enormous estate of the Jimbo family, from which the area took its name. In the Meiji Period, schools began to locate on the former estates. The University of Tokyo, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and Gakushin University were all founded on formerly empty land between Hitotsubashi and Kanda Nishikicho, while private universities began to be established to the north in Kanda Surugadai. As a result, the neighborhood became a thriving educational district home to many students. Jimbocho became a used book district where students came to buy and sell textbooks and learning materials.

►Foreign advisors and sports

Educational institutions hired foreign advisors to aid in Japan's modernization, and many of these teachers played a major role in the introduction of sports. The first person to introduce baseball to Japan was the American Horace Wilson, who came to Japan in 1871 and taught at the Kaisei Academy, which later became the University of Tokyo. Frederick William Strange, who came from the United Kingdom in 1875, worked as an English teacher at the Tokyo English Academy, while also advocating for the spread of track and field, boating, and baseball. Strange is considered the father of modern sports in Japan, promoting the idea of sportsmanship and extracurricular sports, his activity laid the foundation for the club activities



Kaisei Academy, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, and the Tokyo Higher Normal School can be seen on this map from 1881 of Kanda Hitotsubashi and Ochanomizu (Kaisei kubun tōkyō saizu, in the collection of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies).



Volleyball at the Tokyo YMCA. Source: Tokyo YMCA Website.

and athletics competitions that are now part of Japanese education. George Adams Leland arrived in Japan in 1878, and as a professor at the athletics academy, where he helped train athletic instructors for schools. The athletics academy was founded by the government in 1878 in present-day Chiyoda Ward, and was Japan's first physical education research and training institute, helping to ensure the expansion of athletics into schools nationwide.

►Tokyo YMCA and sports

The Tokyo YMCA, which began operating in 1880, was instrumental to the introduction and development of modern sports in Japan. The Tokyo YMCA was originally located in Ginza, but in 1894 a new building was completed in Kanda Mitoshirocho. Designed by Josiah Condor, who also designed Nicolai-do Cathedral, the grand red brick building included a hall that could hold 1,000 people. Only the building's gymnasium survived the Great Kanto Earthquake, but the second building became a symbol of the area for decades until its demolition in 2003. Moreover, the Tokyo YMCA played a major role in the spread of basketball and volleyball. Basketball was invented as an indoor sport that could be played during the winter in 1891 by a YMCA instructor in the United States, while volleyball was created in 1895 as a more widely accessible sport. The head of the Tokyo YMCA, Hyozo Omori, brought the two sports back after studying in North

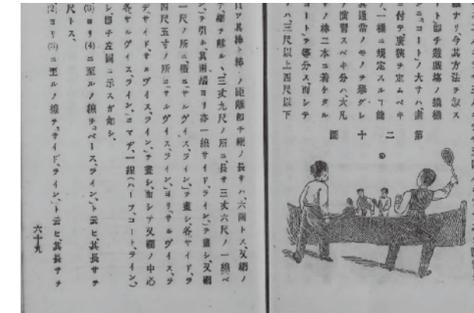


Practice at the pool of the Tokyo YMCA Gymnasium. Source: Tokyo YMCA Website.

3 Translating sports as "play"

►Gendo Tsuboi introduces sports as play

The government-run athletics academy was reorganized within the Tokyo Higher Normal School in the 1880s before becoming the physical education department of the Tokyo University of Education. The superintendent of the Higher Normal School, Gendo Tsuboi, translated the concept of sports as "yūgi," or play, reflecting his belief that sports were about more than building up physical and mental stamina. Tsuboi was also the first person to introduce table tennis to Japan. In 1902 he brought equipment including a racket ball net back from Great Britain and had Tokyo sports goods vendor Mimatsu Shoten produce table tennis equipment, which eventually spread around the country.



Explanation of lawn tennis in "Methods of Outdoor Play" (1888), edited by Gendo Tsuboi and Seigy Tanaka.

►Jigoro Kano and modern sports

Jigoro Kano was head of the Higher Normal School for more than two decades, and is best known for unifying several schools into the single sport of judo. Kano's Kodokan Judo style excluded traditionally favored techniques of striking and locking an opponent, transforming judo away from a practical martial art into a competitive and modern sport. Kano devoted much of his life to promoting physical education alongside intellectual development, serving in positions including the first head of the Japan Sports Association and the first Asian member of the International Olympic Committee.

