

From Teri's trip in September 2007

Omotesando Hills

Omotesando 表参道

- Tokyo Metro Ginza Line,
Chiyoda Line & Hanzomon Line

■ By Teri Mitchell



Omotesando Hills



Ashi-yu (foot bath) by Omotesando street



Omikoshi (portable shrine) by ladies



Omotesando Hills (表参道ヒルズ) was opened in February of 2006, in a series of Tokyo urban developments such as Roppongi Hills (opened April 2003) or Tokyo Midtown (opened March 2007).

Omotesando Hills occupies a two hundred and fifty meter stretch of Omotesandō, a famous shopping and residential road in Aoyama.

This building replaced the Dojunkai Aoyama Apartment building that had been built after the 1923 Kanto earthquake. The original building created a nice street view and caught the hearts of passers-by. The destruction of the apartments again raised questions of Japan's commitment to preserve historic buildings.

The mission was 'to keep the height of the building as low as the row of Keyaki (Japanese Zelkova) trees by building a half of the structure underground to make the best use of the space adopted the slight slope of Omotesando to the building design as a public space inside'.

This trendy shopping, dining and residential spot consists of three buildings: The main building, the west building and the Dojuncan building and is 12-stories high with 6 floors above ground and 6 below. From B3 to the 3rd floor is occupied with about 100 boutiques, stores and restaurants. 4th and 5th floors are for residents. Guest parking is placed on the B4 floor.

I was fortunate enough to happen to see 'Omikoshi' on the street. Ladies were transporting a portable shrine on their shoulders. While the shrine is called Omikoshi, the act of carrying the shrine is also called 'Omikoshi' as well. It was a refreshing moment to see the traditional scene in the middle of contemporary atmosphere.

Another thing I enjoyed quite a lot is 'Ashi-yu' (=foot bath). It was set under a tent by the street and was filled with natural hot spring water from a famous hot spring in Niigata prefecture. Though I hadn't walked much yet, the unexpected foot bath soothed my feet greatly. It was sooo COMFORTABLE.

Explore Japan Troupe

Teri Mitchell is planning a private tour to Japan for the end of May or the beginning of June 2008. You will be exploring Tokyo, Yokohama and Kamakura on Teri's localized guided tour. If you've never been to Japan, this will be the best opportunity to start traveling there. Keep checking updates in Asia Trend Magazine or contact Teri at teri_mitchell@hotmail.com.

