

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF SAYAMA, JAPAN BY WIFA DELEGATION, MARCH 30-APRIL 5, 1994**

### **1. Description of City of Sayama: Physical, Demographics**

Sayama is a historic city. Shards of Jomon pottery (the earliest pottery in Japan) have been found on the high land along the Iruma river. Ancient wells were dug when the plateau was first cultivated, two of which still can be seen (the "Nanmagari Well" and Hirgane Well").

Sayama spans both sides of the Iruma River, and is situated between Kawagoe and Tokorozawa cities. In the feudalistic period (Edo era), most people were engaged in rice growing, and many rice fields still remain in Sayama. When the movement of people between Tokyo (then called Edo) began, this Irumagawa village became a post town along north-south and east-west routes connecting other cities, and a public market was opened.

Rafting on the Iruma developed the commerce of the village. Due to Tokyo's growth and several fires, timber was in demand and was rafted from the Hanno mountains from the transit point in the Iruma post town which is now Sayama.

The land is now 30% agricultural, 25% buildings, 9% forest, 36% other-parks roads, recreational facilities.

The population of Sayama is 162,986. There are 14,235 people per square mile in the area containing buildings. There are 70,200 taxpayers, 37% of whom work in Sayama, 63% commute to Tokyo. (Lou Briggs first family, the Yoshikawas, took her by bus and train to Tokyo on her 'free day,' Monday, and the trip took approximately 1 1/4 hours from Sayama.)

The foreign population is 1089, representing 34 countries. SIFA members take an active role in educating foreign residents by providing Japanese classes. They provide training for their members in how to teach Japanese to non-Japanese speakers.

Sayama has little crime: there were 3,791 reported crimes last year--1 murder, 3 armed robberies, and the remainder thefts. On an average day in Sayama, there are 4.2 births, 1.6 death, 2.5 marriage, 25 people move out of Sayama and 26 people move in. Last year there were 897 marriages and 160 divorces in Sayama.

There are several annual festivals in the city: The Irumagawa Tanabata Festival in August which dates back to the mid-Edo period, the Hichiman Shrine Deer Dance, expressing awe toward the gods and first performed around 1713, and the Sasai Honen Ashi Dance which is held to pray for a good harvest in April and October at the Shirahige Shrine in Sasai.



## 2. Government

Nearly forty years ago, on July 1, 1954, one town and five villages were merged into Sayama City, the fifteenth city of Saitama Prefecture (a prefecture is similar to a state). The population was initially 31,000, but it is now over 160,000 because of its satellite relationship to Tokyo.

The City of Sayama has a strong mayor form of government, with a "diet" or city council. The current mayor, Matsushige Ohno, has been in this office for two terms of four years and expects to be re-elected later this month in a very hotly contested race.

The political contest was evidenced by posters everywhere on houses, fences, walls, businesses, trees, etc. Interestingly, both contestants had accompanying caricatures with their posters: the mayor as a winning soccer player, and his opponent as a gardener watering a growing city. The mayor is very powerful and is a farmer by heritage, the most influential class in Japan. The city is represented by thirty (30!) members of the diet elected at large to full-time positions and paid high salaries.

The city conducts its legislative meetings in an exquisitely designed chamber located in the Sayama City Hall, whose address is 1-23-5 Irumagawa. The City has seven branch offices to service its eight districts of Irumagawa, Iruma, Hirgane, Sayamadae, Shinsayama, Okutomi, Kashiwabara, and Mizutomi.

The government provides a wide array of city services: from a mandatory recycling program to "kobans" (neighborhood police stations), to senior citizens' day care center, "kashiwa-en." City government is also responsible for the educational system, the library, housing, the museum, the zoo, social welfare and public health. The city government is all inclusive and appears to be supported by a taxation plan that includes a municipal property tax, light automobile tax, tax certificate (income tax), fees for registration and scrapping of motorcycles (among other things), and National Health Insurance Tax.

The city government provides its citizens with several unique services through community-based organizations. The "Jochikai" is a local community association of residents who cooperate in installing and managing the garbage collection sites, passing the neighborhood circular (karanban) and maintaining street lights for crime prevention and safety. The "koban" or nearest policebox is always manned by policemen or can be reached by dialing 110. The police boxes are actually small police offices disbursed throughout the city in every type of area. The police officers give directions, accept lost and found items, accept reports of missing children, accept traffic accident reports and patrol the area.