4 Sports and entertainment

►Korakuen Stadium and professional baseball

In 1937, Korakuen Stadium was built on the former site of an artillery factory. The stadium was specially designed to accommodate baseball, and as the sport and the Tokyo Giants team exploded in popularity, the stadium became the celebrated scene of many famous games and memorable plays. The stadium was also used to host ski jumping on a manmade snow hill, as well as sumo and boxing matches. In 1955 the Korakuen Amusement Park opened nearby, followed by bowling alleys, roller skating rinks, and other sports and leisure facilities that made the area an entertainment center popular with young people.

►Nippon Budokan

Nippon Budokan was constructed in the Kitanomaru Park just north of the Imperial Palace as a result of judo being added as an official sport for the 1964 Olympics. Opened just in time for the Games, the venue was intended as a home for traditional Japanese martial arts, but also became a legendary music venue after the Beatles held a concert here in 1966.

Nippon Budokan soon after completion. Remains of the former army base can be seen in the background.



5 Sports goods shops and sporting culture

►Kanda as a sports town

Sports shops began to appear along Yasukuni Boulevard between Kanda Ogawamachi and Jimbocho after the Second World War. At the end of the Meiji Period, sports equipment manufacturer Mizuno opened its Tokyo branch in Kanda Ogawamachi, but at the time the street was mostly home to shops selling school uniforms and used goods. After the war, around 50 sports shops were established within some 500 meters of the current Mizuno, Minami, and Victoria stores, making Kanda the city's biggest sports goods district. Shops here sell equipment for every type of sport, and shaped Japanese sporting culture by helping to popularize winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding after the 1960s.



Many sports shops are clustered on Yasukuni Boulevard between Kanda Ogawamachi and Jimbocho.

►Marathon boom and Imperial Palace running

Today the circumference of the Imperial Palace is a popular course for runners in Tokyo. In 1964, Kokiichi Tsuburaya earned the bronze medal in the marathon at the Tokyo Olympics, leading to a boom in the popularity of running. Soon after, a 5-kilometer "Imperial Palace Loop Marathon" event was sponsored by clubs and bars in Ginza, whose hostesses competed as athletes. Later, in the 1970s the route became popular among bureaucrats and company workers from nearby offices. After the creation of the Tokyo Marathon in 2007, the palace running route has become extremely popular, with as many as 10,000 people running at peak times. Keeping pace with this demand, there are now running stations, bathhouses, restaurants, and salons catering to these athletes.

Explore Old Tokyo

The Tokyo Cultural Heritage Alliance

The Tokyo Cultural Heritage Alliance (TCHA) brings together business, academic, and government bodies to promote the rich and varied cultural heritage located in north-central Tokyo ("Old Tokyo") and bring new cultural vitality to the area (launched in April 2015). This pamphlet was produced as part of a series to introduce visitors to a unique route that ties together the area's varied cultural heritage.

"Old Tokyo" Walking Guide Series

- #1: Yushima area walking map: Explore the spiritual culture of Old Tokyo/Published 1 April 2017
- #2: Edo-Tokyo's Information Crossroads: "Greater Akiba" Akihabara, Kanda, and Jimbocho/Published July 25, 2018
- #3: Edo-Tokyo, City of water & culture: Ueno, Hongo and Korakuen/Published August 25, 2018

Spot 1

A center of sporting culture

Kanda Sports Goods District

[Address] Kanda Ogawamachi to Jimbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Osaka-based sports equipment manufacturer Mizuno opened its Tokyo branch here in 1912. Numerous other sports retailers soon opened in the area, creating a bustling sports goods district between Kanda Ogawamachi and Jimbocho, centered on the major retailers Mizuno, Minami, and Victoria. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics and 1972 Sapporo Olympics resulted in the increased popularity of amateur sports, and sports retailers adapted to support a boom in skiing and snowboarding between the 1960s and 1990s, and the increase of Imperial Palace runners since the 2000s. Golf, baseball, football and other equipment is also in abundant supply. Since their establishment, the sports shops of Kanda Ogawamachi have always grown and changed together with Japanese sporting culture.



Sports goods shops line Yasukuni Boulevard between Ogawamachi and Jimbocho.

