

Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho (Sanbancho Conference Hall)



【Brief History】

The Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho is a national conference hall built at the site of the residence of Duke “Aritomo Yamagata,” who was a politician in the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho periods (1912-26).

The original building burned down in World War II, but the site of the garden created by Duke Aritomo Yamagata and a monument in commemoration of the visit of Emperor Meiji remain and remind us of the past.

The annex of the conference center was designed by “Hiroshi Oe,” one of post-war Japan’s representative architects. His architectural designs are famous for their high-level fusion of modernism and traditional Japanese styles. His major works are the Japan Pavilion of Japan World Exposition, Osaka 1970 and the National Noh Theater.

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho Guide Map

[1] Stone monument

Stone monument built by Aritomo Yamagata in commemoration of the visit of Meiji Emperor in October 1885. A waka poem by Aritomo Yamagata is engraved on the surface.



[2] Garden

The garden remains at the site of the residence built by Aritomo Yamagata in 1885 and reminds us of those days.



[3] Three-Step Fall and Pond

Like "Murin-an," a garden created by Aritomo Yamagata in Kyoto, there is a three-step waterfall that creates natural sounds. The pond includes colored carps brought up in Odiya City, Niigata



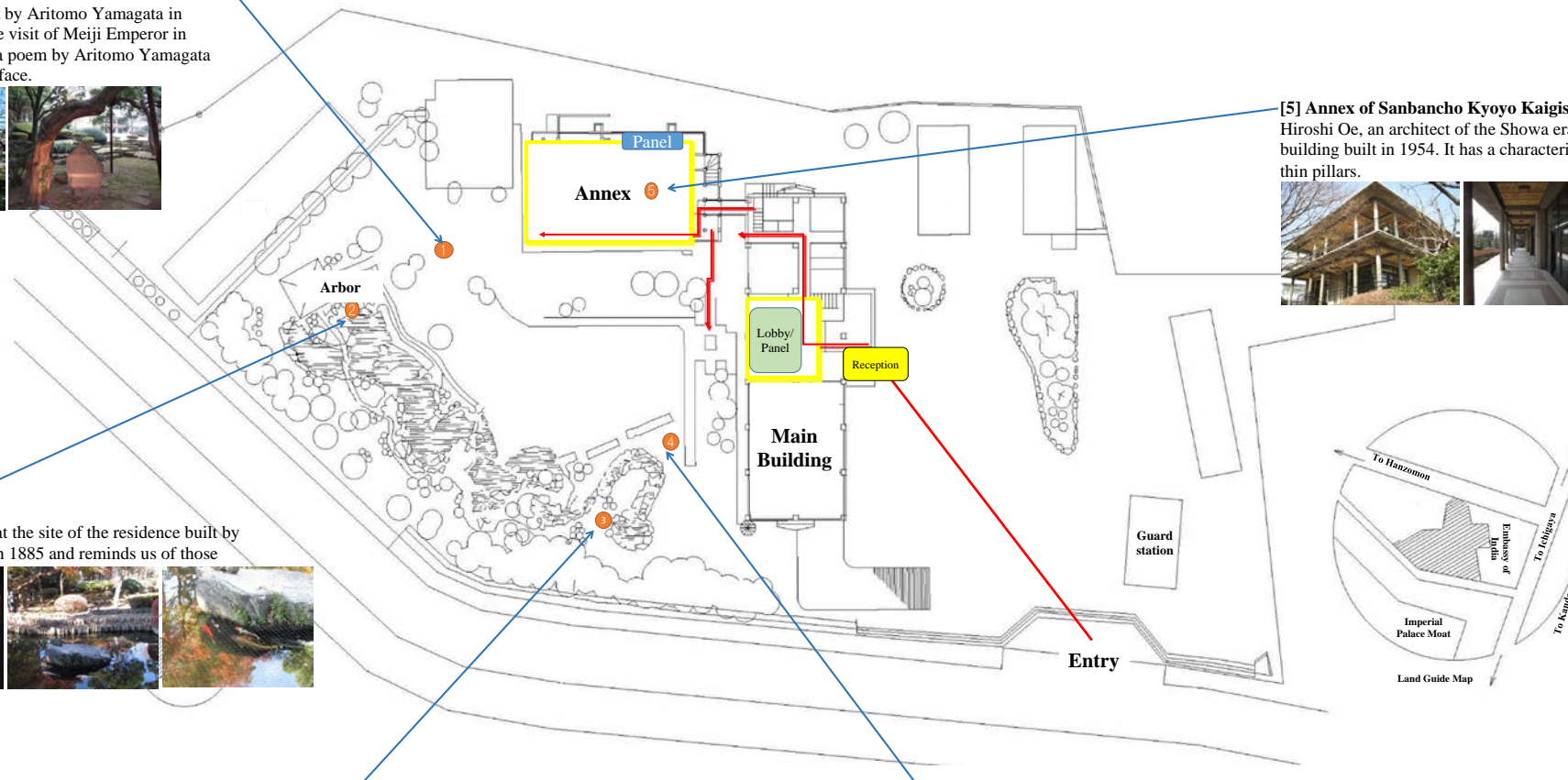
[4] Lantern

Lanterns in the garden of the residence of Aritomo Yamagata have hexagonal foundations and were created with a technique from late Edo Period to the beginning of Meiji Era.



