

Pilot Edition

Walking Tours to Learn about JAPAN

Social Structure

Route No.1

Learning about Japan in Tokyo

(Around the Imperial Palace and Tokyo Station)

May 24, 2021 Edition

Preface

- This walking tour guidebook has been created for international students and researchers at the Tokyo Institute of Technology to learn about the Japanese social structure by spotting on their walk.
- Please utilize this information for interactive communication between Japanese students and international students to learn or explain the Japanese social structure and discuss the differences between Japanese and foreign social structures.

Characteristics of this Route (1)

- On this route, you will start at Kokkai-gijidomae Station or Tameike-sanno Station on the subway, visit central facilities such as the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary in Japan, and learn about the Japanese social structure. The goal is Mitsukoshimae Station on the subway. (There is also an "advanced course" for those confident in their physical strength.)
- If you do not stop by, the distance of this route is about 9.5km, so it's about 2 hours and 30 minutes on foot. There are also several recommended places where you can stop by, so you can enjoy a walk for about 3 to 4 hours if the weather is nice.
- When joining walking tours, please follow the traffic lights and be careful not to obstruct the passage of other pedestrians with a large number of people.

Characteristics of this Route (2)

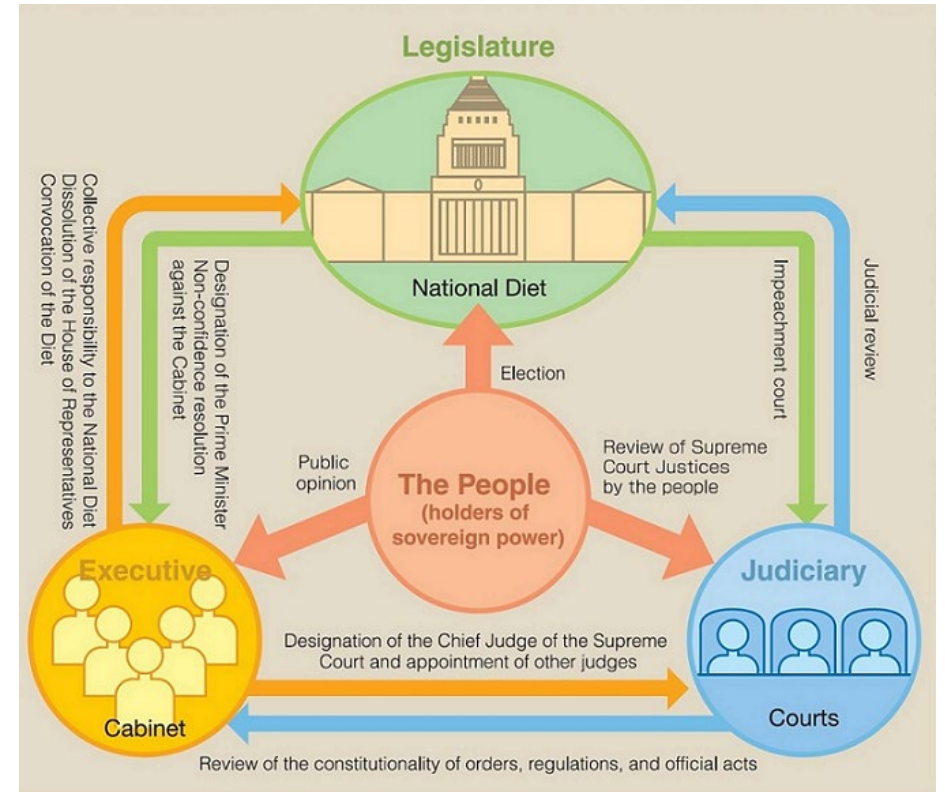
- The explanation of the checkpoints of this route contains content particularly for international students and researchers who have just arrived in Japan and are learning the Japanese language and culture. You can skip the parts that are not of interest to you.
- Virtual walks using Google Maps are possible, but we recommend that you take a walk and experience something that is not explained there to deepen your understanding of Japan.
- We do not intend this document to introduce shops or gourmet food, so this does not include a detailed introduction of shops and goods. There are many shops and restaurants along this route, so please try various things for yourself.

Characteristics of this Route (3)

- The facilities, stores, and services listed in this document are introduced based on information as of January 2021, so they may not be open due to measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection. Please check the websites of the facilities when using them.

Basic information (1)

Before starting this walking tour to understand the Japanese social structure, please make sure you know about the **legislature**, **executive**, and **judiciary** in Japan. The Constitution of Japan, which came into effect in 1947, has three defining chapters: Chapter 4 **Diet (legislature)**, Chapter 5 **Cabinet (executive)**, and Chapter 6 **Justiciary**, based on the **popular sovereignty** declared in the preamble. By restraining each other and maintaining a balance (separation of powers), these independent institutions prevent the abuse of power and guarantee the rights and freedoms of the people.



Source:
https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/guide/separation.htm

Basic information (2)

Here is an example of guaranteeing the rights of the people through the separation of powers.

Expropriating land from landowners is an infringement of personal ownership, even for land such as international airports where great public interest is expected. Therefore, first of all, the **Diet (legislature)** must enact a law that "land can be expropriated if public interest is prioritized." Based on this law, the **Cabinet (executive)** will expropriate land. At this time, the underlying law is a law enacted by the **Diet**, which consists of members of the Diet elected by election, so it can be said that they represent the entire nation's interests. However, if a landowner is dissatisfied with the expropriation, the landowner can appeal the unconstitutionality of the underlying law or the illegality of the administrative procedure to the **court (judiciary)** and seek a decision of the **judiciary**.

Basic information (3)

In the previous example, the court (**judiciary**) can judge the unconstitutionality of the underlying law or the illegality of the administrative procedure, point out the unconstitutionality of the law to the **Diet (legislature)**, and order the expropriation to be stopped by the **Cabinet (executive)**.