Spot Site of old YMCA

The Tokyo YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) was founded in 1880 as the first YMCA in Japan. Originally located in Ginza, the organization moved to Kanda Mitoshirocho in 1894, where it remained until 2003. Its three-story red brick building, designed by British architect Josiah Condor, was the first gymnasium in Japan with an indoor heated pool, and was used by many Olympians and other athletes.

Spot Kanda Sports Festival

The Kanda Sports Festival began in 1995 as a festival open to everyone. Sports goods shops, local university students, and other groups collaborate to hold participatory events and games. Since 2016, local groups have also hosted the Wakuwaku Festa, bringing together music, books, and sports in Kanda Ogawamachi each year in early October.



The first YMCA, designed by Josiah Condor. Source: Tokyo YMCA website.



The entrance to the Ogawa Plaza during the Kanda Sports Festival. The sports goods shops along Yasukuni Boulevard hold various sales and campaigns.

Spot 2

Tokyo's most popular jogging route

Imperial Palace runner facilities

Around the Imperial Palace, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

The running course around the outside of the Imperial Palace is five kilometers long, with an elevation change of 26 meters. Most runners begin from one of the subway stations such as Sakuradamon, Takebashi, or Hanzomon and run in a counter-clockwise direction. The course is flat from Sakuradamon to Takebashi, before rising towards Chidorigafuchi, flat again until Hanzomon, and declining towards Sakuradamon. It is popular because there are no intersections or traffic lights and it passes famous spots such as Sakuradamon Gate, Nijubashi Bridge, the National Theater, and the National Diet. The contrast between the old moat of Edo Castle and the surrounding modern skyscrapers make this a beautiful course to run at any time of year.

Spot Kanoya Athlete Restaurant

The Kanoya Athlete Restaurant was founded in 2014 as a joint project between Balnibarbi Co., Ltd., the National Institute of Fitness and Sports in Kanoya and the city of Kanoya, Kagoshima. Meals featuring rice, soup, and three main dishes are based on sports nutrition principles for healthy meals.

Spot Inari-yu bathhouse

The Inari-yu bathhouse in Uchikanda is just a stone's throw from the Imperial Palace and a popular spot for runners. Founded in 1956, it features a traditional painting of Mt. Fuji and hot baths that sooth the ache after exercise.



Running station



Kanoya Athlete Restaurant



Inari-yu bathhouse

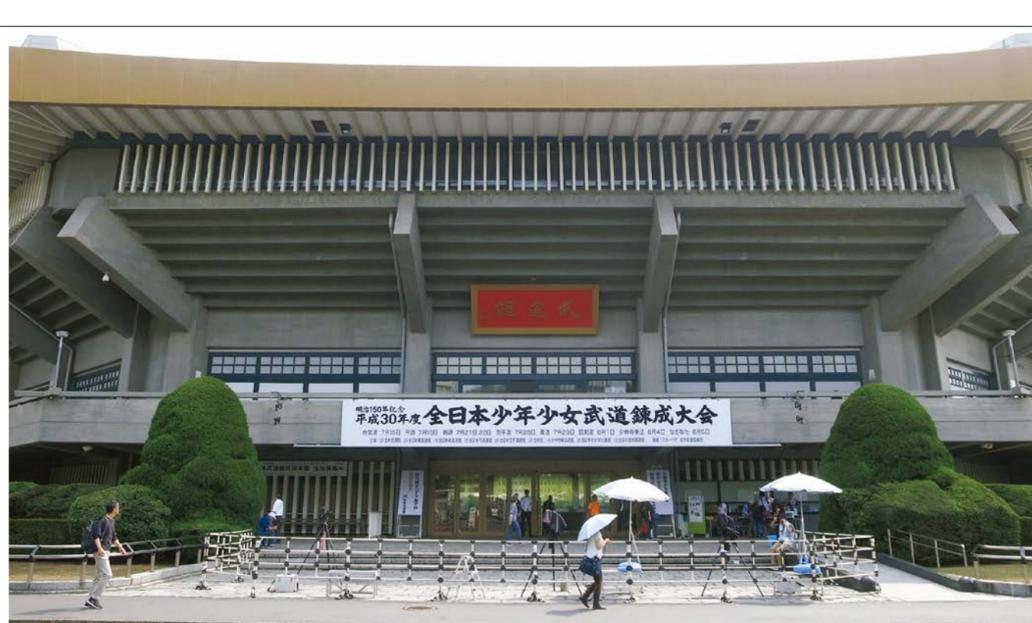
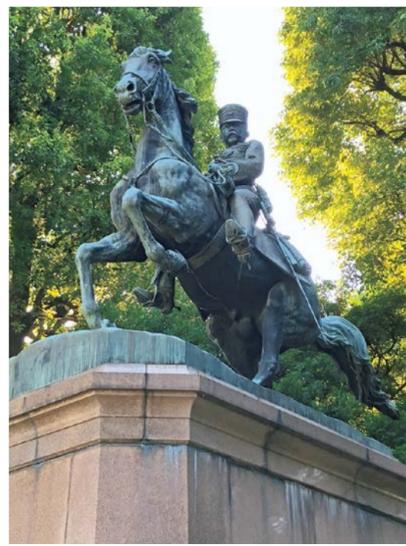
Spot 3

