

# *Les Clefs d'Or Japan*

# *Key News*



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# FAM Trip to Ibaraki

By: Naoko Tsugita

On February 19<sup>th</sup>, 3 members participated in the FAM trip to Ibaraki. The trip was to specifically visit Sashima Tea and tour Kengo Kuma's architecture. Sashima tea was the first Japanese tea brought to the United States. The FAM was organized by Musubi Ltd, and this project is being implemented as part of the Japan Tourism Agency's program.

Prior to the tour, we received a PCR check kit, and were required to report results through the AXUS Travel App. By downloading the application, we were able to view the itinerary, and were also able to communicate by direct messaging which was the beginning of a very new style of travelling.

We were transported on a private car for about 1.5 hours and when we arrived at Sakai Town, we were surprised with a fully automated self-driving bus system Service which was introduced by the local government for the first time.

The first place we visited was Yoshida tea farm, a long-established tea farm founded in 1839 during the Edo Period. We were greeted with a welcome drink and was served the rare Izumi Tea, which was the amazingly refreshing experience. We then took a walk through the tea farm and participated in tea pairing on a wooden deck in the open air. After tea pairing, we were introduced to roasting Hojicha tea, which was quite a healing experience and very much enjoyed the unique fragrant aroma.

The second place we had visited was CHABACO, which is directly managed by Naganoen. This is a cafe attached to the Montenegro Kaikan, a building designed by Kengo Kuma the famous architect. Back in history when Perry arrived at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, a local feudal lord and an Argentine sailor interacted with each other, which led to the opening of this hall.

Inside the Montenegro Hall we were able to experience 12 Sashima Wa Kocho=Japanese black tea tasting workshops by the tea master. Make a round with just the scent, and then taste a spoonful. Find your favorite while feeling that you can feel each individuality. For lunch we enjoyed the CHABACO Vegan lunch, which uses plenty of local ingredients and came with the Wa Kocho that was just made day before by the owner's selection. For dessert we were able to choose a favorite tea and pair with a low-calorie dessert.





After lunch, we visited five architectures by Kengo Kuma. The first place we visited was the Cha-Gura Sakai Riverside Restaurant which is the famous Wolfgang restaurant, attached to the Michi no Eki. We then visited four other works by Kengo Kuma which were all nearby. The popular local Sakai Sandwich shop where people queue up from the morning, followed by the Hoshiimo 100 café with an image of the fiber of dried sweet potatoes by combining louvers of locally produced wood. Next, we visited S-Lab, a facility that develops and disseminates dried sweet potatoes and wine as new special products. We then visited the S-Gallery dedicated to exhibit the works by the artist Shuku San Po. The assemblage of small spaces harmonizes well with the warm humane and even sometimes humorous touch of the artist. Near the end, we enjoyed the view of the sunset while looking at the Sekiyado Castle on the opposite side of the Tone River bank.

In Japan, green tea is the most common type of tea but I was convinced that the days are near when I will be able to share and recommend to our guests this beautiful location which is famous for its black tea. This day was truly a learning experience.



# National Parks of Japan Kushiroshitsugen National Park 釧路湿原国立公園



Photo by Ministry of the Environment

## Japan's Largest Marsh, a Great Meandering River, and the Forest where the River Grew

Date of Designation: July 31, 1987  
Area: 28,788 ha  
Related Prefecture: Hokkaido

**Les Clefs d'Or Japan**  
作成者: Rise Kamei · 2月5日 · 🌐

ORIGAMI is the traditional Japanese art of paper folding which translates to: ORI meaning "folding" and GAMI meaning "paper". The Orizuru or paper crane is one of the most classic design of Origami. The Japanese considered the crane to be a symbol of longevity, peace and good fortune.

To witness the cranes in the wild, one can journey to Kushiroshitsugen National Park which is Japan's largest natural marshland, located in the prefecture of Hokkaido. Here you will have an oppo... もっと見る



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オリジナル音源

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To witness the cranes in the wild, one can journey to Kushiroshitsugen National Park which is Japan's largest natural marshland, located in the prefecture of Hokkaido. Here you will have an opportunity to view the Red-crowned Cranes which are designated as a National Special Natural Monument. The cranes are best seen in the winter as they gather at winter feeding sites such as Tsurui village. 😊

<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/kushiro/index.html>

Les Clefs d'Or Japan is an official partner of National Parks of Japan.