Citizens' Resort Houses are available for leisure time from July, free of charge to citizens of Sayama, through the city. "Public halls" are facilities one uses as a place for "gathering," "creation," and "learning." Public halls are provided to make decentralized services and courses



available to the citizens, which are announced through the Kominkan Dayori (public hall bulletin) and Koho Sayama (monthly City bulletin).

The Sayama International Friendship Association established in 1991 operates under the auspices of the city and receives nearly 98,000 Yen annually for advancing its motto : We are all Global Citizens." The SIFA organization is a part of the Autonomy and Cultural Affairs Office of the City and is the site of the foreign residents' assistance desk for assisting foreigners with customs and daily living.

Refuse disposal and recycling are mandatory and critical in Japan because of its limited land mass. Collection dates are fixed according to area. Refuse must be sorted into combustible and noncombustible; bulky, bottles and cans, and batteries.

Since 1991 Sayama has been involved in its "Basic Medium-Range Plan" aimed at building a better hometown, through three leading policies:

1. Making a center of the townscape

Sayama will promote redevelopment of the area around Sayama-Shi Station so that it may become a more attractive townscape suitable for the center of the city.

2. Establishing a network of greenery, water, and roads

Fresh greenery, crystal waters and well-finished roads are the most important for an urban foundation. The city will systematically establish a network of these.

3. Building a better city for the citizens' health, welfare and continued learning.

In order that every citizen can pursue a healthy civilized life, Sayama will try to provide better city-planning programs.

Mayor Ohno states "the city's consistent policy has been to aim to be an educational city, because we realize the importance of education and we try to foster citizens rich in humanity and to back up the citizens' own culture." The Mayor's policy is supported by the city charter which seeks to establish a rich and modern city:

We will make the city peaceful by keeping the rule of law and preserving order.

We will cultivate ourselves better and make the city highly cultural.

We will love nature and make the city beautiful.

We will respect labor and make the city healthy and rich.

We will respect human rights and help each other to make the city happy and comfortable.



### **3. Education**

#### **A. Schools**

The public schools in Sayama are a function of the city government. The elementary schools contain grades 1-6, middle, 7-9, and high, 10-12, although Japanese children commonly describe themselves as being in the 2d grade of middle school, etc. There are six senior high schools, and four universities and colleges in Sayama. The Chairman of the Sayama Educational Board is responsible to the Mayor. The schools do not have a separate taxing authority.

In the early grades a large number of students attend the public schools. In the upper grades perhaps 50% attend private schools. Some senior high schools are identified to teach specific courses such as electrical engineering.

Most students who graduate from high school attend "cram school" in the evening while attending high school to prepare for the test which determines whether they will be accepted at a university; it will also determine which university a student can attend. They attend high school from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and then go to cram school from 3 p.m. until 9:00 or 9:30 p.m.

If a student fails the examination, he/she can take it again the following year; there is no limit to the number of times students can take the examination. There do not seem to be many adult education opportunities in Japan.

Many Sayama students attend one of the many colleges or universities in Tokyo, taking the train, often for long distances and time. University classes started while we were in Japan; Aki Komatsu went to ceremonies accepting students into college on Sunday, April 4, 1994, then began school with two days of orientation on Monday.

Students start learning English at 12 years old. They often take private classes to enhance their conversational ability. Mrs. Komatsu (of Courtney and Barb's family) teaches private classes and brought some of her students over after dinner to practice their English.

The academic school year starts in April and ends in March. Extended vacations are in March and August. Holidays also occur during certain festivals during the year.

Partnership between a pair of Sayama and Worthington schools is a possibility which will be explored by SIFA. Computers are available and used, but it is not clear to what extent they could be used for international communication between our schools.



### 3. Education

#### B. The library

The library system is a function of the city government in Sayama. Sayama has two major library buildings, one of which is new, built in 1993, and is combined with a gymnasium and a pool. This combination, which seemed unusual to our delegation, follows the city's motto, which is to support learning and good health. Lack of space may also explain the combination, which utilizes a small space very efficiently. The outdoor pool is covered in the winter with a tennis court (with artificial grass), and opened in the summer. The gym, easily accessible from the library, is larger than a standard basketball court and provides practice baskets at several different levels. Also provided are showers, changing rooms, poolside chairs, and exercise rooms.