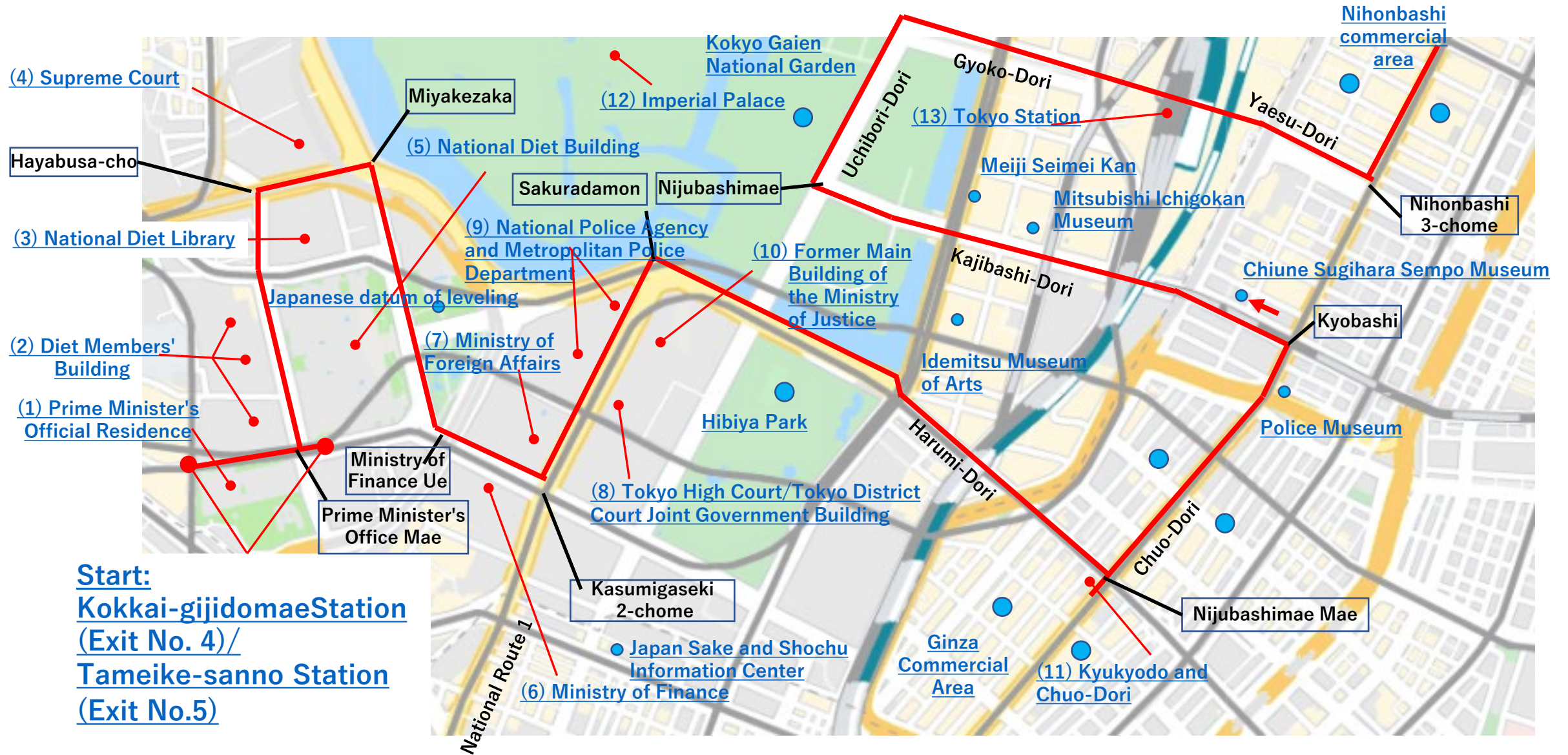
On the other hand, to appoint judges who make decisions in line with the Cabinet's intentions, the **executive** can appoint the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, which is equivalent to the Chief **Justice**, and assign other judges. On the contrary, if the judge (**judiciary**) has a significant breach of duty or misconduct, the judge (**judiciary**) can be dismissed by an impeachment trial conducted by the **Diet (legislature)**.

Basic information (4)

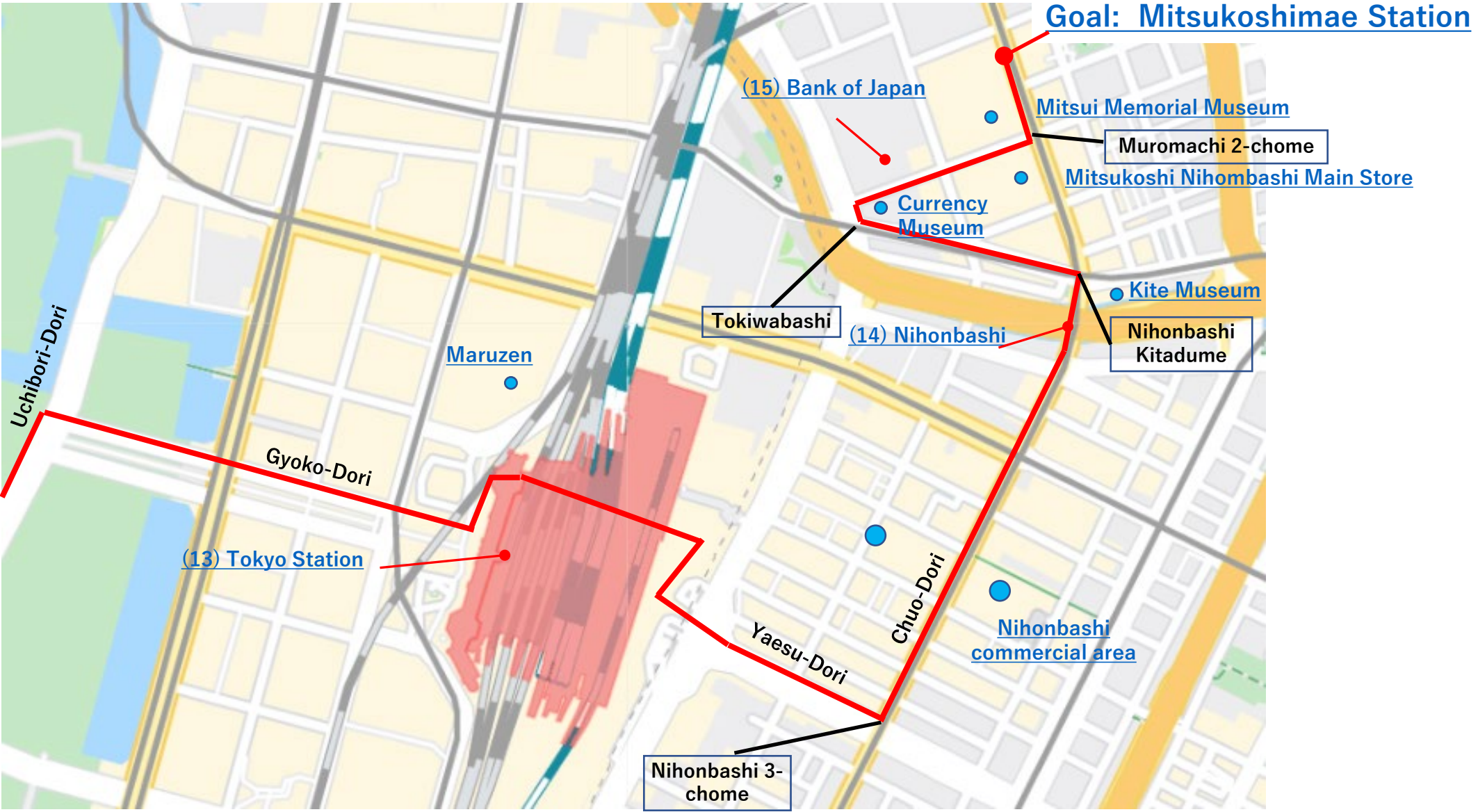
In addition, the **Diet (legislature)** appoints the **Prime Minister**, who is the head of the **executive**, or makes a "resignation recommendation" to the Cabinet by passing a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet. However, the **Prime Minister** has the authority to temporarily dissolve the House of Representatives of the **Diet (legislature)** and hold elections for the House of Representatives to seek the people's judgment.

This separation of powers prevents the abuse of power in Japan, but the powers of the **legislature**, **executive**, and **judiciary** are not completely equal, and the Constitution of Japan stipulates that the **Diet (legislature)** consisting of members of the Diet elected by national elections is the "highest organ of state power."

Route (1)



Route (2)



Start: Kokkai-gijidomae Station (Exit 4)
/Tameike-sanno Station (Exit 5)

[Back to Route \(1\)](#)

This route starts from Kokkai-gijidomae Station (Exit 4) or Tameike-sanno Station (Exit 5) on the subway. Kokkai-gijidomae Station and Tameike Sanno Station are connected by an underpass, but if you are going from Tokyu Ookayama Station near the Ookayama Campus of Tokyo Tech, it is convenient to use Tameike-sanno Station (Exit 5) on the Namboku Line, where the Meguro Line runs.



Information signboard on the platform of Tameike-sanno Station on the Namboku Subway Line



Tameike-sanno Station (Exit No.5)

Checkpoints and Explanations (1)

(1) Prime Minister's Office

Japan has a parliamentary **cabinet** system. The **Prime Minister**, nominated by the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors, which consists of members of the Diet elected by the people, and appointed by the Emperor, serves as the **head of the executive** and organizes the **Cabinet**.

