

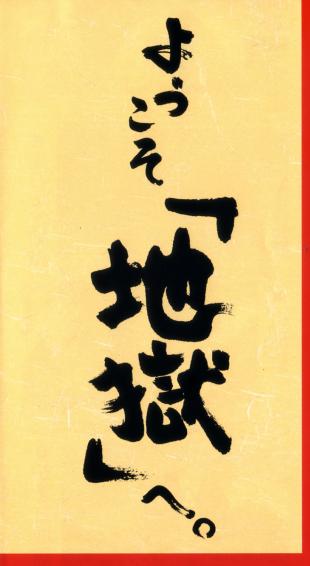
Since September1,2005

30 people

Infant group ¥400



## BEPPU "JIGOKU MEGURI" THE "HELL" TOUR



The Beppu Jigoku Association 559-1 Kannawa, Beppu-City, Oita TEL(0977)66-1577 FAX (0977) 66-7921 http://www.beppu-jigoku.com/



emerged 1200 years ago atter a voicanic explosion.

The manicured gardens are simply magnificent. And from May to November you can marvel at the gigantic "Victoria Amazonica" lotus flowers grown in hot spring waters.



This place is called Oniishi Bozu Jigoku (Oniishi Shaven Head Hell) after the name of the area, which is Oniishi, and because the large and small bubbles of hot gray mud that boil up here look like the shaven heads (bozu atama) of monks.



A gust of steam clears to reveal prancing lions, bathing hippos and curious chimpanzees.

Taking its name from the mountain of mud formed over the years, this "jigoku" is also a mini zoo which children can surely enjoy.



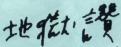
A bright red "demon" standing on an enormous cooking pot is the mascot of this hot spring site, temptingly divided into six unique, pots of murky, budding, "thumping" boiling waters.

## "JIGOKU MEGURI"

The word "jigoku" takes its meaning, "burning hell" from the ancient Buddhist sutras of the East. Yet a visit to the 8 phenomenal, natural hot spring sites will also conjure up images of the hellish depths of the "Inferno" as portrayed in the great Medieval poem by Dante. In an atmosphere charged with magnificence, awe and a hint of terror, one can marvel at and appreciate the power and beauty of nature.

The "hell" tour is a must for visitors to Beppu. Sightseeing buses, enable you to see the 8 spectacular springs in about 2 1/2 hours.

• TOURS ARE CONDUCTED IN JAPANESE ONLY



Admiration for JIGOKU

Heaven, as depicted by Dante, John Milton and William Blake seems neither beautiful nor interesting at all to me.

However, I find the visions of hell conjured by these artists to be tremendously interesting. The cruelty of beings is so vividly expressed in them that I almost feel that I would prefer to be go to hell rather than heaven. In this day and age, however, the heavens and hells described by these great poets and writers no longer evoke yearning or fear amongst many people.

However, if you visit Beppu you will be confronted by a vision of eight great hells appearing before you. And these are certainly terrifying hells. Hot water gushes forth from the ground, roaring and rumbling fiercely, as numerous enormous crocodiles jostle violently with each other. Though you cannot see demons, it is clear that one false step, one slip, will bring you to a rapid destruction. When I consider that these hells must be hotter than the reported cauldrons of hell, all my longing for hell fades swiftly away.

Human beings need to experience hell in this life at least once, to empty themselves of their superfluous accumulations, to reflect on their past conduct, and to contemplate the path ahead. For this important purpose, I highly recommend a visit to Beppu, to witness the many aspects of hell. Only those who have been through hell and lived to recount the experience, are worthy to be called real human beings.

了東九

今 東光 A writer and Buddhist priest.

Kon Toukou Winner of the Naoki Award in 1957.

[National Sites of Scenic Beauty]

One of the cultural treasure designations of the Japanese government, it signifies a spot of unusual scenic beauty. The first hot springs to receive this designation were the Umi, Chinoike, Tatsumaki and Shiraike jigoku "hells."



The force of the steam produced at this spring can pull one and a half train cars. This "hellish" site is the happy home of a variety of crocodiles and alligators who slither down into the warm breeding waters.



The White Pond Hell is so called because the colorless water that naturally spouts from the ground mysteriously turns creamy white. The serene atmosphere of the traditional Japanese garden is sure to soothe your mind



The clay is steaming hot to the point that the steam is red. Japan's oldest natural Jigoku as written about in the Bungo Topography, described as "Akayusen", a reddish hot spring. "Chinoike Ointment", effective for skin diseases is made from the red clay produced here. The spat termenture is 78°C.



Tatsumaki-Jigoku, a geyser, is a natural monument designated by Beppu City. The word "Geyser" means a hot spring spouting out boiling water and steam in intervals. This particular spa appears in the limelight among the world's geyeers due to the short intervals between spouts.