Rivers at the ward

Suginami City is located on the flat Musashino plateau. In the north, there is the Myoushouji River, in the central part is the Zenpukuji River, and the Kanda River flows from the west to the east in the south. Their main source of water is spring water in the ward and neighboring Mitaka City. The gentle rivers flow through Tokyo and eventually join the Sumida River and continue to Tokyo Bay.
Foreword

Treasuring our rich green environment

There are 3 rivers flowing in the ward that have nurtured many lives since ancient times. The flow of the water, which could be called the source of life, created the wind as well as a luscious, green plateau.

Life beside the river

Many village remains have been found near the rivers currently flowing through the ward. Stone tools have also been excavated from these ruins, indicating that people have been living here from ancient times in the pre-earthenware era.

Disappearing farmland

The role as a farming village that began in the Edo Era has gradually changed as the number of migrants from the city has increased due to changes in society and events such as the Great Kanto Earthquake and war. The rapid increase of the population has led to a reduction of farmland in the ward. After the war, changes in industry as well as the burden of the inheritance tax also contributed to this reduction. Farmland continues to decrease. Farmers and agricultural land that comprised 430 houses, 100 ha. in 1985 has decreased to less than half, 146 houses, 44.7 ha. in 2016.

Passing precious farmland to future generations

Among Tokyo’s 23 wards, farmland only remains in the 10 wards of Katsushika, Edogawa, Adachi, Setagaya, Ota, Meguro, Nakano, Nerima, Itabashi and Suginami. Agricultural land supplies vegetables and flowers and serves as an evacuation area. It also offers beautiful seasonal scenery. Once these lands are lost, they are difficult to regain. Therefore, Suginami City together with neighboring Setagaya City hold an “Agrifesta” to highlight the importance of urban farmland.

The flow of the river that fosters life

The 3 rivers and their basins in the ward foster both people and many wild creatures. In particular, the Zenpukuji River and its water source Zenpukuji Park. Along the river, the Zenpukuji River Greenland and Wada Hori Park form a green belt that is the habitat for many birds, insects, and aquatic animals.

Utilizing the water supply

During the Edo Era, the Kanda River was called “Kanda aqueduct” and was used as a water supply system for the city until 1901. The Tama River aqueduct that drew water from the Tama River into Edo also nourished the lives of people in the south part of the ward.

Supporting the lives of the people in Edo

It is said that the population of Tokyo in the mid-Edo period reached 1 million. In order to support the lives of these people, the Tokugawa shogunate developed new rice fields in the ward and established rural villages responsible for supplying vegetables, etc.

Suginami City Overview Pocket Edition “Visit Suginami” introduces Suginami’s history and the efforts of the people who gathered and built villages on a luscious, green plateau in Musashino. People came together and by living closely with water and in a beautiful natural environment, communities and culture were born which has led to the creation of a wonderful residential city.
Gathering at a new residential environment

Improving Railway

The Koubu Railway (current Chuo Line) connecting Shinjuku and Tachikawa opened in 1889, and Ogikubo Station opened in 1891. The opening of three more stations, Koenji, Asagaya and Nishi-Ogikubo, in July, 1922, promoted the development of the area. Private railway lines also advanced during the Taisho Era.

The Great Kanto Earthquake

A huge earthquake of magnitude 7.9 occurred on September 1, 1923. As fires broke out one building after another was destroyed. It was a catastrophe, with more than 140,000 people dead or missing.

Yukufukai in Takaido opened to support the elderly people who had become homeless. With donations from the Imperial Family, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs a foundation was established. After World War II, it became a new home for elderly people. Today, it serves as a social welfare corporation offering nursing care and dementia support, and has become an important facility for the elderly.

Pursuing a safe life

As the war intensified and aerial attacks destroyed many homes the ward population increased as people sought a safe place to live. There were many intellectuals and writers among the new residents, including Masuji Ibuse, Mizuho Aoyagi, Akatsuki Kanbayashi. Life in Asagaya and in the Ogikubo area, as well as the interactions among the writers including Osamu Dazai, is also mentioned in literary works.