[5] Annex of Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho

Hiroshi Oe, an architect of the Showa era designed the building built in 1954. It has a characteristic balcony with thin pillars.





Aritomo Yamagata

Aritomo Yamagata (1838-1922) was a general and politician from the end of Edo period through to the Meiji, and Taisho periods. As young boy he studied at the Shōka Sonjuku, which is the private academy of the late Tokugawa period educator and political activist Shōin Yoshida, and distinguished himself through his participation as a commander(*gunkan*) in the *Kiheитай* army created by Shinsaku Takasugi, who studied at the same academy, and devoted his energy to overthrow the Tokugawa shogunate.

In the Meiji government, he was involved in the development of the Japanese Army, a system of local government, and modern bureaucracy, and held important posts as the third and the ninth prime ministers, chairman of the Privy Council, Chief of the Army General Staff (later a Japanese field marshal).

At the same time, in his personal life, he was a talented gardener with a broad knowledge of gardens, and the gardens he designed are considered masterpieces of Japanese gardens.

Hiroshi Oe

Hiroshi Oe is an architect who graduated from the Department of Architecture, Tokyo Imperial University in 1938, worked as an architectural engineer at Mitsubishi Estte Co., Ltd., and established Oe Architecture Office in 1946. He was an educator as well. He became a Professor at Hosei Industrial College in 1948 and a Professor at Hosei University in 1950. He offered architectural designs of Hosei University and its affiliated institutions, and set a series of international style models. He is a creative architect who designed the National Noh Theater by using Japanese traditional architectural style in 1983.



Summary of the stone monument in commemoration of the visit of Meiji Emperor

On October 19 this year,

The emperor visited my residence. It was a great honor. He also gave me a silver cup and money. I, Aritomo, respectfully presented a Rai Kunimitsu sword and two pieces of calligraphy written by Mr. Shoin.

Today, the imperial family, cabinet members, and several military officers attended a banquet. Officers of Toyama Army Academy demonstrated martial arts and government officials demonstrated sword and spear arts before the emperor. The military band played music in the evening during the banquet. At night, we lit many lanterns and fireworks. As a guard of honor had been prepared, the emperor returned to the imperial palace with the gold-brocaded imperial flag. I had never been happier. I recorded the emperor's visit and the two gifts for the future generation.

November 1885

Aritomo Yamagata, Count with Jusanmi (Junior Third Rank), respectfully wrote this

Waka poem on the monument

The wind from high in the sky
Does not shake the branches of plum trees
In thy glorious reign
The wind brings the scent of plum blossoms
To melt hearts



Main Trees of the Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho

○ *Metasequoia*



○ Japanese Red pine



○ Japanese Maple



○ Grape myrtle



○ *Osmanthus fragrans*



○ Japanese apricot (Ume)



○ *Torreya nucifera*



○ *Prunus lannesiana*
cv. Gioiko



○ *Rhododendron pulchrum*
cv. oh-murasaki



○ *Castanopsis sieboldii*



○ Weeping cherry tree



○ Somei-yoshino (Cherry tree)