The library offers a wide range of services. The new library, named Sayama-Shiritsu Sayamadai, has many services. We spent time in the large room with children's books, and Sadicka was able to locate a children's book written in English on a computer that provided access in English and Japanese. Programs for both children and adults are provided throughout the year. Our guide indicated that the number of volumes was 30,000 in this branch of the library.

In addition special equipment and cubicles are provided for both deaf and blind persons. Access for disabled persons is provided throughout the entire facility.

#### C. Day Care

In an brief and unscheduled stop, Lou Briggs visited a day care center where she learned that that particular center had approximately fifty (50) children and that payment was on a sliding scale. The City of Sayama assisted in making up the difference in support needed to operate the facility.



#### 4. Business and Agriculture

The city's brochure describes itself as changing from a "garden" city (meaning agricultural) to an inland industrial city. Its main industrial park contains the Honda plant we visited, which is similar to the Marysville plant, although 20 years older. It produces Accords, legends and other models sold only in Japan.

Most striking to our delegation from Worthington was the intermixture of agricultural, residential, and business uses. Tea and rice fields were adjacent to residences, and small retail, service, and manufacturing businesses are situated in between residences on busy streets. We saw a blacksmith working next to a fish shop on a Saturday morning walk.

Our observation was that small specialty shops dominate the retail business, shops selling only sweet potato confections, kimonos, fish, etc. There were some grocery stores carrying a variety of goods, and some discount stores (K-Mart like), but the nearest large department store was in Tokorozawa.

Sayama's green tea is famous, and is celebrated in a festival in November. The tea farmers organized a corporation in 1887 to standardize production and opened tea industry schools to improve their techniques. Tea bushes and fields are found throughout Sayama, some of the bushes serving as hedges next to busy two-lane roads.

Although green tea predominates, Sayama is also second in the prefecture in the production of tarros and burdocks and fourth in the production of spinach.



## **5. Culture in Sayama**

### **A. The arts**

The city of Sayama has a citizen's hall, the Shimin Kaikan, which has two entertainment halls, one with 1400 seats, a second with 360 seats. The city supports the arts by sponsoring 3 or 4 events a year, including piano concerts and recitals, speeches and symposiums, and a Japanese institution called "rakugo"--an evening of joking about daily life and politicians.

The smaller hall is often used for children's performances--ballet, singing, and piano recitals by classes of private teachers. "Cram" schools rent the halls for graduation ceremonies as do other private organizations.

There is an artist's organization which has an annual exhibit of sculptures, painting, and pottery, with the city's permission, at the Shimin Kaikan.

There are no art museums in Sayama, although there are a few privately owned art galleries.

The Hakbutsu Kon, the Museum next to Inariyama Park, where SIFA entertained us with koto harps, drums, martial arts demonstrations and a tea ceremony on Sunday, has some special displays, such as the doll exhibition we saw and the history of Sayama which included some real Jomon pottery.

### **B. Entertainment**

There are no traditional theaters in Sayama, such as kabuki or no theater, although they can be seen in Tokyo. (Lou Briggs saw a kabuki play in Tokyo on her "free day.") Occasionally, the no theater performs in Sayama's hall.

There are lots of movie theaters, and western films are shown on local television with Japanese subtitles. Seven channels are available on local television, with one channel (5) which is available only to people in Saitama Prefecture.

Most Japanese families have little time for entertainment, however. The fathers work long hours and the children attend school all day and then go to "cram" school. The mothers may work part-time, but have a primary responsibility for home-making, including cooking meals for the father and children after 7 or 8 p.m. when they come home from work and school.

In the Sayama families Courtney and Barb stayed with, the young Kanazawa children watched cartoons on television in the morning, but they also attended private school during their spring vacation studying the abacus. The Komatsu teenagers took advantage of their vacation to spend time with their friends, but the television was only on once during the four days we spent with them--"The Last of the Mohicans" was watched by 17 year old Masaaki (with Japanese subtitles, of course).



When families have time to be together, they like to spend it out of doors, at picnics or, as the Komatsu's did, skiing, or participating in other sports.