Unlike a **president**, who is elected by direct and indirect elections of the people, the **Prime Minister** of Japan has no fixed term. Under the current constitution, the shortest term of office is 62 days, and the longest is 3188 days in total.

Checkpoints and Explanations (1) Continued

(1) Prime Minister's Office

The reason for this change in the term of office for the **Prime Minister** is that under the parliamentary **cabinet** system, the number of seats (members) in the **Diet** of the political parties that are the support base of the **Prime Minister** may decrease in a short period. At some point, even the **Prime Minister**, nominated with the votes of a majority of members of the Diet, may lose the support of the supporting political parties. If the Diet cannot secure a majority of seats, the Diet will not be able to approve the budget bill or pass bills. Therefore, the only option is to choose the dissolution of the House of Representatives or the resignation of the Cabinet, and this may lead to resignation even in a short period.

Checkpoints and Explanations (1) Continued

(1) Prime Minister's Office

At the Prime Minister's Office, the **Prime Minister** engages in public affairs such as cabinet meetings with the ministers that make up the Cabinet, meetings with domestic and foreign VIPs, press conferences, and meetings of the Emergency Response Headquarters in the event of a natural disaster. Therefore, the Prime Minister's Office is one of **the centers of the executive** in Japan.

Checkpoints and Explanations (1) Continued

(1) Prime Minister's Office

When TV news reports on the official affairs of the Prime Minister, it often broadcasts from the interior or exterior of the **Prime Minister's** Office, so you have probably seen it before. Since there are walls around the site of the Prime Minister's Office, the exterior of the office cannot be seen well from this route, but the Prime Minister's Office website has photos of the exterior and interior.

Japanese: <https://www.kantei.go.jp>

English: <https://japan.kantei.go.jp>

Checkpoints and Explanations (1) Continued

(1) Prime Minister's Office

On the premises of the Prime Minister's Office, there are also the **Prime Minister's official Residential Quarters** where the **Prime Minister** resides and the **Chief Cabinet Secretary's official Residential Quarters** where the **Chief Cabinet Secretary** resides.

The **Chief Cabinet Secretary** is the head of the Cabinet Secretariat, which is responsible for coordinating various administrative departments regarding Cabinet matters and serves as a government spokesman. The Chief Cabinet Secretary is an important official, also known as the "right hand of the Prime Minister," because the order of the Chief Cabinet Secretary in acting on behalf of the **Prime Minister** is stipulated next to the Deputy Prime Minister. Therefore, this **Chief Cabinet Secretary's official Residential Quarters** are located on the same premises as **Prime Minister's Office and the Prime Minister's official Residential Quarters**.

Checkpoints and Explanations (2)

(2) Members' Office Building

The Members' Office Building is the office of members of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors (**members of the Diet**). **Members of the Diet** have their own offices in each constituency throughout Japan, but it is difficult for locally elected **members of the Diet** to return to their constituencies during Diet sessions. Therefore, the Members' Office Building was established under the Diet Law as a base in Tokyo for the political activities of locally elected **members of the Diet** and is managed by the secretariats of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.

Checkpoints and Explanations (2) Continued

(2) Members' Office Building

Although **members of the Diet** in Japan can receive donations from individuals, companies, and groups, etc., as **political funds**, the following is stipulated by the Political Funds Control Act; A political organization represented by each member of the Diet shall manage the withdrawal and deposit of **political funds**, and the person in charge of fund management stipulated for each organization shall regularly prepare and publish a government report on political funds. On the other hand, receiving **political funds** in response to a request to exercise the authority of members of the Diet is equivalent to bribery. In the case of bribery (corruption cases), there is often news that the political funds were provided in cash, which is not mentioned in the government report on **political funds** at the Members' Office Building.

Checkpoints and Explanations (2) Continued

(2) Members' Office Building

The Members' Office Building is behind the **Diet Building** (checkpoint (5)) and is easily accessible from the Diet Building.

The Prime Minister's Office (Checkpoint (1)), the Members' Office Building (Checkpoint (2)), and the Diet Building (Checkpoint (5)) are located in Nagata-Cho, Chiyoda Ward. Terms such as "Nagata-Cho" and "Nagata-Cho no Sensei (official/teacher)" are sometimes used as jargon to refer to politics and members of the Diet.

Checkpoints and Explanations (3)

(3) National Diet Library

Based on the National Diet Library Law, the National Diet Library has been established for the following purposes; collecting books and other library materials, providing services that support the activities not just of the National Diet itself but of agencies in the executive and judicial branches of government as well as of the Japanese public.

In addition, the Law stipulates that when publications (books, recorded materials such as characters and images by electronic recording media, etc.) are published in Japan, they must be delivered to the National Diet Library.

Checkpoints and Explanations (3) Continued

(3) National Diet Library

In addition, in response to changes in publishing media in recent years, "Internet materials" and "online materials" that have been made available to the public are also collected, and since all the publications published in Japan have accumulated, the National Diet Library is a facility that can be said to be **the center of intellectual cultural properties** in Japan.

The National Diet Library is open to anyone over the age of 18. Please check the website of the National Diet Library for details.

Japanese: <https://www.ndl.go.jp/index.html>

English: <https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/index.html>

Checkpoints and Explanations (4)

(4) Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is a **judicial organ** established by the Constitution, and the role of the entire courts, including the lower courts, is stipulated by the Court Act.

In Japan's judicial system, a **three-trial system** is adopted as a general rule. The **District Court** handles original complaints, the **High Court** handles appeals when there is dissatisfaction with the District Court's decisions, and the **Supreme Court** makes the final decision in appeals when there is dissatisfaction with a decision of the High Court. There is only one Supreme Court in Japan. It judges whether the interpretation of laws and regulations is properly performed in the High Court and conducts judicial and executive affairs (establishment of rules in the courts, personnel affairs, etc.).

Checkpoints and Explanations (4) Continued

(4) Supreme Court

In addition, there is no Constitutional Court in Japan that handles unconstitutional reviews of whether the laws and regulations enacted by the legislature (the Diet) violate the Constitution. Article 81 of the Constitution stipulates that the Supreme Court also plays the role of a Constitutional Court, and it is an organization that can be said to be **the center of the judiciary** in Japan.

Checkpoints and Explanations (5)

(5) Diet Building

Since its completion in 1936, the Diet Building has held the Imperial Diet based on the old Japanese Constitution (until March 1947) and the **Diet** based on the current Constitution (after May 1947).

Article 41 of the Constitution stipulates that the **Diet** of Japan is "the highest organ of state power and the sole law-making organ of the State," and Article 42 of the Constitution stipulates that the Diet is a bicameral legislature consisting of the House of Representatives (lower house) and the House of Councillors (upper house). In addition, the Constitution and the Diet Act stipulate that the House of Representatives has superiority over the House of Councillors.

Checkpoints and Explanations (5) Continued

(5) Diet Building

The Diet Building is symmetrical, with the House of Representatives on the left side and the House of Councillors' chamber (plenary session room) and committee room on the right side, making it **the center of the legislature** in Japan.

Even ordinary people can tour the building by making a reservation in advance, and the plenary session also accepts visitors on a first-come, first-served basis. Please check the websites of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors for details.

English: https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/guide/tours.htm

English: <https://www.sangiin.go.jp/eng/info/dbt/index.htm>

Spot to Stop by: Japanese Datum of Leveling

The Japanese datum of leveling is a control point for the altitude of the Japanese archipelago, excluding its remote islands. Its height (from the average sea level in Tokyo Bay) is precisely measured and defined. Since the altitude of the datum of leveling changes due to large earthquakes, it was revised in 1923 after the Great Kanto Earthquake and again in 2011 after the Great East Japan Earthquake, and now it is 24.3900 m above sea level.

