

Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall

The building housing the Memorial Hall is built in a modernized traditional Japanese way and is made entirely from Japanese cypress grown in Gifu, the birthplace of Chiune Sugihara. This unique wooden building was designed to suit the natural features of this area of Gifu, and to express the humanism of Sugihara. Sugihara's office, the observation room with the view of Yaotsu and the open timberwork at the exhibition room, all intensify the impression left by this great man.



The "Bells of Peace" Monument

Three towers designed as the piles of visas that Sugihara issued rise high up to the sky of Yaotsu. Each has a bell on top. On each is carved one of three words "Charity" "Courage" and "Spirit", and every time a bell is rung, it sends this message to the world.

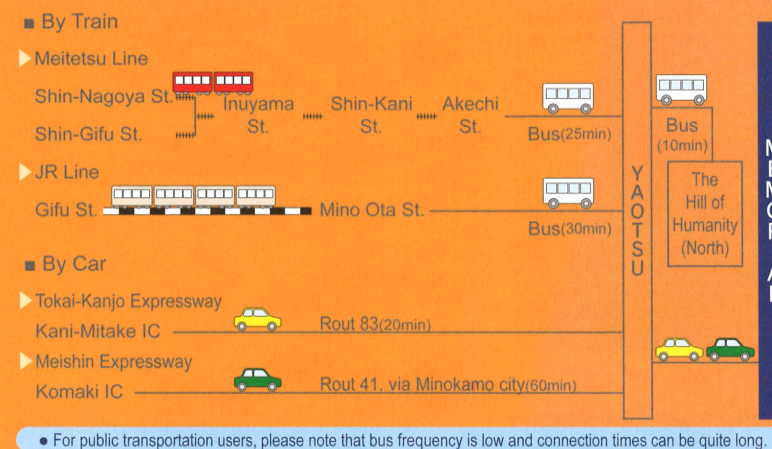


General Information

- Opening Hours 9:30 – 17:00 (admission accepted until 16:30)
- The Memorial Hall is closed on Mondays.
If a national holiday occurs on a Monday, the Memorial Hall will be closed on the following Tuesday.
- Closed on year-end and New Year holidays.

■ Admission Fee	Private Visitor	Adult	300 Yen
		Child	100 Yen / Free

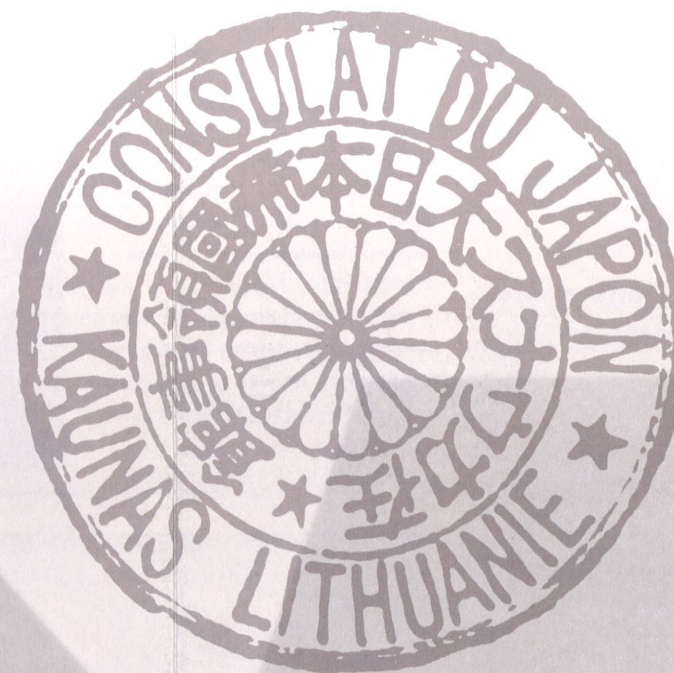
Access Information



Further Information

Sugihara Memorial 〒505-0301 Gifu ken, Kamo Gun, Yaotsu Cho, Yaotsu 1071
TEL 0574-43-2460 FAX 0574-43-2460

City Hall 〒505-0392 Gifu ken, Kamo Gun, Yaotsu Cho, Yaotsu 3903-2
TEL 0574-43-2111(Int. 252) FAX 0574-43-0969
[home page] <http://www.town.yaotsu.lg.jp>
[e-mail] yaotsu@town.yaotsu.gifu.jp



July 1940.

Jewish refugees who are fleeing the Nazis are gathered at the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas, asking for transit visas to Japan. Consul Sugihara faces a tough decision. What should he do?



杉原千畝記念館

The Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall



As clear and transparent as Sugihara's love for mankind was, so are the glass panels that portray his life.

If it were you, how would you feel?
If it were you, what would you do?

Chiune Sugihara

(1900-1986)

The man who saved the lives of 6,000 Jews by issuing them visas



Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese diplomat who saved 6,000 Jews from Nazi persecution, was an ordinary person who was born and raised in normal surroundings. That ordinary person, who loved his home country and was faithful to it, was also an international person who was empathetic to other people. During the Second World War, when Jews were persecuted and killed en masse, Sugihara took an unusual humanitarian action. Here, in the Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall which is placed in the middle of the rich greenery of his hometown Yaotsu, we would like you to get to know his true character. If you too, just like Sugihara, act with devotion, courage and generosity, you will surely have a chance to make a major contribution to society in the future.