From a military base to a pantheon of sports and music

Nippon Budokan

[Address] 2-3 Kitanomarukoen, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3216-5100

Nippon Budokan was built as a venue for judo at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, opening just before the games on October 3, 1964. In the Edo Period, the area where the Budokan stands was home to the mansion of the Tayasu branch of the ruling Tokugawa family. However, the estate was destroyed after the Meiji Restoration, and became a barracks of the Imperial Guard, one of the first infantry units of the Imperial Army. After World War II, it was decided to turn the former barracks into a public green space near the Imperial Palace. Following the construction of the Budokan in 1964, Kitanomaru Park was opened in 1969.



The Nippon Budokan hosts various concerts and events in addition to martial arts competitions.

Spot Tayasu Gate

The Tayasu Gate faces Yasukuni Boulevard to the north of the Imperial Palace. This L-shaped entryway was built in 1636, and is the oldest remnant of the former Edo Castle.

Spot Remains of the Imperial Guard barracks

Kitanomaru Park began as a feudal estate before becoming an Imperial Guard barracks. The unit's former headquarters building that is now an annex of the Museum of Modern Art, and the park contains several monuments to the army, including a bronze statue of the former commander, Prince Kitashirakawa Yoshihisa.

The Tayasu Gate leads from Kudanshita to Kitanomaru. Bronze statues inside the park memorialize postwar Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida and others.

Spot 4

Home of professional baseball and wrestling

Tokyo Dome

[Address] 1-3-61 Koraku, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-5800-9999

Japan's first profession baseball team, which later became the Yomiuri Giants, was established in 1934, soon followed by other teams in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. A movement to construct a baseball stadium in the city of Tokyo soon began, and in 1937 Korakuen Stadium was erected on the site of a former military factory. The ballpark was designed to make it easier to hit home runs and delighted throngs of fans as the home of the Giants. After temporary closure during the war, it was reopened with a game between Keio and Waseda in 1946 and entered its golden age. In 1987, it closed after 50 years and was replaced in 1988 by Japan's first all-weather multi-use stadium, Tokyo Dome, where games are played today.

The front entrance to Tokyo Dome



The entrance to the Baseball Hall of Fame. The museum is dedicated to both professional and amateur baseball.

Spot Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

The Baseball Hall of Fame was opened as Japan's first baseball museum in 1959 and celebrates players, managers, coaches, and other contributors to Japanese baseball. The museum features portraits of those inducted into the hall of fame, and exhibits historical materials related to baseball.

Spot Korakuen Hall

Korakuen Hall has been home to boxing, professional wrestling, kickboxing, and other martial arts since its opening in 1962. Approximately half of the boxing matches held in Japan take place here, and it is regarded as the premier venue for combat sports.

Historical site Former Korakuen Bicycle Racetrack

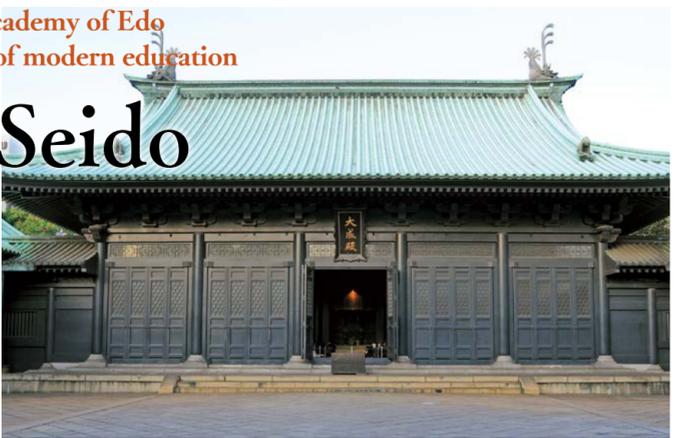
The site of Tokyo Dome was previously home to the Korakuen Bicycle Racetrack. Established in 1949 to aid in war recovery, this venue hosted bicycle races as well as international soccer matches and other events until closing in 1973. After being used for a swimming pool and golf range, it made way for Tokyo Dome in 1988.