There are 84 control benchmarks in various parts of Japan. There are 16,707 benchmarks in Japan, including the first-order control points measured in units of 0.1 mm and the second-order control points measured in units of 1 mm. This Japanese datum of leveling is the origin for all those benchmarks.

At present, crustal movement observations are being carried out using a global positioning satellite system that uses 1,300 GPS-based control stations to measure position and height in near real-time.

Checkpoints and Explanations (6)

(6) Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is one of the one office, 11 ministries, and one agency *1 (as of 2021), which is an administrative agency under the direction of the **Cabinet**.

*1 One office, 11 ministries, One agency

Cabinet Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Defense, Reconstruction Agency

Reference: https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/jinjikyoku/files/satei_01_05_3.pdf (Japanese)

Checkpoints and Explanations (6) Continued

(6) Ministry of Finance

Initially, it is the **Cabinet**'s sole responsibility to draft the national budget, but the Ministry of Finance prepares the actual budget based on the Cabinet's intentions.

Every year around the end of July, each ministry and agency is notified of the **budget request guidelines** decided by the **Cabinet**. Each ministry and agency submits a **budget request** prepared based on this to the Ministry of Finance by the end of August. The Ministry of Finance prepares government proposals through discussions with the persons in charge of each ministry and agency, vice-minister negotiations by the administrative vice-ministers of each ministry, ministerial negotiations by the ministers, and political negotiations. The Ministry of Finance has a superior position over other ministries and agencies because it can set the budget for other ministries and agencies.

Checkpoints and Explanations (6) Continued

(6) Ministry of Finance

Many ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (checkpoint (7)), are located in Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda Ward, and the term "Kasumigaseki" is sometimes used as jargon to refer to ministries and bureaucrats.

Checkpoints and Explanations (7)

(7) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is one of the one office, 11 ministries, and one agency *¹ (as of 2021), which is an administrative agency under the direction of the **Cabinet**.

*¹ One office, 11 ministries, One agency

Cabinet Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Defense, Reconstruction Agency

Reference: https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/jinjikyoku/files/satei_01_05_3.pdf (Japanese)

Checkpoints and Explanations (7) Continued

(7) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts negotiations with foreign governments, collects and analyzes information on the politics and economy of the country, and leads international public relations activities to help people around the world understand Japan.

In the Cabinet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs is generally ranked next to the Prime Minister, the Chief Cabinet Secretary, and the Minister of Finance. Many of the successive Prime Ministers served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs before taking office as Prime Minister.

Checkpoints and Explanations (8)

(8) Tokyo High Court/Tokyo District Court Joint Government Building

Kosai and Chisai are abbreviations for the High Court and the District Court, respectively. The High Court is the highest court among the lower courts after the Supreme Court (Checkpoint (4)). The Tokyo High Court is one of the eight High Courts in Japan. It has jurisdiction over the ten prefectures of Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Shizuoka, Yamanashi, Nagano, and Niigata, in addition to Tokyo.

This building is used jointly by the Tokyo High Court and the Tokyo District Court, and there is only one Tokyo District Court in Tokyo, so we can say that all the courts in Tokyo are here.

Checkpoints and Explanations (9)

(9) National Police Agency and Metropolitan Police Department

The National Police Agency is a national administrative agency established under the National Public Safety Commission. It can be said to be **the center of police administration** in Japan because it plans the police system, manages police on cases related to national public security, and supervises and guides Prefectural Police Departments. However, there are no investigators at the National Police Agency.

The National Public Safety Commission, which is located in the same building as the National Police Agency, is an administrative committee that is an external agency of the Cabinet Office under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister. It is an organization for ensuring democratic management and the political neutrality of police administration. The Public Safety Commission oversees the proper operation of the National Police Agency but does not give instructions or orders for individual cases.

Checkpoints and Explanations (9) Continued

(9) National Police Agency and Metropolitan Police Department

The Metropolitan Police Department and the National Police Agency have similar names in Japanese. They are easily confused, but the Metropolitan Police Department is a police organization under the jurisdiction of Tokyo. It is positioned as a subordinate organization of the Tokyo Metropolitan Public Safety Commission under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Tokyo. This relationship is similar to the relationship between the National Public Safety Commission and the National Police Agency.

Unlike the National Police Agency, the Metropolitan Police Department has investigators. Police officers (Omawari-san) working at police stations, and the police boxes in various parts of Tokyo, which are the local agencies of the Metropolitan Police Department, are familiar to the citizens.

Checkpoints and Explanations (9) Continued

(9) National Police Agency and Metropolitan Police Department

The Metropolitan Police Department in Tokyo is equivalent to the police headquarters with jurisdiction over each prefecture. On the other hand, since Tokyo is Japan's political and economic center, the Metropolitan Police Department is different from the police headquarters in other prefectures. Many of its executives are seconded from the National Police Agency. The Police Act stipulates that the National Public Safety Commission shall carry out appointments and dismissals with the consent of the Tokyo Metropolitan Public Safety Commission. The appointment and dismissal of the Superintendent General, the head of the Metropolitan Police Department, also requires the approval of the Prime Minister. Due to these circumstances, the name is specially called the Metropolitan Police Department, not the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Headquarters.

Checkpoints and Explanations (9) Continued

(9) National Police Agency and Metropolitan Police Department

The Metropolitan Police Department building is a characteristic building with a high communication antenna and heliport on the roof, which is a little sharp when viewed from the Sakurada Gate of the Imperial Palace. Its appearance is often used in the opening of detective dramas.

Also, like other ministries and agencies, the address of the building is Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda Ward, but unlike other ministries and agencies, the term "Sakuradamon" is sometimes used as jargon for the National Police Agency and the Metropolitan Police Department.

Checkpoints and Explanations (10)

(10) Former Main Building of the Ministry of Justice

This building was used as the main building of the Ministry of Justice in the past but while it is no longer **the center of legal administration** in the present day, it is a characteristic and historic building along the route, so we chose this building as a checkpoint. By the way, the current main government building of the Ministry of Justice is Central Government Building No. 6, which is located behind this building.

Legal administration refers to the development of laws, the maintenance of legal order, the protection of the rights of people, and immigration control that is closely related to international students.

Checkpoints and Explanations (10) Continued

(10) Former Main Building of the Ministry of Justice

This building was built in the German Neo-Baroque style, designed by two German architects, and was completed in 1895 after a seven-year construction period. From its appearance, it is called the Red Brick Building. It has been used as the government building of the Ministry of Justice (shihosho) under the old Constitution and the Ministry of Justice (homusho) under the current Constitution for a long time after being repaired and restored in the wake of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and World War II in 1945.

In the renovation work in 1994, it was restored to its original appearance and was designated as a national important cultural property in the same year. It is still used as the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Justice Library.

Checkpoints and Explanations (10) Continued

(10) Former Main Building of the Ministry of Justice

In addition to legal history materials, architectural history materials are also exhibited in the Ministry of Justice Museum, which is open to the public free of charge on weekdays. We also recommend this building as a Spot to Stop by.

Reference: Website of the Ministry of Justice Museum (Japanese Version)

http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/tosho-tenji/housei06_00004.html

Spot to Stop by: Hibiya Park

Hibiya Park is a metropolitan park that is open to the public free of charge. There are several fountains, flower beds, and open spaces, etc., in an area of about 16ha (0.16km²), and this is famous as a place of relaxation for the citizens of Tokyo. In addition to facilities such as Hibiya Library, Hibiya Public Hall, large and small concert halls, restaurants, and shops, there are also many historical spots left in the park.