Shifting to a town of anime from a town of writers

In the late Meiji Era, inspired by foreign animation, Japan started producing animation. The first film was about 2 minutes long and was screened at a theater. With the spread of TV, many new works were created. Currently there are 622 animation production companies in Japan, of which 138 firms, more than 20%, are in Suginami City. (Source: The Association of Japanese Animations “Animation Industry Report 2016”). Suginami has the most animation companies in Japan which have released countless beloved anime.

With the improved railway system in the Meiji Era, as well as survivors of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the war moving into the Ward, housing developed rapidly. Also, the number of shops increased, greatly supporting people’s livelihood.

Japan’s first animation museum

The Suginami Animation Museum opened in March, 2005 promoting the Ward’s unique position as a leading area in the animation industry. The museum welcomes many visitors and introduces the history of animation in Japan and the procedure of animation production, and other exhibitions.

Promoting multilingualization

There were 906 foreign visitors to the Suginami Animation Museum during 2011. The number increased by 5 times to 4,500 people in 2015. With the Tokyo Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games approaching in 2020, the number of foreign tourists is expected to increase. Therefore, we are promoting multilingualization of exhibitions and guidance in (English, Chinese, Korean, etc.) so that foreign visitors can both enjoy and deepen their understanding of Japanese animation.

The town’s symbol “Gundam monument”

In March 2008, a statue of “Mobile Suit Gundam” was placed in front of the Seibu Shinjuku Line Kami-Igusa Station. The area has many anime production companies including the company of Gundam. Created at the request of the local shops, it has become a beloved symbol.

The first broadcast of the Ultraman Series The “birthplace of Ultraman”

Prior to the first episode of “Ultraman”, a PR event, “Ultraman Eagle Battle: Ultraman’s Birth” was recorded on July 9th 1966 at the Suginami Public Hall and broadcast on July 10. There is a plaque commemorating the “birthplace of Ultraman”.

Changes in the number of foreign visitors at the Suginami Animation Museum

changes

Map of Literature Village

Suginami Public Hall commemoration plate ©Tsuburaya Productions
Supporting the lives of the elderly

- **Focusing on the year 2025**
  
  About 8 million people were born in 1947 – 1949, which is 20 to 30% more than other generations. These people, called the baby-boomer generation, will be over 75 years old in 2025. Also, one in four people in Japan will be over 75 or older. We are building a comprehensive regional care system so that the elderly can continue living independently as they are accustomed to. Measures include dementia management, partnering with medical care and nursing care facilities, and the improvement of a living support system.

- **Houses for the disabled “After parents’ death”**
  
  According to “A survey on community life” conducted by Suginami City in FY 2013, 49.6% of caregivers of disabled people were over 60 years old. To cope with the so-called “after parents’ death” situation in which disabled people lose support due to the aging of parents or caregivers, we have established a system to secure a group home and support new homes for disabled people.

- **Maintenance of special nursing homes for the elderly**
  
  Applications to enter special nursing homes for the elderly are expected to rapidly increase. Establishing special nursing homes is being promoted mainly on public land, but it is not easy to secure land in the ward. For these reasons, we are working towards establishing a special nursing home for the elderly by collaborating with the local government in Minamizu-cho, Shizuoka Prefecture. This is the first effort in Japan to solve administrative issues collaboratively.

- **Using various methods**
  
  During a national discussion about aging in urban areas this was praised for being a great example of a strong partnership between local governments. By meeting the needs for special nursing homes for the elderly, there are accompanying economic benefits such as rural employment and tourism by family members.

### Partner local government

**“Oshino Village” appeals**

Oshino Hakkaai takes its water from river-bed water of Mt. Fuji, and is famous as a tourist spot. As transportation from the metropolitan area is convenient, the population of the village has reached a record high. Major companies and related businesses have also relocated here.

**“Minamizu Town” appeals**

It is blessed with tourism resources such as hot springs and Yumigahama, the spawning ground of sea turtles. The main industry is the production of processed fisheries and marine products such as spiny lobsters, turban shells, and tengusa seaweed. Migrants from urban areas seeking its warm climate are increasing.

