



Children play in the Fujiko • F • Fujio Museum grounds watched over by a Doraemon statue.

# VARIATIONS ON A THEME

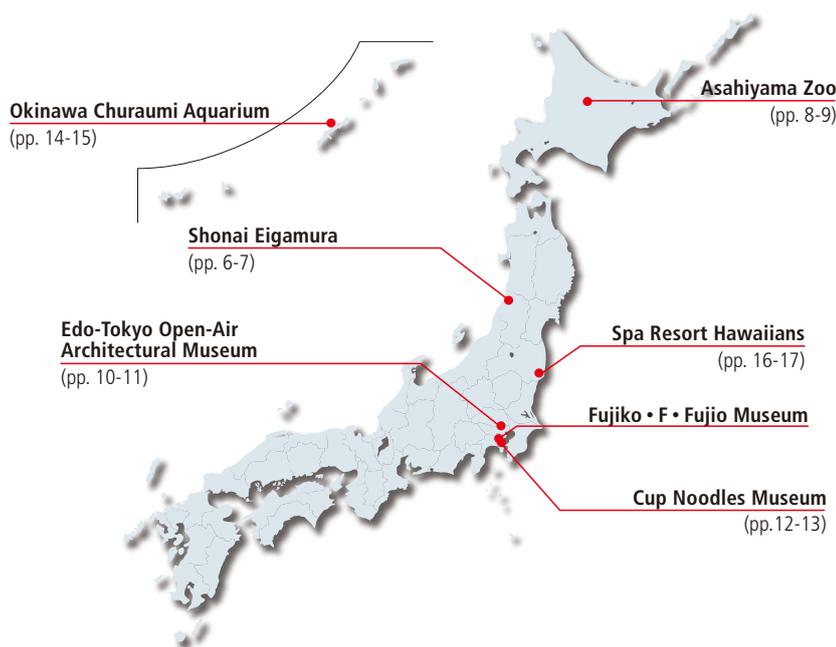
*In every area of Japan, there are theme parks with ingenious ideas and methods of display, and they have become an important source of tourism for local areas. In the cover story for this month's feature, we introduce the aims of theme parks in Japan and, through the ingenuity of the tangible and intangible aspects that attract people, the hidden creativity that is unique to Japan.*

In September 2011, the Fujiko • F • Fujio Museum opened in Kawasaki City in Kanagawa Prefecture, which is adjacent to Tokyo. Fujiko • F • Fujio (1933–1996) is the creator of numerous manga including *Doraemon* and *Perman*. Among Fujiko's works, *Doraemon*, with its eponymous cat-type robot hero who travels back in time from the future to the present, is Japan's most popular manga, which has been made into countless TV cartoons and films. The *Doraemon* cartoons are broadcast in more than thirty

countries around the world and the manga books have been published in more than ten countries.

The Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum in Hyogo Prefecture is known as a museum focusing on the manga creator Tezuka (1928–1989). Fujiko became a manga creator because he wanted to be like Tezuka, and the two artists' careers would run concurrently. In Japan, not only children but also adults read manga. The work of Fujiko and Tezuka helped to spread Japanese manga culture all over the world.

The concept of the Fujiko • F • Fujio Museum started with the wish of Fujiko's wife Masako to "repay the kindness of the fans who supported us the whole time." The museum, which sits on a 5,500-m<sup>2</sup> plot of land on the grounds of a former amusement park, opened on Doraemon's birthday, September 3. The basic concept is "a museum where both adults and children can sense the fun of the World of Manga, savor the works to their hearts' content,



and come into direct contact with the appeal of the original pictures," and "a museum where it is possible to experience the "bit mysterious science fiction" of Fujiko • F • Fujio.

The museum has collected and curates approximately 50,000 original pictures and, among them, approximately 130 items are on display. At the museum, there is also a display where Doraemon characters introduce the process of completing a manga using a special technique called "Fantaview." In addition, approximately 10,000 items such as the actual desk that Fujiko used, books that Fujiko collected, plastic models and souvenirs from abroad are on display in a room that is a reproduction of Fujiko's

## Access and Admission

**Access:** Approximately 10 minutes by shuttle bus from Noborito Station on the JR Nambu Line and the Odakyu Line.

**Tickets:** Available at Lawson convenience stores. Advance reservations by date and time only. **Tickets are not sold at the museum.** 1,000 yen for adults and university students; 700 yen for high school and junior high school students; 500 yen for children over age 4 (free entry for children under age 3)

**Website:** <http://fujiko-museum.com/english/>

workspace. There are also "secrets" hidden here and there in this museum. For example, the information board at the entrance says, "Mice will be denied admission into the museum," a deadpan reference to the fact that Doraemon hates mice. The signs for the restrooms and elevators also use pictures with motifs from the works. No matter how often a visitor comes to the museum, it is fun to seek out these "secrets."

"I will come back because there are still many tricks that I have missed," comments a female visitor in her thirties who has taken the day off work to visit the museum. "I think this is a

wonderful museum where it is possible to actually see and experience Fujiko's world view." 



Visitors to the Museum can enjoy original artwork by Fujiko • F • Fujio while listening to explanations on the free audio guide.

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