While we were in Sayama, the blooming of the cherry trees drew many families out to picnic and play in Inariyama Park and in Chikozan Park. The former park is on a site where the Japanese air force once trained, and was then used by the occupation forces for officers quarters. It is now covered with lawns, pine trees, and, of course, cherry trees. Chikozan Park is a multi purpose park which includes the Botanical Gardens which we visited. Many people were picnicing and playing ball there also.

#### C. Restaurants

Most Japanese restaurants specialize in one type of food: noodles, for example, except for the most expensive ones which serve a wide variety of foods. We were taken to two of these by SIFA during our visit (see slides).

Sayama also has many Chinese restaurants, one Korean, and a number of MacDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chickens.

#### D. Religious and spiritual life

Sayama has many Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples and one Protestant church. Shinto shrines, once marked only by a tree or rock, are surrounded by trees and are usually peaceful, quiet refuges where Japanese families observe *matsuri*, or festivals marking important turning points in life--births, marriages, deaths--as well as the four seasons. The Komatsu family took Courtney and Barbara to an ancient Korean shrine west of Tokorozawa on Saturday and showed them correct behavior at the shrine. This shrine was surrounded by trees and featured a reconstruction of a 17th century farmhouse.

On our walk through Sayama on Sunday, we saw a Buddhist temple with a huge gong (which we rang), and another shrine at the top of a hill. The shrine was reached by a steep stone staircase--which Mr. Komatsu said he ran up when practicing for his annual run up Mt. Fujiyama!



## 6. Family Life (Lou Briggs)

### A. General Family Organization

Prior to our going to Japan, members of the delegation read books about Japan, watched tapes, and talked with Japanese who are working in this country and Americans who had worked in Japan about family life in Japan and in Sayama. We were told about the long hours that men spent at work and the demands of their companies on their time and energies, the children's long hours at school and in "cram" school preparing for university and high school tests, and the role of women as homemakers and, at most, part-time employees. We were told that meals are eaten with chopsticks while sitting on the floor, breakfast eggs are usually eaten uncooked over rice, and a variety of seafood, vegetables, and noodles along with other unfamiliar foods, are served with lots of rice. We were told that taking a bath was a complicated affair, requiring one to soap and rinse off completely before climbing into a very hot tub to soak.

These generalizations about Japanese family life are probably fair. However, members of our delegation stayed with six different families and found that there were many exceptions to these generalizations and that we reacted with delight to Japanese customs and food rather than with distaste. For example, in two families, mothers with children still at home worked fulltime. Two of the fathers took days off from work in order to be with or to go on our tour as a translator for their American guest; one father came home from work early in order to take his guests to visit a historic site; the children were on school break and some were having as much fun and staying up late talking to their friends like American kids on vacation. Several families ate only "Western" style with tables and chairs, and with forks and knives as well as chopsticks, and our hosts kindly provided us with our familiar, well-cooked scrambled eggs, along with an array of delicious Japanese dishes. The slight awkwardness we experienced in showering with a hand shower while sitting or standing was more than compensated for by the wonderfully relaxing heat of the soak in the Japanese hot bath.

We learned that family life is governed by the school and work years, each of which start in April. New jobs and promotions start on April 1 throughout the country, and colleges and universities start soon after April 1, while the public schools start up again after Spring Break around the April 8th. ( For example, the support staff for SIFA changed in the middle of our visit, with two new staff persons taking over from two experienced ones, while one experienced person remained.)

Women who obtain university degrees are expected to use them to oversee their children's education, if they marry and have children, but they also use them in a variety of other ways by working in teaching, government, sales, and other work. According to one of our interpreters, family structure in Japan is heavily influenced by Confucianism, where the roles of parents and children are prescribed. The decision of the



recent bride of the young crown prince to leave her extremely successful career to serve at his side was in conformity with most expectations in Japan regarding women's roles.

Men's work hours are particularly burdensome. As well as working longer hours than their American counterparts, they are expected to come in on their days off and to give up vacation days, if needed. However, we observed many men with their families at the events that SIFA provided for us and at the park enjoying picnics under the cherry trees.

Our personal experiences with the two host families that we each stayed with were the most telling, giving us an opportunity to get to know Japanese people as individuals and to see how different families worked together. Having two different families to compare and discussing our experiences with the other visitors kept us from generalizing from an experience with one family.