We wish to create an environment in which people can live happily even in old age and when medical care and nursing care are required, we support each other in the community. We are partnering with local governments, in addition to improving public facilities within the ward.

- **Partnering with local governments**
  
  According to a national census in 2015, the population of Japan was 127 million, a decrease of 947,000 from 5 years ago which is the first decrease since the census began. On the other hand, the population of the metropolitan area continues to increase, and over 10% of the total population is concentrated in Tokyo. This is due to the influx of young people from rural areas. If the population of rural areas continues to decline, we will inevitably be affected. Therefore, we are promoting efforts toward regional revitalization so that both city and rural areas can thrive.

- **Regional revitalization/partnering local government collaboration forum**
  
  We have been holding a forum since 2015, with the theme of “creating a flow of young people to rural areas and cultivating people who support the area.” We conduct discussions so that urban and rural areas can coexist and prosper together.

- **Prospering together**
  
  Our partnership currently includes 10 cities in Japan and 3 cities (areas) overseas. The origins vary but we have been strengthening our ties since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

  **Trial migration (Minamizu-cho)**
  
  We co-opened a special nursing home for the elderly in Minamizu-cho. We also provide a “trial migration” from a few days to about a month in order to promote the migration of active seniors (healthy elderly).

  **Country experience (Ojiya City)**
  
  Ojiya City, which is known for its rice fields, is promoting a residence type farm “Ojiya Kuraian Garuten Fureai Village.” Experience the countryside with a base in two residential areas, urban and rural.

  **Supporting activities in other areas (Suginami City)**
  
  The new “Suginami regional revitalization collaboration troop” is a system in which young people in the ward conduct various activities in partnership with local governments for a period, which expands one’s way of living. It is expected to help eliminate the local talent shortage and revitalize the region.

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- **Partner local government**

**“Kitashinobara Village” appeals**

Enjoy one of the top 100 famous Japanese mountains “Bandai,” as you trek around lakes, enjoy canoeing, cycling and fishing. In recent years, Lake Hibara has been a base for long distance track & field practice, where many business associations and university teams visit for training.

**“Ojiya City” appeals**

Many people come from across Japan and overseas to visit the birthplace of Nishikiogi carp and to enjoy the sweet Kohshikari rice from Uonuma which is nurtured by the rich natural environment of this snowy land. Manufacturing centers on ironworks The electronics industry is thriving, as Ojiya is easily accessed from the metropolitan area via the Kanetsu Expressway.
Supporting families raising children
A town you can raise children with ease

Unceasing support from pregnancy
In recent years, the number of people who feel about anxious raising children is increasing, especially when giving birth for the first time. Therefore, we continue to offer prenatal and postpartum support by public health nurses and midwives such as holding childbirth preparation classes. This includes a “cradle” service in which all pregnant women are counselled by specialists such as public health nurses at the time of notification of pregnancy as well as after giving birth.

Suginami daycare child emergency declaration
Due to the increase in pre-school age children and rising women’s social advancement, the number of people applying for daycare is also increasing every year. In April, the number on the waiting list tripled from the previous year, causing some parents to quit their jobs. For couples to be able to raise children with ease, day care is crucial. For these reasons, we announced the “Suginami daycare emergency declaration” on April 18, 2016. We are working hard to solve the waiting list problem by April, 2017 and provide more than 2200 childcare spaces in a single year.

Opening after-school care at Elementary Schools
The need to enroll children in after-school clubs is also increasing. We are making efforts to secure a nurturing, safe environment for children and meet future demands by basing after-school clubs in schools and promoting school maintenance at the time of school renovations.

Nurturing youth for the next generation
Children have unlimited potential and we are committed to nurturing the next generation so that they can fulfill their dreams for the future. The options they can choose from expand by experiencing culture and arts from various countries and interacting with people through sports, etc. To support young people who are responsible for the next generation, we established the Next Generation Development Fund in 2012.

If we rely only on the influx from the rural areas to maintain the population, it will eventually decline even in Suginami City and that speed will accelerate. To prevent this, we must create an environment where young couples can give birth and raise children with ease.