Reference: Guidebook of Historical Spots in the Park (English Version)

https://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/park/view/pdf/hibiyaguide_english_20200630.pdf

Such a vast site could be secured as a park near the government office district because this area was originally a place where the inlet of Edo Bay was reclaimed, and the ground was terrible, so it was not suitable for the construction of large-scale buildings.

Spot to Stop by: Hibiya Park Continued

At Hibiya Park, extraordinary events are held weekly. For example, events where you can enjoy local specialties and sake from all over Japan and Oktoberfest (German beer festival) held in October in Germany are held in May or June only with food and drink charges. You can experience many things that can only be experienced in Japan, so we recommend the park as a place to go to play on weekends. Please check the website below for events.

Reference: Tokyo Metropolitan Park Association Website

Japanese: <http://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/index.html>

English: [http://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/index.html#googtrans\(en\)](http://www.tokyo-park.or.jp/index.html#googtrans(en))

Spot to Stop by: Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center [Back to Route \(1\)](#)

Although it is a little off this route, on the south side of Hibiya is Nishi-Shimbashi, which is prospering as a business and commercial area along with Shimbashi located to the east of Nishi-Shimbashi. There are many museums, art galleries, and shops opened by companies and local governments to widely introduce their own or local foods and goods and explore consumer reactions (antenna shops in Japanese-English) around this route, including in Shimbashi and Nishi-Shimbashi. There are places where you can enjoy them for free, so please feel free to visit.

The first to introduce is the "Japan Sake and Shochu Information Center," operated by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. This center is a kind of antenna shop (Japanese-English) that holds exhibitions and events that introduce sake culture for free. Under Japanese law, you can drink alcohol if you are over 20 years old. However, if you are an international student prohibited from drinking alcohol or are not allowed to drink alcohol under the law of your own country, we do not recommend drinking or buying alcohol even if you are over 20 years old.

Spot to Stop by: Idemitsu Museum of Arts

The Idemitsu Museum of Arts is an art museum that exhibits works of art collected by Sazo Idemitsu (1885-1981), the founder of Idemitsu Kosan Co, Ltd., an oil wholesale company. The museum opened in 1966, the same year as the completion of the Imperial Theater Building which contains the museum. The exhibits are mainly Japanese calligraphy and oriental antique art such as Chinese and Japanese ceramics, and the museum holds many special exhibitions. Please check the website for admission fees and opening hours.

Museum Website (English Version) <http://idemitsu-museum.or.jp/en/>

By the way, the Teigeki Building, which houses this museum, was designed by Professor Yoshiro Taniguchi, an emeritus professor of Tokyo Tech, like the 70th Anniversary Hall on the Ookayama campus of Tokyo Tech. This can be said to be closely related to Tokyo Tech.

Area to Stop by: Ginza Commercial Area

The west side of the JR line where Hibiya Park is located is named Hibiya, while the east side of the JR line is named Ginza. The name Ginza comes from the fact that the silver mint public office (Ginza Yakusho), which manufactures silver coins, was relocated from Sunpu (now Shizuoka City) in 1612 in the early Edo era to cast silver coins and trade silver bullion. The Ginza Yakusho was relocated in 1800, but Ginza remains a common name for this area and is now used as a town name.

Since the Edo era, the Ginza area has prospered as a craftsman's town and commercial area. The brick townscape was improved in the Meiji era, making it the best downtown area in Japan. The current cityscape of Ginza was constructed after World War II.

Area to Stop by: Ginza Commercial Area Continued

The Ginza area is shaped like a long rectangle from southwest to northeast and short rectangle from northwest to southeast. Harumi-Dori, which is also on this route, runs from northwest to southeast in the center of the Ginza area. Therefore, both the north and south sides of Harumi-Dori are commercial areas, and many shops make you want to stop by.

The center of this Ginza area is far from the railway between Shimbashi and Tokyo Station because Ginza was already a downtown area when planning the railway between Shimbashi and Tokyo Station and acquiring land was unrealistic. As a result, Ginza avoided the division of east and west, which contributed to its subsequent development.

Area to Stop by: Ginza Commercial Area Continued

In the Showa era, the image of a "high-class shopping district" was established in Ginza, so there were many shopping districts named "Ginza," such as the Meguro Ginza shopping district in Meguro Ward. The Togoshi-Ginza shopping district in Shinagawa Ward, which was the forerunner of this, took over bricks from Ginza that became unnecessary due to the Great Kanto Earthquake in the late Taisho era and laid them on the road and was named the Togoshi-Ginza shopping district.

There are shopping districts named "Ginza" all over Japan, but in addition to Japan, there are also shopping districts named "Ginza" in South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Palau, etc.

Area to Stop by: Ginza Commercial Area Continued

[Back to Route \(1\)](#)

Also, making fun of the crowds of people in Ginza, areas where typhoons often pass are sometimes called "typhoon Ginza." This term, of course, is not a formal weather term.

Checkpoints and Explanations (11)

(11) Kyukyodo and Chuo-Dori

Chuo-Dori (commonly known as Ginza-Dori) runs from southwest to northeast in the center of the Ginza area. Along Chuo-Dori, many shops, such as high-brand jewelry stores, boutiques, and department stores, sell the most expensive goods in Japan. This is a place that can be considered **the center of Japan's commercial area**. Chuo-Dori is a high-class downtown district comparable to Fifth Avenue in New York and Champs Elysees in Paris.

Please note that Chuo-Dori can be a pedestrian street on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays, and cars cannot pass or cross the street. Bicycles can pass if you get off and push them.

Checkpoints and Explanations (11) Continued

(11) Kyukyodo and Chuo-Dori

Ginza is the region with the highest land prices in Japan, and in particular, the area in front of Kyukyodo near the Ginza 4-Chome intersection, which is located in the middle of Chuo-Dori in the Ginza area, has received the highest evaluation in Japan (45.92 million yen/m² in FY2020). By the way, the land price is the valuation price used when calculating inheritance tax and gift tax, and the actual selling price may be 1.5 times or more than that.

We have selected Chuo-Dori on the route for this walking tour, but we also recommend taking a walk off this route as there are many shops on both sides of the streets that run vertically and horizontally in the Ginza area.

Spot to Stop by: Police Museum

This museum exhibits historical materials on Japanese police and introduces the current activities of the Metropolitan Police Department. The main exhibits are explained in English, and there are also exhibitions and events that children can enjoy.

The maximum number of visitors is 25 at a time, and there is a limit of 3 times a day (start time: 9:15, 12:45, 15:00) with a 90-minute replacement system, but you can enter the museum free of charge. If you want to make sure you enter the museum, we recommend making a reservation by phone.

https://www.keishicho.metro.tokyo.jp/multilingual/english/about_us/Police_Museum.html

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum

Chiune Sugihara (Sempo is used as the museum's name because it was called Sempo for Lithuanians because of its ease of pronunciation) was an employee of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early Showa era. He was appointed as Consular Agent of the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania, in August 1939.

This location and time are critical, so we will give you additional information. First, Lithuania is the southernmost country of the Baltic States, with a northern border bordering Latvia. Also, the southwestern border borders Poland, and the southeastern border borders Belarus, which belonged to the Soviet Union of Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) at that time. And August 1939 is just before the German invasion of Poland (September 1939).

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

After Chiune Sugihara arrived in Kaunas, many refugees from Poland and other European countries had flowed into Lithuania for fear of persecution by German troops. The following year, in June 1940, Soviet troops invaded Lithuania, and Lithuania lost its independence.

Against this background, Chiune Sugihara issued more than 2,000 visas to refugees (predominantly Jewish), including Lithuanians, to allow them to pass through Japan from July to August 1940.