#### B. Personal Experiences of Delegation Members with Host Families

##### Courtney Chapman and Barbara Avery

1. First family---Shigeru and Masumi Kanazawa and their three children, Azusa (girl) 11, Rin (girl, pronounced "Leen") 9, and Manabu (boy) 7. Kanazawa-san works in the parts section of Honda (pronounced with a long o) and just spent three years at their plant in Guadalajara, Mexico, accompanied by the family. The children are in elementary school and Azusa and Rin were taking private abacus classes.

The family had a home which the father built on a piece of land purchased 14 years ago, with a central hallway, family/dining room and kitchen on the left, a tatami room, and three rooms used for cleaning (toilet, sink and clothes washer, and shower and hot Japanese bath) downstairs. Upstairs were three rooms: a bedroom for the parents, a bedroom for the three children (with double decker bed) and a study room with three desks and books for the children.

While at the Kanazawa's we ate breakfasts and dinner at a western style table with chairs. Barbara helped the children color eggs and put together an Easter basket, and we had a "Welcome Cake" from a bakery at the traditional Japanese table. The children liked their Worthington sweat shirts and other gifts and Azusa and Rin wrote us letters when we left.

We slept on futons (pronounced "f'tone" in Japanese) in the tatami room and hung our clothes on hangers on hooks hanging from a rail on the wall of the room. Our shoes were left inside the front door and we wore slippers in the rest of the house, except for the tatami room, where even slippers were not worn in order to avoid tearing the grass tatami mats. (Sizes of rooms are measured by the number of tatami mats they can contain.)



We stayed at Kanazawa's for two nights, and then switched to our second host family one day earlier than Sadicka and Lou because our family was leaving to go to the country for the weekend to observe the first anniversary of the death of a grandparent in their home prefecture.

2. Second family: Mitsuaki and Keiko Komatsu (49, 46) and their three children, Aki (girl) 19, Masaaki (son) 17 and Mitsuhiro (son) 13.

Komatsu-san works for the Komatsu Co. which builds large construction and other equipment. He designed the power train for several pieces of their equipment including a machine the mines anthracite coal. He now works in their patent department.

Keiko Komatsu teaches English to high school children in private classes in the afternoon and early evening, cooks all the meals and oversees the children's education. Several of her students came over on Monday evening to practice their English with us.

The Komatsus rent their home from Komatsu Co. which rents it from a landlord who permits Mr. Komatsu to have a garden on another piece of land about five minutes drive from the house. The Komatsu home is similar to the Kanazawa home, but has three rooms (Mitsuhiro's bedroom, living room, and bed/living room) plus kitchen/dining area and a bath, toilet, and cleaning/sink rooms downstairs, with two bedrooms upstairs. The three children have separate rooms with beds and desks, and the parents sleep on futons in the downstairs rooms which doubles for a living/dining room (and contains a piano).

We ate breakfasts at western style table and chairs, with scrambled eggs, dinner leftovers, salad, rice, soup, and cooked vegetables. Dinners were eaten Japanese style in the living room, with the meals cooked on the table on a small stove with a large kettle containing simmering liquid in which meat, vegetables, noodles were cooked and served out in bowls. We used chopsticks, except for ice cream when spoons were provided. (We were offered knives and forks, but chose chopsticks.) Mrs. Komatsu's curried rice, "shabu-shabu" and "oden" (stew, cooked in several steps, ending with noodles) and breakfasts were delicious. She had family and friends over for dinner on Sunday evening who brought special dishes they had cooked for the occasion.

The children were having their spring break, but Aki started college in Tokyo and went with her mother to the opening ceremonies on Sunday. Mitsuhiro and Masaaki were riding scooters and motorcycles with their friends and talking to them late into the night during their spring break.

Komatsu-san broke the stereotype of the Japanese father by doing the family laundry, including hanging the clothes on the line and offering to do our laundry (and doing it!), driving us all out to a Shinto shrine in the country on Saturday morning, and coming home early from work to take us to the old section (200 years old) of Kawagoe City on Monday afternoon. He also took us for a long walk through Sayama on Sunday



morning. He runs the marathon and practices for his annual run up Mt. Fujiyama by running up the steps of the Shinto shrine in Sayama! (We were huffing and puffing from just walking up the steps!) He also grows vegetables for the family meals, spinach, cabbage, potatoes, on a garden plot five minutes drive from their home.

