

Route Description

1. Kanemaru Inari Shrine

The shrine stands on the former residence of Matsudaira Setsu-no-kami. Late Edo period, the four sons of Takasu Matsudaira clan included Tokugawa Yoshikatsu, Hitotsubashi Shigeaki, Matsudaira Katamori, and Matsudaira Sadamichi.



2. Tsunokami Benzaiten Shrine

(*Cover Photo)

3. Kappazaka



This slope lies on the southern side of the Owari Domain residence. Its name is said to originate either from a pool where kappa (mythical water creatures) were believed to appear. Others say it comes from the raincoats (kappa) of the samurai being hung to dry on the domain's walls.

4. Ichigaya Memorial Hall

Originally the first building of the former Imperial Hapanese Army Academy, now within the Ministry of Defense compound, this site has witnessed significant historical events. In 1946 (Shōwa 21) it served as the venue for the Far Eastern Military Tribunal, and in 1970 (Shōwa 45), it became the location of Yukio Mishima's ritual suicide (seppuku).

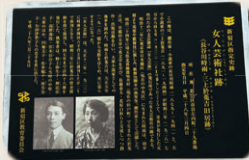


5. Former Residence of Kunio Yanagita

6. Site of the Dai Nippon Printing Ichigaya Factory

7. Former Residence of Shigure Hasegawa: Nyonin Geijutsusha

In 1928 (Shōwa 3), Shigure Hasegawa and Okichi Mikami founded the Nyonin Geijutsusha (Women's Art Society). They published 48 issues of the magazine Nyonin Geijutsu.



8. Ichigaya Kamegaoka Hachimangū Shrine



Column : Site of the Dai Nippon Printing Ichigaya Factory



The site of the former Dai Nippon Printing Ichigaya Factory is located in what was Chōenji-tani machi during the Edo period. Like the nearby Samegahashi area (around present-day Minamimotomachi, Shinjuku), it was a low-lying, damp district inhabited by impoverished residents. As of 2025 (Reiwa 7), the factory has been dismantled, revealing the valley's original depth and shape. A short walk from here leads to the former residence of Kunio Yanagita, a pioneer in Japanese folkloristics. It was here, from 1901 (Meiji 34) for nearly thirty years, that Yanagita conducted fieldwork, including collecting oral narratives from Kizen Sasaki for Tono Mōnogotari.

For more information, please visit our website !



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"Unfolding Historical Layers: Yotsuya and War" Araki-chō to Ichigaya

史層をひらく
— 四ッ谷と戦争 —
荒木町~市ヶ谷



This route starts from Araki-chō, a district that flourished as a red-light area in modern times, crosses Ichigaya, and loops around to the north side of the present Ministry of Defense. The ups and downs are quite challenging, but you can sense the character of the area, shaped by the most prominent basin-like terrain near Yotsuya and its development in connection with the Imperial Army. Hidden behind the residential neighborhoods that spread just behind the office buildings, historical sites quietly remain, evoking images of the prewar and wartime periods. Let's explore how people lived in this distinctive basin-shaped landscape, from the Edo period through the war years.

—TOP3 Recommended Historical Sites —

2. Tsunokami Benzaiten Shrine

Located on the former residence of Matsudaira Setsuno-kami, Tsunokami Benzaiten Shrine is said to have originated from the nearby Muchi Pond. During the Meiji era, the area developed into a pleasure district and became a recreational site for soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy (now the Ministry of Defense). Benzaiten is a deity originating from India, associated with water as well as the arts. In Japan, her worship was modeled on Chikubu Island in Lake Biwa and extended to locations such as Enoshima, Shinobazu Pond, Inokashira Pond, and Shin-Yoshiwara. The formation of the pleasure district around the pond was likely connected to the character and attributes of Benzaiten herself.

6. Site of the Dai Nippon Printing Ichigaya Factory

Situated near the former Imperial Japanese Army Academy, this area became the location of Dai Nippon Printing, which traces its origins to Shueisha, founded in 1876 (Meiji 9). The company grew to become a leading force in Japan's printing industry, playing a significant role in everyday life. Given its proximity to military institutions, one might wonder what role it played during the prewar and wartime periods. As you walk through the site today, the alphabets engraved on the buildings would catch one's eye, offering a tangible connection to its historical legacy.

8. Ichigaya Kamegaoka Hachimangū Shrine

Emperor Ōjin, who is venerated in Hachiman worship, was the son of Empress Jingū, who invaded the ancient Korean Peninsula. Since he has traditionally been associated with martial virtues, his proximity to the Imperial Japanese Army Academy in the modern period is thought to have conferred a symbolic significance upon him. Within the shrine grounds, boundary stones marking army-controlled land and military property remain, attesting to its historical role as a place where people prayed for victory and military fortune during wartime. The characters "Hakkō ichiu" inscribed within the grounds reflect the ideology promoted by the state at the time, linking the ideology of the nation with religious faith, and continue to leave an impression and raise questions for contemporary visitors.