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

At that time, the Soviet Union issued transit visas to foreigners who were sure to be leaving the country and allowed them to enter the country. As a result, those who received visas from Chiune Sugihara, and their families, had the opportunity to find a country that would accept them, as refugees after passing through the Soviet Union from Lithuania and entering Japan. The visas issued by Chiune Sugihara saved the lives of more than 4,500 people and are called the "Visas for Life."

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

On the other hand, Chiune Sugihara issued these "Visas for Life" in July to August 1940, just before the signing of the Tripartite Treaty of Japan, Germany, and Italy (Tripartite Pact of Japan, Germany, and Italy) (September 27, 1940). Chiune Sugihara's actions were contrary to the orders of the Japanese government because the Japanese government had a policy of not openly opposing the policies of the German government. Therefore, Chiune Sugihara could have been subject to dismissal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in fact received a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to comply with visa-issuance conditions. However, he continued to issue visas as much as he could because of his humanitarian feelings and love for humanity.

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

Chiune Sugihara was transferred to Berlin, Germany, in September 1940 by order of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the request of the Soviet Union and remained in Europe after that. However, Chiune Sugihara's actions in Kaunas were not favorable from the perspective of the German government, and he was restricted from his subsequent activities, such as being refused to be assigned to a German-controlled area during World War II.

After that, the Sugihara family, who reached the end of the war in Bucharest, Romania, returned to Japan in April 1947 after being detained by Soviet troops. Chiune Sugihara disappeared from the front stage of diplomacy when he retired in June of the same year after receiving a retirement notice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is believed that his actions in Kaunas, contrary to government orders, resulted in this treatment.

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

Chiune Sugihara's actions became widely known in Japan by being featured in books published in 1981 and TV programs in 1983. Also, his reputation was raised because he was awarded the "Yad Vashem Award" by the Israeli government in 1985 as a "Righteous Among the Nations." After his death, in October 2000, the Government of Japan officially restored his honor.

To convey to posterity the courageous actions supported by Chiune Sugihara's humanism, this museum, opened in March 2019, displays Chiune Sugihara's memoirs, passports issued under the Visas for Life, and medals later sent to Chiune from Israel and Poland.

Spot to Stop by: Chiune Sugihara Sempo Museum Continued

This museum is not a checkpoint as it is not the theme of this walking tour. We do not strongly recommend this facility because it requires an admission fee, but we would like international students to visit it once during their stay in Japan.

Website (English Version): <http://en.sempomuseum.com/>

This museum is on the 2nd floor of the building, and the signboard is small, so the entrance is difficult to see, but the entrance is in the direction of the red arrow shown in Route (1).

Spot to Stop by: Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum

Mitsubishi Ichigokan was a Queen Anne-style building initially designed by a British architect and completed in 1894. It was the first Western-style office building built by Mitsubishi in Marunouchi and was used as a bank office, but it was dismantled in 1968 due to deterioration.

However, since Mitsubishi Ichigokan was a building that symbolized the modernization of Japan, restoration has been considered since 2003, and based on the original design drawings and the actual measurement drawings at the time of dismantling, some parts of the old building have been used, and the same parts as the old building have been reproduced by production methods at the time. It was restored in 2009 after a construction period of about two years.

Spot to Stop by: Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum Continued [Back to Route \(1\)](#)

The museum was opened in 2010, the year after the building was restored, and is holding a special exhibition featuring modern Western art from the latter half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, which matches the age of the building.

Admission fees vary depending on the content and time of the exhibition, but discount rates may apply to university and graduate students, so please check the website.

Museum Website (English Version): <https://mimt.jp/english/>

Spot to Stop by: Meiji Seimei Kan

Shinichiro Okada designed this building, completed in 1934 with eight floors above ground and two floors below ground, and it is a classical style building with Corinthian colonnades lined up in front. The Government of Japan designated it as an important cultural property in 1997.

This building, which was the headquarters of Meiji Life Insurance Company, was requisitioned for the General Headquarters by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ) from September 1945 to July 1956 after World War II and was used for the US Far East Air Force (FEAF). Currently, it is used as the head office building of Meiji Yasuda Life Insurance Company, the successor company of the Meiji Life Insurance company. Part of it is open to the public free of charge as a museum that tells the history of the turbulent Showa era.

Website (Japanese): https://www.meijiyasuda.co.jp/meiji_seimeikan/index.html

Spot to Stop by: Kokyo Gaien National Garden

Going west on Kajibashi-Dori, the open space inside the inner moat of the Imperial Palace is a beautiful park covered with a lawn called Kokyo Gaien National Garden. Except for the part where the lawn is being cured, you can go onto the lawn, so you can have a picnic lunch.

This Garden is located in an area with many police officers guarding the area around the Imperial Palace, so you could say that it is the safest park in Japan.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12)

(12) Imperial Palace

The Imperial Palace has a residence for His Majesty the Emperor and a building for ceremonies and public affairs and can be said to be **the center of the Japanese Emperor system.**

In Chapter 1 of the Constitution of Japan, which came into effect on May 3, 1947, it was stipulated that "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State," "The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state," and "The Emperor shall not have powers related to government." Therefore, the Emperor is neither a "monarch" nor a "head of state" in Japan, and the Emperor system under the current Constitution is called a "symbolic Emperor system" and is not a national system.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12) Continued

(12) Imperial Palace

On the other hand, the Emperor conducts the following national affairs with the advice and approval of the Cabinet; "Convocation of the Diet," "Dissolution of the House of Representatives," "Appointment and dismissal of Ministers of State, etc.," "Awarding of honors," and "Receiving foreign ambassadors and ministers." The Japanese people widely accept the Emperor's existence through the activities of the Emperor, such as ceremonies and cultural activities in the palace, activities by the imperial family as honorary presidents of non-profit organizations such as the Japanese Red Cross Society, and activities such as visiting disaster-stricken areas.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12) Continued

(12) Imperial Palace

The area where the Imperial Palace is located was originally the place where Mr. Edo, who ruled this area at the end of the Heian era (around 1100 AD), set up his residence. "Edo," which was used as the name of this area before the name was changed to "Tokyo" in September 1868, was derived from Mr. Edo.

After that, Dokan Ota, who ruled this area on behalf of Mr. Edo, built a castle in 1457 and maintained a water moat. Dokan Ota is familiar to citizens of a certain age or older because there was the statue in front of the former Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building No. 1 in front of JR Yurakucho Station. The statue has now been moved into the Tokyo International Forum on the site of the former Government Building.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12) Continued

(12) Imperial Palace

Then, in 1590, Ieyasu Tokugawa moved his territory from Sunpu (now Shizuoka City) to Edo, and he worked on the maintenance of castles and castle towns. After he came to power in the Battle of Sekigahara (1600), he undertook large-scale water control and construction in castles and castle towns for over 50 years.

Edo Castle was a castle with many buildings built in a wider area than other castles remaining in various parts of Japan, but the castle tower, the tallest symbol of the castle, does not remain today. Since it was destroyed by the Great Fire of Edo in 1657, it was not rebuilt due to the loss of the role of the castle tower and economic reasons, as well as prioritizing the reconstruction of the town.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12) Continued

(12) Imperial Palace

Edo Castle existed as the residence of the shogun and the center of the Tokugawa Shogunate for more than 200 years after Ieyasu Tokugawa entered the castle. However, it was surrendered to the new Meiji government forces in April 1868. Edo Castle was renamed "Tokyo Castle (Tokei-jyo)" when Emperor Meiji arrived in October of the same year. When Emperor Meiji returned from Kyoto to Tokyo in March of the following year, the name was changed to the "Imperial Palace." Since then, it has been known as the Imperial Palace. By the way, until now, some people claim that "Kyoto and Tokyo are both capitals" because the Emperor has not issued an imperial notice to "move the capital to Tokyo." However, Kyoto does not have a capital function, so it is unfavorable today.