Legendary hall of brass band
The holy land where high school students long to play baseball is “Koshien,” for soccer, “The National Stadium” and “Hanazono” for rugby. Suginami City also has a place where high school students across the country long to go. It is “Fumon Hall” in Wada-2 chome.

The famous All Japan Band Competition, known as “Koshien” of brass band competitions, has been held at Fumon Hall. This is where many Jr. High and High School amateur brass bands have aspired to perform. The building was completed in 1970 and can accommodate 5000 people. Its iconic exterior is painted in two colors. World-renowned orchestras have also performed here. Although it is currently held in a different hall as it was found that the building cannot withstand an earthquake with a seismic intensity scale of 6, the hall remains one of the most famous buildings in the ward, a place where countless touching performances have been held.

Partner local government
★ “Nayoro City” appeals
Nayoro has one of Japan’s largest telescopes, “Kitasubaru.” The air is clear and it is ideal for making astronomical observations. Many railroad fans also visit, attracted to the history of the discontinued line and revived station. It is also a mecca for outdoor sports, including skiing and fishing.

★ “Higashiagatsuma Town” appeals
Mt. Iwabitsu, where the famous warrior, Yukimura Sanada spent his childhood is the symbol of the town. You can enjoy nature and historical culture together, such as the fireflies dancing in June – July.

★ “Ogasawara Village” appeals
The Ogasawara Islands, 1000km south of Tokyo, are called a subtropical paradise and are also a World Heritage Site. In addition to the many unique plants and animals, the islands include both the easternmost and southernmost tip of Japan.

★ “Ome City” appeals
A town where nature and history live together. Long worshipped as a high mountain, Mt. Mitake is close to Mitake Valley, which is famous for its autumn leaves. The Ome Race which has continued since 1967 is a pioneer of “citizen marathon” and is beloved by many people.
Creating a town through music

There are multiple music events in the ward, which is the symbol of our town. It helps us create a town through music.

★ Partnership with Japan Philharmonic Orchestra

In 1994, Suginami City signed a friendship partnership agreement with “The Japan Philharmonic Orchestra,” an orchestra that represents Japan. The ward provides practice venues and the orchestra performs at events for the people in the ward to enjoy music.

Suginami Public Hall at Ogikubo Station Northgate is one public performance venues.

★ Koenji is not only Awa Odori!

In 2016, “Tokyo Koenji Awa Odori” won the top ranking of a major travel agency’s survey, “Japanese Festivals I would like to go!” It is famous as an event that represents Tokyo’s summer, 10,000 people dance for 2 days, and 1 million people visit. Koenji is also known as a town of rock. There are many live houses playing rock and blues around the station, as well as many street musicians playing on street corners. The entire town is rocking!

★ Asagaya has jazz

The departing bell of JR Asagaya Station is the Jazz-themed “Tanabata.” Asagaya is famous for “The Asagaya Tanabata Festival” which has been held since 1954. The town which is known for jazz has also held “Asagaya Jazz Street” for 2 days in late October since 1995, in which the area becomes lively with many people.

★ Class suits Ogikubo perfectly

Otaguro Park is in a quiet residential area of Ogikubo. A circuit style Japanese garden that opened in 1981, it was created on the grounds of the house of the music critic, Motoo Otaguro (1893 - 1979). On the 9000 m² site there are rows of gingko trees, zelkova, Japanese red pine, as well as a lovely pond with Nishikigoi carp and a room for Japanese tea ceremony. There is also the piano which Mr. Otaguro used over 100 years ago, and mini-concerts are often held using it. Ogikubo holds “The Ogikubo Music Festival,” aspiring to develop the town through classical music. You can enjoy classical music at various places, including Otaguro Park, the plaza in front of the station, cafes, banks, and hospitals.

Suginami City is a lively ward where approximately 560,000 people live. The Seibu Shinjuku Line runs along the Myoohoji River flowing north. In the middle is the Zenpuku-ji River and the JR Chuo Line. At the south is the Kanda River and the Keio Inokashira Line. The Tamagawa Aqueduct is parallel to the Keio Line. Each station is built upon the history and culture of the land.