"Visa for Life"

This replica of a visa written by Sugihara was contributed to the town of Yaotsu by Silvia Smoller, a Sugihara survivor. The Jews who escaped the Nazis thanks to those visas say that the visa is "the most important thing to them after life itself".

The ordinary person, Chiune Sugihara, was able to take an extraordinary act as a human being thanks to his **generosity, courage and devotion.**



Young Sugihara

Sugihara was born in Yaotsu in 1900 and was raised in a normal family and surroundings. He entered Waseda University, but financial difficulties led him to apply to study abroad through the Foreign Ministry. After passing the exams successfully, he was sent to Harbin to study Russian. This was his life's turning point.



The Sugihara family (Chiune is standing in the center)

1900-1922

Sugihara's work

After establishing himself in Harbin, Sugihara took his first step as a diplomat. Around that time in Europe, Hitler's dictatorship had begun, and the lives of the Jewish people were in danger.



Sugihara while serving in Manchuria

1923-1940

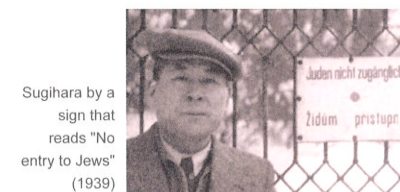
Learn from Sugihara

Then, in 1940, an unusual event made Sugihara face a tough decision. Jewish refugees who had escaped from the Nazis arrived at the consulate and asked for transit visas to Japan, in order to flee Europe.



Jewish refugees by the Japanese Consulate in Kaunas

In 1939 Sugihara was ordered to open a new consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania. He was ordered also to gather intelligence about the Soviet Union. At the same time, WW2 had begun and Jewish persecution by the Nazis was becoming more and more aggressive. However, many countries refused to let them in, and the Jews had nowhere to flee to.



Sugihara by a sign that reads "No entry to Jews" (1939)

Make Your Own Decision

The Decision Room

What would your decision be?

"Am I aloud to issue transit visas?" Sugihara telegraphed to the Ministry in Tokyo. "No visas should be issued to those who don't meet the conditions." was the Ministry's reply. Sugihara didn't know what to do. Should he issue the visas to the Jews and save them or should he act as a diplomat and obey his superiors? After considering and agonizing, he reached a decision.

Try to put yourself in Sugihara's place. What would your decision have been? After reaching a decision you are welcome to stamp your own admission ticket with the stamp on the table.

Here you can watch a film about Sugihara or listen to an interview taken with him.



1940

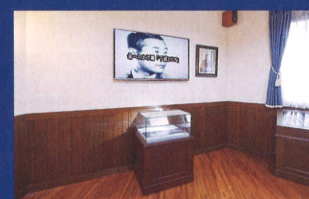
Sugihara's life after issuing the visas

After returning home to Japan, there was no position available for Sugihara in the Ministry and he was forced to leave the service. Over 20 years later, a Jewish man came to visit Sugihara. With tears in his eyes, he held a worn visa, the same visa that was given to him in Kaunas by Sugihara 28 years earlier and that had saved his life.



With Mr. Warhaftig, one of his survivors who became the Minister of Religious Affairs in Israel.

1947-



Video Corner (The Decision Room)

Here you can watch a 15-minutes film about Sugihara.



The Jews' Footprints

This marble plate shows the escape route the Jews took from Lithuania to Japan.

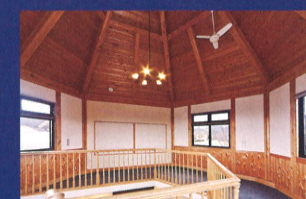


Message Board

Share with us your ideas of humanity or leave a message.



Temporary Exhibitions Room



Observation Room

Here you can enjoy a spectacular view of Yaotsu, Sugihara's hometown.

Sugihara's Biography

- 1900** Born on January 1st in Yaotsu in Gifu Prefecture
- 1917** Graduated from Daigo High school in Aichi Prefecture. Obeyed his father and took the admission test for medical school, but failed himself deliberately
- 1918** Entered Waseda University but dropped out in 1919, applied for the Foreign Affairs Ministry's program and was sent to study in Harbin
- 1924** Became a clerk in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. In February was posted in Manchuria and in December was transferred to Harbin
- 1932** Negotiated with the Russians over the North Manchuria Railroad. An agreement was signed in 1935
- 1937** Was posted in the Soviet Union but was denied entry by the Russians. Was appointed to the Japanese Legation in Helsinki, Finland instead
- 1939** Was ordered to establish a consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania
- 1940** From July to August 26th issue 2,139 transit visas to Japan to Jewish refugees. On August 29th he closed down the consulate in Kaunas. On September 5th he left Kaunas by train to Berlin. Was appointed to the Consulate General in Prague, Czechoslovakia
- 1941** On February 28th was appointed to the General Consulate in Konigsberg, Germany. In November was transferred to Rumania
- 1945** Was imprisoned in a Soviet POW camp in the outskirts of Bucharest
- 1947** In April returned to Japan with his family. Retired from office in June
- 1960** Appointed office head of a trading company branch in Moscow. After that he switched jobs twice but continued his stay in Moscow
- 1968** After 28 year had a reunion with Nishri, one of the people who were saved by his visas
- 1969** Received a medal from Zorach Warhaftig, the Israeli Minister of Religious Affairs, who was saved by him
- 1975** Retired
- 1985** Was awarded "Righteous among the Nations" by the state of Israel. He was the first Japanese to be awarded this title
- 1986** Passed away in Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture

杉原千畝記念館

The Chiune Sugihara Memorial Hall