日本の伝統文化「折り紙」  
そこでよく登場する鶴は、長寿や平和、縁起物の象徴として日本では考えられています。  
優雅に空へ羽ばたく鶴の美しい姿を見たことはありますか？日本最大の湿原「釧路湿原国立公園」は、国の特別天然記念物であるタンチョウが一年を通して生息しています。特に冬は、鶴居村などの給餌場に行くと美しいタンチョウの群れに出会うことができます！😊

世界中の人が鳥のように自由に飛びまわれる日常が1日も早く戻ってきますように...+

釧路湿原国立公園 写真提供: 環境省

# National Parks of Japan Setonaikai National Park 瀬戸内海国立公園



photo by asako koike

## Islands and the Sea that Keep on Shining The Archipelago seascapes of the inland sea and islets where people live in harmony with nature.

Date of Designation: March 16, 1934

Area: 66,934 ha (land area)

Related Prefectures: Osaka, Hyogo, Wakayama, Okayama,  
Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime, Fukuoka, Oita



**Les Clefs d'Or Japan**  
4月1日 午後10:18 · 🌟

Embark on a journey to feel a gentle sea breeze on the islands of Sun-kissed Setonaikai National Park! Now, the Geiyo islands are dyed in beautiful Cherry blossom color. 🌸

Les Clefs d'Or Japan is an official partner of National parks of Japan.  
<https://www.env.go.jp/en/nature/nps/park/setonaikai/index.html>

瀬戸内海の芸予諸島も春真っ盛り！桜の花も満開を迎えました。太陽輝く瀬戸内の島々で春の潮風を全身で感じてみませんか！🚲🚲🚲

#国立公園 #瀬戸内海国立公園 #しまなみ海道 #桜

photo by asako koike

+7



National Parks of Japan  
Official Partner

Les Clefs d'Or Japan is  
an official partner of  
the National Parks of Japan



## Getting to know our members !

### The Prince Gallery Tokyo Kioicho, a Luxury Collection Hotel Shinobu Momoi

**Experience as a Concierge : 22 years**  
**Member of Les Clefs d'Or : 13 years**

**Highlights of your hotel:** The view from Sky Gallery Lounge Levita is my highlight in the Hotel. Glass-art-waterfall, which is the work from Mari Noguchi, falls into this Levita, and it provides us the best view all the time. My favorite is sunset. The sunlight chiseled the shadow of the buildings clearly and the water-fall gleamed green. The whole view is so magical and when you take a picture there, it looks like you are somewhere unknown. This is one of the best spots for photo shooting in the Hotel.

**How I spend my time on my day off:** I have one goldfish named Kiki. Kiki has been with us for 4 years and used to be only 5cm big when he came to our home. Now he is 15cm big. I usually change the water tank, and after that I go for a walk, looking around flower shops. On the way, it is always nice to pop into small crockery shops or cafes. I usually spend time with my mother or all by myself lately. My mother sometimes finds good shops unexpectedly, and it is also nice to find myself thinking it is genuinely nice.



**Special place to visit:** April in 2017, I was so busy at work at the Concierge Desk. By the time Someiyoshino, the famous Cherry blossom, was about to finish, Yaezakura, Kanzan was in full bloom. I left the Hotel earlier than usual one night and I decided to have supper at Aux Bacchanales on Kioicho Street. I took one table outside at their Terrace and found beautiful Kanzan trees in front of me! I thought I found the best spot! Concierge should leave the desk earlier sometimes to explore own town. I enjoyed this one hour as I could be back to myself quietly.

**Favorite Hotel Movie which takes place in a hotel: My blind date with life.** Saliya has dreamt of working at a Luxury Hotel, however he has been losing 95% of his eyesight. He took a job interview hiding his sickness and started working at one Luxury Hotel as a trainee. He met colleagues who helped him in the Hotel, however training was so hard. Clouds on the glasses are not accepted. We should not accept compromise. This is a comedy movie, however I understood again how high we have wanted to achieve.

## Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba Ikuyo Takeuchi

**Experience as a Concierge : 25 years**

**Member of Les Clefs d'Or : 20 years**

**Highlight of the hotel:** Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba is located in Tokyo bay. The name Daiba is derived from O-DAIBA, which is the battery constructed in preparation for the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry to open Japan during Edo Period (1853). It is 15 minutes by Yurikamome line crossing over the Rainbow-bridge from the city center. Here you could experience 'Another Dimension, Another Tokyo' as our hotel concept. Rooms are designed with varied color scheme inspired by nature. From the window the panoramic view is spread out as if you could see it from high in the sky. At dusk, the everchanging gradation of lights and star lights creates a breathtaking panoramic view of Tokyo.

**How I spend my time on my day off:** I had in the past spent many hours venturing out to find new places for guests to visit, but recently I've been able to more focus on my reading as I had to stay at home for most of the last one or two years. The genres are various but when I came across the mysterious story on the newspaper written by Miyabe Miyuki a Japanese novel writer, I got to read many of the mystery novels set in ancient times which is still continuing now.

**Special place to visit:** My special place would actually be more of a "special place to walk", especially the Ginza and Naka-Meguro's atmosphere is most familiar. In Ginza there are historical buildings and the symbolic row of cherry blossom trees as well as the famous row of willow tree. A little further out is the Shintomicho area where one can enjoy a retro feel as well as a pop feel at the same time and still be able to enjoy high end brand shopping. Naka-Meguro. Although it is a small town, there is always something new or popular with long queues. When the new style Starbucks Coffee opened in Naka-Meguro, I was often asked about the shop from Asian travelers. However, I feel the most charming scene would be the riversides of Meguro River, especially right after the Someiyoshino cherry blossom ends and the Yaesakura cherry blossoms starts to bloom, it reminds me of the European streets in early summer.

**Favorite Hotel Movie:** Pretty Woman (1990 Dec.) was filmed at Beverly Wilshire Hotel in California. I thought that it was such a wonderful movie as I was able to feel the charm of a luxury hotel and the staffs' warm service, especially the Concierge's or perhaps it was the GM of the hotel.



# Online Monthly Meeting



April



March



Our president Ms. Sumiyoshi shared about her inspection trips as an adviser for the Tokyo Luxury Authorization. Through this trip the organization is trying to find an attractive and true luxury experience with in Tokyo for luxury guests. She have gone on to these inspections with different theme' each time. It has given us an opportunity to learn more of different contents offered in Tokyo from her sharing information.

Our affiliates have given us update that gas oil has been increasing, and at the restaurants are starting to get the impact as the prices of ingredients raising. Some items cannot be served due to the war by Russia. On the other hand, we also heard bright news from Meikai University that they will start face to face lecture from April instead of on-line classes.

Mr. Eiji Tanaka has given a presentation on his experience as a Les Clefs d'Or Concierge in Great Britain. It was very interesting to hear and learn about the differences of how meetings are held in London, and also the exciting events and gathering that was organized. It has given us idea's and a great opportunity to learn about other sections of the Les Clefs d'Or family.

Ms. Maumi Tajima has given us a quick presentation on the Premium VIP meet & greet service by Active work inc. We hope to be able to use the service soon for our VIP guests.

AGM was held (Japanese new business year starts from April) and the following topics were covered; all the major activities in 2021 and expecting activities in 2022, the accounting report from the treasurer, the past PR activities, the analysis reports from Les Clefs d'Or Japan Lounge, the past activity reports from SEC team, reintroduction of the member of committee and the role of each member.

Followed by the monthly meeting, a discussion was held regarding the below topics;

-The next month members meeting to be held as hybrid system, both available in the venue also still online.

-The next international BOD meeting also to be held as hybrid system at Marrakesh. Our representatives Mayako Sumiyoshi and Aiko Imaizumi will join Online.

-1,193 people had accessed to our homepage website last month and we are receiving some enquiries requesting us to be as advisors also to be as lecturers.

-We will be celebrating 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the foundation of Les Clefs d'Or Japan in November.

We have exchanged our current business situation from the different sections in Japan. Overall, in Tokyo although we could see some business improvement for the hotels, the business for some restaurants & bars and retail stores also even for the business at regional hotels in Japan were still down. For those who were experiencing the business growth after a while, facing to the difficulty handling the high demand with the minimum staffing level.

Our member Akhil Tiwari from Four Seasons Hotel at Marunouchi introduced the SDGs programs from his property. He explained how F&B team were reducing the use of plastic materials, explained HACCP and the environmental-friendly programs from Housekeeping and Engineering team as well as introducing us their employee awards programs and unique donation systems from HR team.