Staying with two different families was a wonderful experience for us. They were gracious about our skimpy Japanese and worked hard to facilitate our communications, were generous in preparing delicious home-cooked food and taking us on trips to interesting places. Staying with them helped us to understand what life is like for Japanese individuals and families. We are looking forward to being able to return the hospitality of these families, either directly to them or to other SIFA families.

### Sadicka Thomas

The opportunity to experience the Japanese culture afforded by the home stays was truly invaluable and genuinely rewarding.

1. First family. I stayed with the Koizumis, Toshiaki and Makiko, my first four days. Mr. Koizumi is a mechanical engineer with the Pioneer Company and his wife teaches piano in the home. The Koizumis has three boys, Shou, 5, Kei, 7, and Yuh, 8 and they were quite entertaining and full of energy. Kei and Yuh performed with their mother a duet of violin and piano and Yoh is quite accomplished. The children attend neighborhood schools and all three walk to their schools. I visited both the elementary school and the preschool and was very impressed by the age-appropriateness and design of the playgrounds and equipment.

A third floor room for the boys was recently added to the Koizumis' eleven year old home. The home was approximately 1100 sq. ft. with a small kitchen area, living/dining area, two bedrooms on the second floor and a Japanese style bath (see description above). The house was constructed of concrete and the interior walls remained in the natural state.

The family was very friendly and accomodating and the boys provided the family focus. Very untypically, both Mr. Koizuma and Mr. Sumiya absented themselves from work on my behalf. Both spoke English to varying levels of proficiency, but were, of course, far superior to my 12 word Japanese vocabulary.

Mr. Koizumi took me to a shopping area where we tasted many local delicacies, like red bean candy and grilled chicken skins. We also had the opportunity to visit a koban--a local police box, and interviewed the three station police officers. Mr. Koizuma is very fond of American jazz and played the records of none other than John Coltrane.

2. Second family. My second family, the Sumiyas, were extremely friendly, warm and ingratiating: Keiichi and Fakiko, 45, 43, and their two children, Miyuki and Etushi, 21, 13. The daughter, Miyuki had just returned from a month long exchange program with a California university



and American home stay. She could speak English and acted as my official translator. Etushi was very handsome and had set his career goal to become a baseball star. Tomiko, the grandmother, at 74 was still quite active and lived with the family.

Their home has four bedrooms upstairs, a separate family area and a traditional tatami room.

Mr. Sumiya works for Honda motorcycles in management and Mrs. Sumiya is the nurse administrator for a private clinic. Miyuki is a student at the university and works part-time.

Both families observed the Japanese tradition of removing one's shoes upon entering the home and not wearing slippers inside the tatami room. I used chopsticks at both homes. The mothers in both instances assumed the traditional role of primary hostess and cook. The food was exciting, authentic and very tasty. Fakiko taught me to make Chawanmushi (soup) and shrimp tempura.

We ate at tables with chairs at both homes. However, the Sumiyas always returned to the Japanese style family room after supper where we sat on the floor around a table and played whomping rounds of "Uno." The Sumiyas are a very outgoing and lively family, introducing me to their neighbors and friends, while the Koizumas were very quiet and very focused on their boys' welfare. The children of both families were enjoying their extended spring break and awaiting the start of the next school year.

The Sumiyas took me to the old section of Kawagoe City on Monday (our free day), the Tenshinji Somon Shrine believed to be opened in Buvroku 3 (1594), the Kawagoe festival and Shinto Shrine, a private clinic and the Public Health Department.

Mr. Sumiya said he looked forward to retirement because as the eldest son he would inherit his parents' farm/land, and would be able to enjoy a life in the country growing his famous flowers and trying vegetables.

### Lou Briggs

There were many highlights of our trip to Sayama, but certainly a major one for me was the opportunity to live with our host families.

1. First family. Toshiko (48) and Susmu (55) Yoshikawa and their two children, their daughter, Yufu (19) and son Satoshi (15). Mr. Yoshikawa is a publisher in a firm in Tokyo that publishes books and an agricultural newspaper. Mrs. Yoshikawa teaches English in a Junior High School in Tokyo. Yufu has just completed high school and is studying to take her exams for entrance into college. Satoshi attends Junior High School. He leaves the house at approximately 7:30 a.m. and when school is over in the afternoon he goes directly to a private "cram" school to prepare for college entrance exams. Susumu leaves the house for work



by 7:30 a.m. to catch the train to Tokyo and does not get home until 10 or 11 p.m. Toshiko was on spring break but normally she leaves home about the same time for the train station and does not return home until 6 or 6:30 p.m.