○ Japanese black pine



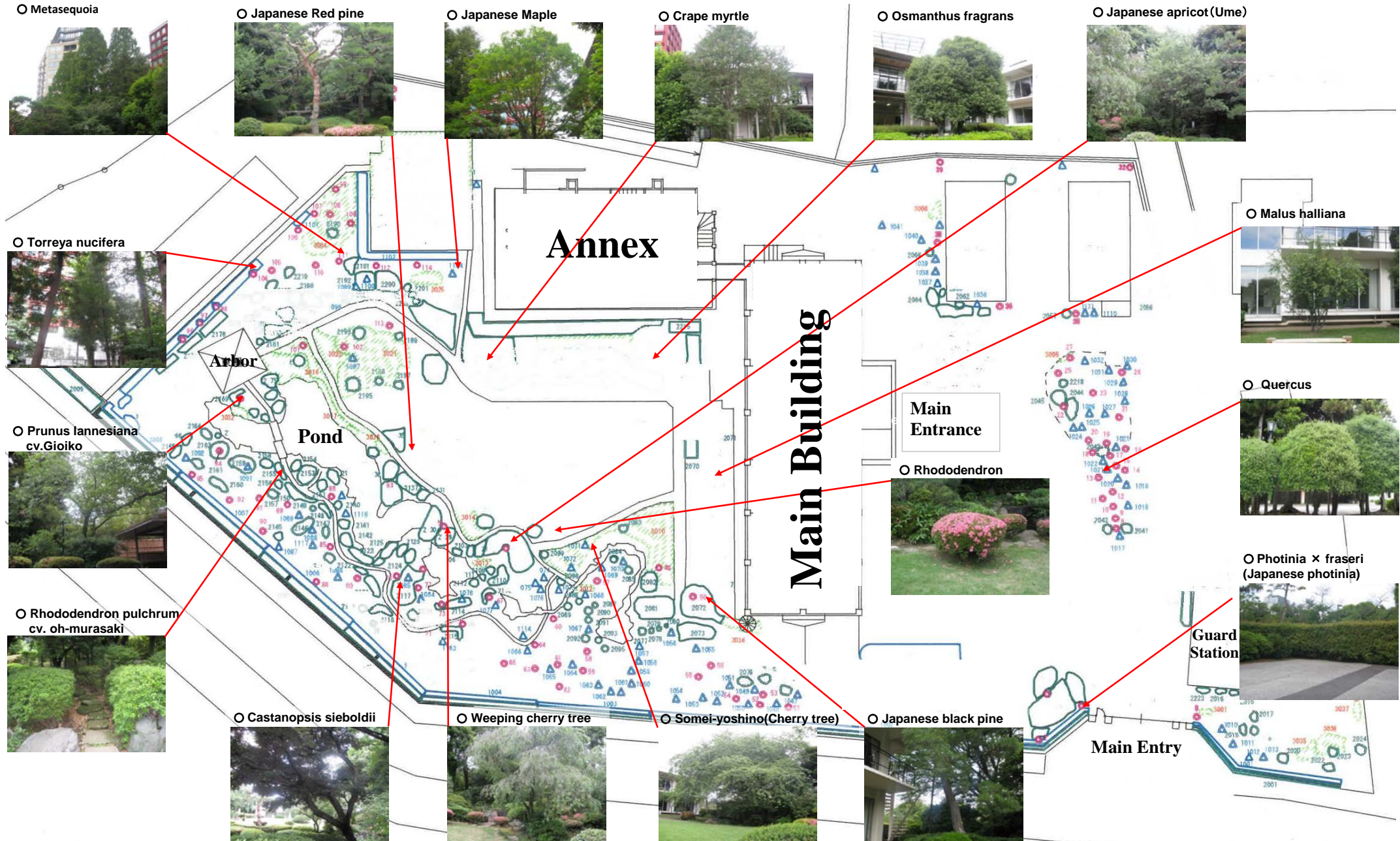
○ *Malus halliana*



○ *Quercus*



○ *Photinia × fraseri*
(Japanese photinia)



Chronology of Events Related to Sanbancho Kyoyo Kaigisho

- Meiji 14 (1881)
April 7 Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce was established
- Meiji 18 (1885)
The building was completed as a residence of Aritomo Yamagata.
Designer: Tokuma Katayama
The building was a masterpiece in Japanese western-style architectural history. There were no external decorations, but inner decorations were gorgeous with foreign goods, including a big mirror with marble front ornament. It included a carriage house, as well as charioteers and grooming rooms
* Floor space (main building): 819.8 square meters; total floor space: 1107.4 square meters, and attached buildings: 747.1 square meters.
- Meiji 18 (1885)
October 19 Visit from the Meiji Emperor.
- Meiji 18 (1885)
November Monument in commemoration of the visit was built.
- Meiji 19 (1886)
July 10 Inaugurated as the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce.
After the inauguration, the Government of Japan bought the private residence of Aritomo Yamagata as the office of the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce.
- Taisho 12 (1923)
September 1 The building was seriously damaged in the Great Kanto Earthquake.
- Showa 18 (1943) The building was reconstructed as the official residence of the minister. (Commencement of work in Jan. 1942 and completion in Oct. 1943)
- Showa 20 (1945)
May 24 Most of the building was burnt down by an air strike. The building was abandoned without any hope of rebuilding.
- Showa 27 (1952)
August Commencement of work on the former main building (wooden building; partially two stories; and total floor space of 819.8 square meters).
- Showa 29 (1954)
June Commencement of the Annex (Currently, reinforced-concrete (RC), two stories, with a total floor space of 833.1 square meters). Designed by Hiroshi Oe.
- Showa 48 (1973) Commencement of reconstruction of the main building (Currently, reinforced-concrete (RC) whole two stories, and the total floor space of 2086 square meters).
(Commencement of work in Aug. 1972 and completion in Mar.1973)
- Showa 55 (1980) Development of the garden (pond, arbor, hiking trail, trees, etc.).
- Showa 56 (1981)
April 7 The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), centenary celebration.

*Since April 1999, the building has been a common conference hall used by all ministries.

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