

SAMUKAWA AND SIEA

(Samukawa International Exchange Association)

さむかわちょう 寒川町とSIEA

Samukawa is the town that comprises Koza-Gun (County), Kanagawa Prefecture. It is surrounded by four cities, Chigasaki, Fujisawa, Hiratsuka and Ebina, and as of July 1, 2009, the town's population stood at 47,812, compared to that of Chigasaki, which is a little over 230,000.

At one time, there was an opportunity for those cities and *Samukawa* to merge but this didn't come about. However, not only because it is so close to Chigasaki but also because *Samukawa's* name often crops up in Chigasaki City publications, people may think it is actually a part of Chigasaki City. However, it is not. The town is its own separate entity in terms of its administration.

In *Samukawa* there exists a body called the SIEA, which works to develop closer ties with foreign countries, while there are about 700 foreign residents today.

The SIEA was established in 1994 aimed at encouraging young people in the town to have contact with non-Japanese people and gain exposure to the cultures of various different countries. It has its executive office in the Town Office, about thirty officials and 100 association members work to run it, and their activity consists of four sections overseeing language training, interaction with foreign people, public relations, and homestay.

In addition to the SIEA News, the association holds various annual events, including special junior high school classes taught by overseas students from Yokohama National University, English conversation lessons, the setting up a booth at the Samukawa Industrial Fair, games at Halloween and a New Year party. Furthermore, students from Washington & Jefferson College in Pennsylvania visit the town every two years.

Through its cross-cultural communication program, the SIEA has done much to foster interaction between *Samukawa* junior and senior high school students and their non-Japanese counterparts. Soccer games between *Samukawa* teams and a Peruvian team have been held, it has arranged host families for overseas visitors here and vice versa, and many junior high school students have gone on homestay visits to foreign countries. So far, young people from New Zealand, the United States, Russia, China, Nepal, Indonesia, Brazil and other countries have visited *Samukawa*.

Future projects include how to organize meetings with foreign residents and how to provide them with news on issues concerning their daily lives. As part of its 2009 agenda, the SIEA, in conjunction with the town's Board of Education and the Town Office, is planning to make Japanese language lessons available to foreign residents.

What characterizes *Samukawa* is that there is quite a lot of industry, and there is a famous shrine called *SAMUKAWA JINJA*. This shrine is very well known all over the country and every year millions of people visit, particularly during the time of the various festivals and celebrations such as the New Year days and the day of the *shichi-go-san* celebration for children in particular. This is when families celebrate the fact their children have reached the ages of seven, five and three. This festival falls on November 15, and at *SAMUKAWA JINJA* you will find many children and families wearing beautiful *kimono*.

SIEA Homepage: <http://www.shj.or.jp/siea>



Town Emblem

EBOSHI-IWA AND ITS BOAT TOUR

いわ しま しゅうゆう えぼし岩と島の周遊



In December every year, there is a cruise boat service to take passengers around the rock called *EBOSHI-IWA*. This rock is a part of the *Uba-jima*

reef, and is a symbol of Chigasaki, not only because its shape resembles the headgear worn by court nobles in the *Heian* era (794~1185), but also because of its particular geology.

EBOSHI-IWA and the reef are a part of the stratum consisting of two layers of volcanic rock and sandstone forming stripes, and its birth is said to go back 3 to 6 million years with the strata piling up over the long period.

Through the years, as there are rich fishing grounds around it, the reef had attracted fishermen from further afield than just the local Kowada area of Chigasaki, and this had caused some serious disputes. In the *Edo* era there was a trouble especially between fishermen from Izu and Kowada. However, the story goes that in the end some undeniable historical record was discovered referring to the ownership of the *Uba-jima* area, and this helped the Kowada fishermen win the dispute.

Concerning the cruise boats, the Chigasaki City Tourism Association offers the "*EBOSHI-IWA* boat tour" where people are able to take a boat from Chigasaki fishing port and enjoy an hour cruise around the rock and reef. From beyond the reef, it's possible to enjoy a superb view of the rock with a snow-capped Mt. Fuji as a backdrop.

Since this boat tour is so popular, many people apply to take it every year, but it will take some more time till we know when and how this tour will be arranged this year. Last year, it was on Sunday in December, the boat departed four times on the day, and the fare was ¥1,500. Those who wanted to go on board were required to make application by early November. One requirement was that passengers must be over 110cm in height. Should the number of applicants be more than this, places will be decided by drawing lots, and in the event the weather is stormy, the cruises will be cancelled.

The air is usually clearer in winter, so you could also enjoy a view as you look over the thick greenery of the hills and mountains.

Why don't you give this cruise a try?

Inquiry: The Chigasaki City Tourism Association at
0467-84-0377



A number of people wearing life jackets are boarding the boat on a sunny December day at Chigasaki fishing port.

HISTORY OF CHIGASAKI

DAI-ROKUTEN SHRINE

だいろくてんじんじや 第六天神社

Dai-Rokuten Shrine is located at Jukkenzaka in Chigasaki, about 100 meters west of the Jukkenzaka 2chome crossing on Route 1 in the direction of Hiratsuka. You can see the shrine on the right hand side of the road. It takes about 12 minutes on foot from Chigasaki station to get there.

The year of the shrine's establishment is not clear, but it is estimated to be in the early years of the Edo era (1603~1867) when the local area started to become populated.

The deity of Dai-Rokuten Shrine used to be worshipped as the god that bestows good physical health and eternal life. It was also the one that looked after the safety of travelers on the old Tokaido (Route 1) going back and forth between Kyoto and Edo, present Tokyo, as the shrine is located on the Tokaido. Also, the deity of the shrine has been worshipped as the god that bestows charity and all kinds of joy.

In recent years however, the deity of Dai-Rokuten Shrine has come to be worshipped as the guardian deity related to production, manufacturing and construction.

The deity enshrined here is said to be *Nobunaga Oda*, a conqueror in the age of wars, who had a very strong faith. Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who took over the power of *Nobunaga Oda* and unified the whole country, ordered the abolition of Dai-Rokuten Shrine because he feared the word and the deed of *Nobunaga* were the crucial power enshrined here.

For this reason, almost no Dai-Rokuten Shrines exist in the western part of Japan, and even in the eastern part they are extremely few in number. The question is whether this shrine has remained in direct association with the main shrine, or been allowed to remain as a result of the name of the god having been changed. It is said that this is one of only two independently existing Dai-Rokuten Shrines in the prefecture.

The shrine performs many rituals and events. One of these is taking part in Hamaori-Sai at Chigasaki Nishihama Beach on Sea Day (Umi no Hi) in July.