★ Many Merchant Association Sponsored Events

“Tokyo Koenji Awa Odori” and “Asagaya Tanabata Festival” are Tokyo’s new summer traditions, which were initiated by the merchant associations. The association has held many fun events to express gratitude to shoppers and to offer enjoyment to local children. These events also serve as an opportunity for many people to visit the shops.

★ Nishi Ogikubo Station Area

Nishi Ogikubo is sandwiched between the popular town, Kichijoji and the terminal station, Ogikubo. With a mix of traditional shops and cool, new stores in the shopping street, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Every year more stores participate in the merchant association-sponsored “Chasamopo.” In this event, stores provide pots of tea in front of their stores so people can casually sip tea and get to know each other. At another event, pictures are drawn on a 300m street from Tokyo Women’s University to the station with chalk. This event is very popular among children!

★ Horinouchi Area

Horinouchi is the home of Myoohoji temple which was the setting for a Ukiyoie painting in the Edo Era. Many people visit the temple which was founded as a religious sect warding off evil. In front of the temple, you will find an old style shopping street. Events are held using Globe amaranth as a symbol.

★ Creating a flow of people from abroad

In anticipation of the 2019 Rugby World Cup and the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games in 2020, we are also making efforts to have tourists from overseas visit the ward and partnering with local governments. One example is the Koenji Awa Odori performance in Taiwan in April, 2015. Although our relationship started by an exchange through Jr. High School baseball, we have continued to promote traditional performing arts in the ward. In addition, we are attracting visitors by broadcasting promotional videos on the Internet.
Offering wisdom to create a safe and secure town

Life along the river creates wind and nature and provides a pleasant living environment. However, nature can suddenly pose a threat to our lives such as heavy rain and storms. Earthquakes can also strike the Tokyo area at any moment. Therefore, we are continuing our efforts of disaster preparedness such as widening narrow roads and eliminating areas with concentrated wood housing.

- Widening narrow roads

Approximately 30% of the roads in the ward are narrow roads with a width of less than 4m. About 198km of roads have been redeveloped with the owners retreating 2m from the road centerline since 1989. However, there are still obstacles such as planters, vending machines, vehicles, etc., causing significant interference with evacuation, traffic and everyday life. For example, nursing care vehicles and cleaning vehicles cannot pass. To solve these problems and increase the disaster preparedness level of the town, based on the revised “Ordinance on Expansion of Narrow Roads”, we prohibit placing obstacles such as planters, vending machines, vehicles, etc. in areas slated for redevelopment, and will warn or publish a list of violators, as well as enforcing proxy executions.

- Utilizing Fireproof Special Zone

We are utilizing Tokyo’s “Fireproof Promotion Special Development Zone (Fireproof Zone) System” and promoting fireproofing in the areas surrounding Suginami Sixth Elementary School (about 46.7 ha) and Honan 1-chome area (about 33.6 ha). This system urges the removal and rebuilding of old buildings. As there is a partial subsidy for dismantling, removal cost, design cost/construction supervision fee, reduction and exemption of property tax, fireproofing is expected to advance during the specified period (end of FY 2020).

- A giant water reservoir

The underground No. 7 retention pond is a giant tunnel made about 40 m underground with a diameter of 12.5 m and a length of 4.5 km. It draws water from the 3 rivers, Myoshiji River, Zenpukuji River, and Kanda River, which flow through the area and protects the area from flooding. It began withdrawing water after its partial completion in 1997. Today, it has become a facility that can store a maximum of 540,000 tons, which is equal to 1,800 swimming pools.

- Rugger man scrunched with the local town council

In 2015, the Waseda University Rugby Football Club and 6 neighborhood associations in Kami-Igusa signed a “Mutual Disaster Assistance Agreement.” Students who are mentally and physically trained through rugby and the local residents will be in a scrum to prepare for disasters. Even in Japan it is unusual for a national university club to sign a disaster reduction agreement with the local area.

