

Komaba Historical Walking Tour

July 1st, 2017 Saturday

In spite of the rain, the annual Komaba Historical Walking Tour hosted by the Kokusai PTA, Culture Committee has been a great success, with 57 members of the Kokusai family attending the event (21 from the first grade, 23 from the second and 13 from the third).

Although the originally planned route had to be altered to accommodate the weather, the rain remained light, and we were able to visit many historical sites and places of interests around Komaba area. Here are some of the highlights from the tour.

【Assemble~Departure】

10 a.m., the participants gathered at the Komaba-Todaimae Station exit near Tokyo University main gate. As people checked in, they were each given a brochure with the day's schedule, along with a pink ribbon to indicate that they were part of the tour. The tour started with Takai-san from the Culture Committee as our guide.



Meeting up at Komaba Todai-mae Station

【1. Tokyo University College of Arts and Sciences Campus】

The first stop of our tour was Tokyo University College of Arts and Sciences campus. We visited various historical buildings and monuments reminiscent of the former Dai-ichi Koutou Gakkou (First Higher School), such as the Lecture Hall no. 900, First Higher School crest (Gogokuki), and a stele with the lyrics to dormitory anthem (Aa-GyokuHai) inscribed. Many participants were seen taking notes and pictures as Takai-san explained the background and significance of the sites we visited. They seemed to be as eager as, or perhaps more eager to learn than the students!



“First Higher School” inscribed on the maintenance hatch



Monument of First Higher School



←Left

The Building No.1 where the group photo was taken

Right→

It is said that freshmen of Tokyo University all look at this sign that asks people to help preserve the mosquito population in the area, and are puzzled. It serves as their conversation starter.



We left the lush Tokyo University campus heading towards the Komaba Park. As we left the campus, we took to the path that runs across the Komaba campus known as the Road of Education (Kyoyou no Michi). It is beautifully lined with ginkgo trees on both sides, making our stroll through the campus pleasurable. As the trip progressed, the participants got to know each other more.

【2. Komaba Park - Maeda Family Mansion】

Komaba Park previously was a residential property belonging to the 16th Marquis, Toshinari Maeda. Their western style residential building unfortunately is currently under construction, but we were able to visit the Japanese style garden annex, which is open to public as a rest area free of charge. The view of the garden from the porch was magnificent, with all the greeneries, a koi pond, and beautifully carved balustrades. It was hard to believe that we never left central Tokyo. The rain prevented us from walking in the park, but the view was enough to give us a moment of relief.



View from the Japanese garden annex porch



Pretty chandelier in the garden annex hall

【3. Japanese Folk Crafts Museum】

Our final stop, Japanese Folk Crafts Museum was founded in 1963 by Soetsu Yanagi, an advocate of preserving common folk crafts from all over Japan. The special exhibits are replaced around 4 times a year. After a quick overview from the museum staff members, we spent our time looking around the numerous exhibits; amongst them were antique ceramics, wood works, paintings, and kimonos that were actually used by people more than 100 years ago!



Group photo taken in front of Building No.1 in Tokyo University Komaba campus

The Cultural Committee would like to thank all those who participated for making our trip a great success, and for participating in our survey at the end of the trip as well. We hope that you enjoyed the historical insights of the Komaba area, and meeting other members of the Kokusai community as well.

Kokusai PTA Cultural Committee