Spot 5

The Shoheizaka Academy of Edo Japan's birthplace of modern education

Yushima Seido

[Address] 1-4-25 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3251-4606



Yushima Seido was established in 1690 as part of the Shogun's efforts to promote Confucian learning under the leadership of the scholar Hayashi Razan. In 1797 a government-run academy known as the Shoheizaka Academy was established on the grounds. In the Meiji Period, the grounds later became home to some of Tokyo's earliest universities.

The athletics academy that would later be incorporated into the Higher Normal School was first founded in 1878 in Kanda Hitotsubashi as an organization for cultivating athletics teachers, and moved within Yushima Seido in 1886 as part of its reorganization. Jigoro Kano spent 23 years as the head of the school, contributing to the development of Japan's school education and sports.

Spot Nyutokumon

Most of the structures of Yushima Seido were destroyed by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. The wooden Nyutokumon was built in 1704 and remains a valuable piece of Edo history.



The Nyutokumon Gate is at the bottom of the stairs leading to the main hall.

Spot Kanda River at Ochanomizu

The platform of JR Ochanomizu Station faces the Kanda River, forming a unique scenic spot together with the Hijiri Bridge. The Ochanomizu area was rich in greenery during the Edo Period, when fireflies were a common sight. When the Higher Normal School was based at Yushima Seido, the river was sometimes used for intercollegiate boating competitions.



The Kanda River gorge from Ochanomizu towards Suidobashi.

Historical site The former Tokyo Higher Normal School

The former site of the Higher Normal School is now the campus of the Tokyo Medical and Dental University. This 1885 map shows that the entire TMDU campus was once part of the Shoheizaka Academy, and the predecessor of today's Ochanomizu University was located next door.

Explore more sports history

Each spot is indicated with a ★ on the map

Kitchen Calorie

Since its founding in 1950, this classic Western diner has filled the stomachs of student athletes in Kanda and Ochanomizu. Its famous dish is the "calorie-yaki": grilled beef and onion atop spaghetti.

[Address] 3-10 Kanda Ogawamachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3291-3266
[Hours] 11:00-22:00 (until 21:00 on Sundays and Holidays)



Japan Football Museum

A football exhibition space established by the Japan Football Association to commemorate the hosting of the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Japan and South Korea. Exhibits focus on the 2002 World Cup and the history of Japanese soccer.

[Address] 1-16-30 Kasuga, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3811-7152
[Hours] Mon.-Fri. 10:00-17:00 (Judo library)
[Admission] free
[Website] <http://kodokanjudoinstitute.org/>



Gakushi Kaikan

The Gakushi Kaikan was built in 1928 as club for Imperial University graduates. Its design is emblematic of early 20th century Japanese architecture. The grounds



include a monument commemorating the birthplace of Japanese baseball.
[Address] 3-28 Kanda Nishikicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3292-5936
[Website] <https://www.gakushikaikan.co.jp>

Kodokan

The headquarters for Kodokan Judo, established by Jigoro Kano in 1882. The Kodokan hosts judo practices, grade promotions, and lessons, and also publishes official magazines and books promoting judo. The Kodokan Judo Library includes information on the history of Kodokan.

[Address] 1-16-30 Kasuga, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
[Phone] 03-3811-7152
[Hours] Mon.-Fri. 10:00-17:00 (Judo library)
[Admission] free
[Website] <http://kodokanjudoinstitute.org/>



First radio exercise meeting

Radio exercises began to be promoted by the government in 1928 to encourage the health of citizens and quickly spread across the country. Sakuma Park near Akihabara Station was the first place where residents gathered for early-morning radio exercise meetings.

[Address] 3-21 Kanda Sakumacho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo



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