Checkpoints and Explanations (12) Continued

(12) Imperial Palace

After that, the palace was completed in the Imperial Palace in 1888, and it came to be called "Kyujyo." The year after the enforcement of the Constitution of Japan (1948), the name was changed to the "Imperial Palace," and it continues to this day.

Railroads and roads, including the subway, cannot pass through the current Imperial Palace area, which may force you to make detours. However, there are many opportunities for the general public to enter the Imperial Palace, such as the New Year's general public visit, Inui-Dori open to the public the spring and autumn (cherry blossoms/autumn leaves), and weekday visits, and Japanese people widely accept the existence of the Imperial Palace itself.

Spot to Stop by: Maruzen

The famous bookstore Maruzen Marunouchi Main Store is near the Marunouchi North Gate of Tokyo Station. This store is renowned as the bookstore with the largest selection of foreign books (imported books and magazines) in Tokyo, so we recommend you visit this bookstore to look for foreign books that you can't find at nearby bookstores.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13)

(13) Tokyo Station

Tokyo Station is the third largest JR station after Shinjuku Station and Ikebukuro Station in terms of the number of passengers, but ten conventional lines (**Chuo Line (Rapid)**, Yamanote Line, Keihin Tohoku Line, **Tokaido Line**, **Utsunomiya Line** (Tohoku Line/Takasaki Line), Joban Line, Sobu Line (Rapid) [Narita Express for Narita], Yokosuka Line [Narita Express for Yokohama], **Keiyo Line**, and **Musashino Line**) run into Tokyo Station, and it is the starting station for many lines (bold). In addition, Tokyo Station is the starting station for the **Tokaido Shinkansen**, **Tohoku Shinkansen**, **Joetsu Shinkansen**, **Hokuriku Shinkansen**, **Hokkaido Shinkansen**, **Yamagata Shinkansen**, and **Akita Shinkansen**, so it can be said to be **the center of railway traffic** in Japan.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

In addition to JR Lines, the Marunouchi Subway Line (Tokyo Metro) runs into Tokyo Station, and an underpass connects Tokyo Station to Otemachi Station, where you can use five lines; the Marunouchi Line, Tozai Line, Chiyoda Line, Hanzomon Line (Tokyo Metro), and Mita Line (Toei). Therefore, since it is within walking distance, we do not recommend taking the Marunouchi Line from Tokyo Station and transferring to another line at Otemachi Station, as it is a waste of time and money.

If you want to use the Tokyo Metro Chiyoda Line, you can walk about 200m from the Marunouchi South Gate of Tokyo Station to Nijubashimae Station.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

On the contrary, even in Tokyo Station, the Sobu underground platform where the Yokosuka Line and Sobu Line (rapid) stop and the Keiyo underground platform where the Keiyo Line and Musashino Line stop are known as platforms that take time to transfer from other lines.

By the way, in Japanese, the English term "platform" is abbreviated as "form" in katakana notation, but it is difficult to translate accurately by automatic translation, etc., so please be careful.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

The Marunouchi station building at Tokyo Station was designed by Kingo Tatsuno, who studied British architecture, and originated from a building completed in December 1914 after more than six years of construction. Since the station building was built during the Empire of Japan, in the center of the west side (Marunouchi side) of the station, which was directly connected to Gyoko-Dori from the Imperial Palace, there was an imperial gate that was used only by the imperial family. The character of being "the Emperor's station" was strongly expressed.

The station building was used after repairing damage caused by the Great Kanto Earthquake and World War II and was designated as an important cultural property in 2003. Restoration work has been carried out since 2007 while incorporating the latest technology, such as containing a seismic isolation structure underground, and in 2012 it was restored to its original appearance.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

After seeing the exterior of the Marunouchi station building, enter the station building from the North Gate. You can look up at the beautiful restored dome structure from the inside.

Since Tokyo Station has a passing structure, the station building is completely separated into the Marunouchi station building on the west side and the Yaesu station building on the east side. However, since it adopts elevated tracks, there is a wide concourse on the ground floor, and the underground structure is also being developed as an underground shopping mall.

If you go through the north passage of the station from the Marunouchi North Gate, you can go to the Yaesu North Gate through the railroad track, and if you go down the stairs on the way, you can enter the underground shopping center of the station.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

Most of the underground shopping mall of the station can also be used as a public path without admission fees, and many restaurants, souvenir shops, character shops, etc., are open, making it a tourist destination. In addition, the concourse and the underground shopping mall inside the ticket gate have been enriched with restaurants and shops called Ekinaka shops in recent years, making it a space that you can enjoy without exiting the ticket gate.

Checkpoints and Explanations (13) Continued

(13) Tokyo Station

For lines departing from and arriving at Tokyo Station, except for the Yamanote Line and Keihin Tohoku Line, which do not start from Tokyo Station, the direction from Tokyo Station as the departure station is sometimes referred to as "down," and the direction to Tokyo Station as the arrival station is sometimes referred to as "up." However, in an easy-to-understand format for users, the place name of the destination, such as "Platform for the X Line in the Y direction," is increasingly used in displays.

Also, for the Yamanote Line, which is a loop line, on the premise of left-hand traffic, clockwise is sometimes called the "outer loop," and counterclockwise is called the "inner loop," and the Keihin Tohoku Line is sometimes referred to as "northbound" or "southbound," which is often used in the news.

Area to Stop by: Nihonbashi Commercial Area

The north and south area of Nihonbashi (next checkpoint (14)) is called Nihonbashi and has developed as the best commercial area in Japan since the middle of the Edo period.

In the Meiji era, the center of the commercial area moved to Ginza because the Ginza area, which had room for development, had been renovated into a Western-style cityscape, but the Nihonbashi area has also undergone redevelopment and has been in the limelight again in recent years as a business and commercial area.

Checkpoints and Explanations (14)

(14) Nihonbashi

Nihonbashi was the starting point of the five Kaido roads (Toh Kaido, Nakasendo, Nikko Kaido, Oshu Kaido, and Koshu Kaido) constructed in the Edo period, so it is still the starting point of seven major national roads. Therefore, it can be said to be **the center of road traffic** in Japan.

"Zero Kilometer of Japan" is located in Nihonbashi, which is the origin of the distance displays of national roads. There are lion statues at the four corners of the bridge and Kirin statues at the base of the lighting tower on the parapet. The current bridge was completed in 1911 and was designated as a national important cultural property in 1999.

Checkpoints and Explanations (14) Continued

(14) Nihonbashi

Currently, there is a highway just above Nihonbashi, which is not a fantastic landscape. This is due to the construction of highways on rivers and canals to eliminate the need for land acquisition when developing a road transportation network in a short time in preparation for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

Many people hope to regain the landscape of Nihonbashi, which can be said to be one of the centers of Japan. In line with the plans for repairing and rebuilding the expressway in Tokyo, which has been 50 years since its construction, plans are currently underway for an underground expressway that passes through Nihonbashi. Construction will begin with the aim of opening in 2040.

Spot to Stop by: Kite Museum

This museum displays about 3,000 kites collected from all over Japan. Although the mainstream of Japanese kites is to put Japanese paper on a frame made of bamboo, which is caused by splitting bamboo into small pieces and then drawing a picture on it, unique kites have been made in various parts of Japan and have become a kind of traditional culture. In addition, samurai paintings drawn on kites are precious as works of art, and you will never get tired of seeing them.

Admission is free, but there is no guidance in English, so we recommend that you go with someone who understands Japanese.