The Yoshikawa's home is only about one year old. They have lived in an apartment and then purchased a condominium before building this home. The bedrooms were upstairs, and downstairs there was the tatami room (where I slept on a futon), a family room, kitchen and dining room as well as the traditional bath and hot tub and a separate toilet room that included a washer and dryer.

Yofu and her friend gave me a guided tour of a supermarket near their home. They also pointed out the various shops and stores in their neighborhood as we walked home from the bus ride one evening.

Toshiko invited her neighbors in one evening where everyone brought a special dish for a delicious dinner. All of our meals were at a table where I became fairly proficient with chopsticks. One evening Yofu and Toshiko and several friends took me to a karaoke club where we all sang Japanese and English songs.

2. Second family. Hisae (47) and Shuhyi (51) Sakima and their two daughters, Kyoko (20) and Ikuko (17). Mr. Sakuma is an engineer with a large construction company in Tokyo and Hisae is an architect who works at home drafting construction plans. Kyoko has finished high school and has spent one year at Ohio University. Although the Sakuma's home was built by them approximately 17 years ago, it had a similar floor plan as the Yoshikawas.

Mrs. Sakuma showed me the traditional silk kimonos that Kyoko wore at age three, seven, and twenty. These are traditional times for girls to be "presented" and the kimonos are beautiful (and very expensive).

We had some marvelous Japanese breakfasts and dinners and some great conversations about their country and ours. Mrs. Sakuma and her daughters took me on my "free day" to Tokyo. We took a bus from their home to the train station where we took a clean and fast train (about one hour) to Tokyo. I learned that the train is privately owned!

While we were in Tokyo, we walked around the moat surrounding the Imperial Palace, had a nice lunch and shopped for kimonos. I even had the great opportunity to see Kabuki Theater. We shopped for sushi at a large supermarket where I took pictures of octopus and seaweed, something not seen in my Kroger market.

My visit to Sayama was a once in a lifetime experience. I am especially grateful to my two host families for their kind and generous hospitality to me while I was a guest in their homes. I now have two families as friends in Japan!

### C. Social Services

The population of Sayama is younger than it was 10-15 years ago. Like many metropolitan areas in the U.S., the cost and shortage of



property has seen families moving further from the central city. This has caused a large increase in the number of younger families leaving apartments to find a small home in Sayama.

An average family includes a mother, father, and two children. Divorce is legal in Japan, but it was estimated that the divorce rate is below 10%. The closeness of relatives (aunts, uncles, grandparents) depends upon whether or not they live near the families.

Japan, by our standards, is a very crowded country. Property is very scarce. Most young families begin their marriage living in a small apartment. They may eventually save enough money to rent or purchase a larger condominium or home.

The health care system in Japan is more progressive than in the U.S. The government pays for all children's health care up to two years old and all care costs after the age of 70.

Individuals pay 30% of the fees for health care and the employer pays 70%; the employee is eventually reimbursed for his/her 30% by the government, with the exception of children's care.

Japan, like the U.S., is seeing a growing number of elderly. There are some nursing homes, but their social welfare system is highly developed. There are many volunteers who assist the elderly with transportation and other areas as well. The Japanese government is planning for the amount of elderly housing which will be needed. Sayama has plans for the amount it will need. The city will build these housing units for the elderly and payment will be made on a sliding scale.

We visited a Senior Center where Seniors are taken by a city bus, private car, and public transportation for day care. This center was only for able-bodied persons or mobile individuals and was less structured than our Senior Center. It is used primarily for visiting, exercise, and games. They also had a place for lunch and there was a large shower room and a large hot pool for relaxing. There was special equipment for massaging (chairs, and machines for back and feet).

There is a facility for the mentally ill, where one pays as one can and the remainder is paid by the government. There are volunteers to assist the staff with the clients.

Retirement is similar to our Social Security. Lou was given an example of a retired woman who had worked for 40 years and put \$100 a month into the pension plan, and now received in her retirement \$2000 per month.