- Local government scrum support meeting

Minamisoma City joined Suginami City and Minamisoma City in Fukushima Prefecture’s disaster mutual support agreement. Although these local governments had already signed a disaster agreement with Suginami City, they had no direct relationship with Minamisoma City. However, they launched “Local Government Scrum Support Meeting” in April, 2011 to be in a scrum together and help people in need. One City in Tokyo and Kitashiobara Village in Fukushima Prefecture have joined this meeting, and the partnership is enlarging. This scrum support activity is not limited to the support of Minamisoma City. Each local government will cooperate to deepen disaster management efforts and relationships between local governments, promote civic-level exchanges and discuss issues among local governments, which will lead to a relationship aiming for mutual prosperity.

- Partner local government

★Local partner government
The current situation of “Minamisoma City”
Minamisoma City experienced tremendous damage in the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident at Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant. A large tsunami struck the town immediately after the earthquake and flooded about 10% of the city area, resulting in 636 deaths. 5,200 houses were fully/partially destroyed. Many residents were forced to evacuate due to the nuclear plant accident. In July, 2016, 5 years after the earthquake, the evacuation order was lifted in most areas. However, the population decreased from 70,000 to 50,000 people and as most of the people who left were working age, the city is lacking workers. Moreover, to ensure the safety and peace of mind of the residents regarding air and tap water, well water and agricultural products, radiation monitoring has continued. The shipment of safe agricultural products and marine products that have undergone rigorous inspections has begun bring smiles to residents.

Also, the “Soma Nomaoi” with a 1000-year history was held even in the year of the earthquake, hoping for local reconstruction and deepening local ties. It is a precious tradition that strengthens local pride and unity and even after the disaster it attracts many visitors from across the country.
When Christmas illuminations start to adorn the city, you know the end of the year is approaching. Released from work, the time you can spend with family and friends increases. The local areas, shrines, and temples also become lively with more visitors at the end and beginning of the year giving thanks for the year and praying for good luck in the new year.

○Nostalgic mochi pounding and end-of-year cleaning

The Nagaya-mon gate and old houses built in the Edo Era have been relocated to the Suginami Historical Museum. You can see the year-end cleaning and repasting of the paper of the paper sliding doors at the end of the year. You can also experience a little traditional farm life, including the annual mochi pounding, which many local residents join.

○The new year that begins with the Bell on New Year’s Eve

The bell ringing starts from 12 A.M. on New Year at Myohoji. Unlike other temples, the bell ringing does not stop at 108 times, and many worshippers visit to ring the bell and form a long queue.

○Praying for a peaceful year

Neighborhood shrines are located throughout the ward. Families dressed in special clothes visit to conduct the first worship of the year and pray for good health. These shrines provide luscious greenery and are a rejuvenating place for local people.

○Local traditional performing art: “shishimai”

Traditional performing arts such as shishimai and hayashi are still cherished. Sadly, there are many festivals in each area that have been lost. However, these events are being passed down to children with the help of conservation groups.

Sometimes let’s treat ourselves to a reward and stop by (and get drunk)

There are more occasions to have a drink with family and friends during the New Year’s holidays. You will find the so-called “bar town” around many stations in Suginami, with many cozy restaurants and bars. You become closer to people as you get drunk, and you will see many people smiling.
In addition to the Suginami public announcements and the City's official website, we are also introducing the issues and efforts of the City through video. The video features comedians and we have tried to make it easy to understand, so we hope you take the time to watch.

**Suginami news**
We explain the challenges facing the ward and feature the efforts the ward is making. We also introduce events taking place in the ward as well as useful information for everyday life.

**Suginami news street corner NOW**
As the name suggests, it is a 5-minute program introducing the “now” information of Suginami from various places. Comedians and actors join to make residents smile.

**Suginami Want to Know Everything Troop**
As part of the Suginami News, residents’ questions are answered. In addition, mysteries of Suginami City are introduced. We also welcome information from the residents.

**Example**

*“Huge underground space”*
A dark space deep underground. Who, when, made it for what purpose?

*“Tokyo’s bellybutton”*
The Bellybutton connects the mother with the baby and is an important part of the body. What is Tokyo’s bellybutton and why is something so important hidden in our Ward?

*“Letter to Anne Frank”*
A Jr. High School student read Anne’s letter and wrote a reply. Let’s see what kind feelings were embedded in the letter.

You can watch the answer to these mysteries at You Tube Suginami Official Channel.