Website in Japanese: <https://www.taimeiken.co.jp/museum.html>

Spot to Stop by: Currency Museum

The official name is the Currency Museum, Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies (IMES), Bank of Japan. You can see the currency in circulation since the beginning of the 8th century, and you can learn about the history of Japanese currency. After studying the outline of Japanese history, it will be even more interesting.

Admission is free, but there is no guidance in English, so we recommend that you go with someone who understands Japanese.

Website in Japanese: <https://www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm/>

Checkpoints and Explanations (15)

(15) Bank of Japan

The head office of the Bank of Japan (sometimes abbreviated as the Nichigin in Japanese), which is the central bank of Japan, is located here. The Bank of Japan is in charge of the exclusive issuance of bills and government bonds, determination of loan interest rates to financial institutions and execution of loans, mediation of the exchange of money and government bonds between multiple financial institutions, and administration of the government's financial window (national treasury). In other words, this is **the center of finance in Japan**. However, as explained on the next page, **this** does require some explanation.

Checkpoints and Explanations (15) Continued

(15) Bank of Japan

Public companies cannot get a loan directly from the Bank of Japan and must get a loan from banks in cities, but if the companies are publicly traded, they can raise funds directly from stock markets. Since it is probable that the funds of banks in cities are also collected in the form of bank deposits, which were originally in the market, loans (financing) from banks are sometimes called **indirect finance**, and financing from stock markets is sometimes called **direct finance**. Therefore, **the center of direct finance** in Japan is not the Bank of Japan but the Tokyo Stock Exchange, which buys and sells stocks. The Tokyo Stock Exchange is located in Nihonbashi Kabuto-Cho, about 400m east-southeast of Nihonbashi.

Checkpoints and Explanations (15) Continued

(15) Bank of Japan

Let's get back to the story about the Bank of Japan. The area where the Bank of Japan is located was originally the place where Ieyasu Tokugawa ordered the production of oval coins in 1595 and has been the center of money production and finance for over 400 years.

The building facing this route is the former building of the Bank of Japan. This former building was designed by Kingo Tatsuno as the head office of the Bank of Japan and was completed in 1896. It was designated as a national important cultural property in 1974. We introduced Kingo Tatsuno as the designer of Tokyo Station (Checkpoint (13)), but before designing Tokyo Station, he designed the Bank of Japan's head office and numerous branches. Among his works, this former building is the oldest surviving one.

Checkpoints and Explanations (15) Continued

(15) Bank of Japan

When viewed from above, the former building is famous for being in the shape of " 円 (yen) ," the unit of Japanese money. Currently, the former building is mainly used as an exhibition room to display photographs and paintings showing the history of the Bank of Japan and the tools used. The head office of the Bank of Japan operates in the new 10-story building behind the former building.

As of 2021, the Bank of Japan has begun a demonstration experiment with digital currencies, and coins and bills may disappear in the near future.

Spot to Stop by: Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store

Mitsukoshi is a department store that originated in Echigoya, a kimono fabrics merchandising company founded in 1673 by Takatoshi Mitsui, a kimono fabric merchant from Ise. In 1904, when Mitsukoshi Gofukuten Co., Ltd was established by combining the names of **Mitsu** (三) of Mitsui and **Koshi** (越) of Echigoya, it has declared the business conversion from a kimono fabrics merchandising company to a department store ("depart" for short) that was already booming in Europe and the United States. Mitsukoshi is considered the first department store in Japan.

Echigoya originally had a store near Nihonbashi, but in 1914 a Renaissance-style building with five floors above ground and one basement floor was built next to the former main building in Nihonbashi and became a hot topic. This building was equipped with Japan's first escalator, elevator, sprinkler, and heating throughout the building, but it was destroyed by fire in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923.

Spot to Stop by: Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store Continued

After that, the building was made of steel-framed reinforced concrete under earthquake disaster restoration work, and further expansion and renovation were made in 1935. An Art Deco style building with seven floors above ground and two floors below ground, which was connected to the current building, was completed. At this time, a pipe organ was installed that is still used for performances today.

The building was expanded and renovated after World War II, and in 1960, a huge wooden carving "Tenyo Statue Magokoro" was installed in the central hall. Furthermore, in 2008, seismic isolation retrofit construction was carried out to incorporate a seismic isolation structure into the foundations and pillars of the existing building, and in 2016 it was designated as a national important cultural property as a historic building.

Spot to Stop by: Mitsukoshi Nihombashi Main Store Continued

In recent years, since 2016, the building has been renovated by Kengo Kuma, an architect and the designer of Taki Plaza on the Ookayama campus of Tokyo Tech, and was reopened in 2018.

The lion statue in front of the main store, a symbol of Mitsukoshi, was installed in 1914 and is a vintage item that survived the Great Kanto Earthquake and the war. In addition, there are many highlights such as decoration inside and outside the main building and fossils inside the marble used, and free in-store tours and paid history & art tours are also held, so please consider participating.

https://www.mistore.jp.e.az.hp.transer.com/store/nihombashi/column_list_all/nihombashi_history/index.html

Spot to Stop by: Mitsui Memorial Museum

The Mitsui Memorial Museum is a facility that preserves and publishes cultural properties such as Japanese paintings, Noh masks, ceramics, and swords owned by the former Mitsui Zaibatsu (finance group). This collection contains multiple national treasures and many important cultural properties. Although it is a paid facility, it is a museum you should visit at least once. The museum is located on the 7th floor of the Mitsui Main Building, but the entrance is in the atrium on the 1st floor of the adjacent Nihonbashi Mitsui Tower.

Website in English: <http://www.mitsui-museum.jp/english/english.html>

The Mitsui Main Building is based on the one completed in 1929 after the Great Kanto Earthquake as a neoclassical style building with colonnades in front and was designated as an important cultural property in 1998.

Goal: Mitsukoshimae Station

Congrats!!! You have finished!!!

You've walked quite a distance. You haven't walked the shortest distance, so we think you can understand that there are many **centers of Japan** related to the **Japanese social structure** in such a narrow area.

Mitsukoshimae Station is on the Tokyo Metro Ginza Line and Hanzomon Line. Those who are more convenient to the JR Line can move to Shin-Nihombashi Station, which is a little further away, by an underground passage.

If you are confident in your physical fitness, please try [the advanced route](#), which is 1.4km longer.

Spot to Stop by: Former Manseibashi Station

The former Manseibashi Station, which opened in 1912 between Kanda Station and Ochanomizu Station on the Chuo Line and was abolished in 1943 and has been reconstructed and is open to the public as remains. The Transportation Museum was to the south of the former Manseibashi Station until 2006. It was a special place where people of a certain age and older could connect with steam locomotives and train operation simulators. Currently, the Transportation Museum's steam locomotives and other items have been moved to the Railway Museum near JR Omiya Station for display.

At the former Manseibashi Station, in addition to the "1912 stairways" at the time of opening and the "1935 stairways" that were set up when the Transportation Museum opened, the "2013 platform" that maintained the remains of the platform is open to the public.

Goal of Advanced Route: Akihabara Station

Until a while ago, Akihabara was known as an electric town with many shops selling electric appliances such as home appliances and computer parts. Currently, it is famous as a source of subculture such as idol-related goods represented by AKB48, which has a theater in Akihabara, anime/manga and game-related goods and toys, and maid cafes. It is a place that can be said to be **the center of Otaku (geek) culture** in Japan.

The goal of this route is Akihabara Station, which is served by the JR Yamanote Line, Keihin Tohoku Line, Sobu Line (local train), Tokyo Metro Hibiya Line, and Tsukuba Express. Please take a walk in the town of Akihabara and please take a convenient route back home.