

The History of Seibu in Photos (Part 2)

III Business Expansion and Renewal Period (1950–2003)

Expansion of Real Estate Sales

Thoughts of creating a community of individuality and culture.
A business that made the dream of home ownership a reality

1965

Creating prosperous communities

Since the time of Yasujiro Tsutsumi, the Seibu Group has used large-scale residential development to propose the creation of communities, and has continued to offer high-quality residential environments.

Tokyo, Japan's capital, lost most of its homes to fires during the war, and housing shortages were one of the city's citizens' greatest concerns. During the high economic growth period of the 1960s, there was a great influx of population from around the country into the metropolitan Tokyo area, and housing shortages grew more serious. At the same time, land prices continued to rise in the metropolitan region, increasing at double-digit rates on an annual average in the years between 1955 and 1975. Housing prices naturally soared as well.

A 1958 series in the weekly magazine *Shukan Asahi* described the life of the average salaried men in metropolitan Tokyo, unable to own his own home, as the “new *danchi-zoku*,” or “public housing dwellers,” in reference to the thousands who poured into the vast suburban apartment complexes built to address Tokyo's housing shortage. The term quickly caught on. Against this background, the salaried men household's biggest dream was to own a

single-family home with a garden.

Arising out of a desire to address this need were the new housing developments that began going up in suburbs that provided good access from metropolitan Tokyo to the city. The Seibu Group had a long history in both the railway business and in land development, and that expertise in community building was fully utilized as the company began creating new residential subdivisions.

Convenience and comfort

In 1970, the Seibu Group commenced sales at Kamakura Zushi Highland. The ancient capital of Kamakura and Zushi, known as a convalescent resort area, are two well-known cities in Kanagawa Prefecture's, and the project, residential homes for sale on a vast tract measuring about 940,000 m², straddled both of them. With convenient access to Tokyo, just about an hour away, it quickly gained attention for its location, which put ancient temples and historic spots within walking distance.

When sales began, and except for a very short period when it collaborated with a manufacturer of homes as a means of speeding the town's maturation, Seibu Real Estate (now Seibu Properties) was responsible for almost all sales of ready-built homes in the project. It should also be recalled that Seibu Real Estate offered a wide variety of ready-built models. A pamphlet of the time reflected the needs of the era, with the catchphrase, “All you need to add is your nameplate,” and offered aspirational living spaces that included Western-style toilets, baths equipped with showers and stainless steel kitchens.

Aside from residential property, in 1965 the company opened Kamakura Reien, a cemetery located also located in



Ad for Kamakura Reien (October 1976, the Kanagawa Shimbun)



Ad for Zushi Green Hill (July 1976, the Asahi Shimbun)



Initial sales pamphlet for Kamakura Zushi Highland

The Shonan and Miura Peninsula area

Early in the 20th century, beach bathing as a leisure activity was introduced to Japan from the West, and quickly caught on. Zushi, Hayama, Shonan, Kamakura and other areas along the coast were ideally located and soon saw resort development progress.

Since its earliest days, the Seibu Group had been involved in developing tourism and accommodations in the Kamakura and Shonan areas of Kanagawa Prefecture. In its residential developments following Japan's high-growth period, it continued to expand its efforts in these regions.

Sales at Mabori Sea Heights began in 1973, and a contemporary pamphlet for the development notes it was just “38

minutes to Yokohama, 60 minutes to Shinagawa,” and advertised a town that was on a “straight line from the seaside to Yokohama and Tokyo.” This was a major project that took six years from initial development to completion. With an area of about 700,000 m², it offered the latest in home design.

In Kanazawa Bunko and elsewhere, a similar appeal was made to the attractiveness of the area, with newspaper advertisements describing it as a “town colored by greenery and history.”

By giving shape to the urban dweller's aspiration of living in a resort area rich in history and the elegance of an ancient capital, the Seibu Group carved out a new history for the region.



Initial sales pamphlet for Mabori Sea Heights



Initial sales pamphlet for Kamakura Zushi Highland

Areas along Seibu Railway lines

Edo, the historical name for Tokyo, used to refer only to a small area surrounding Edo Castle, and did not include the surrounding regions.

Later, the Edo region developed as the Imperial capital. To take in a new influx of people, the capital of Tokyo grew its road and railway networks, expanding its influence ever outward. The Seibu Group played a role in that growth.

The Seibu Bushi New Town subdivision consisted of about 1,000 lots spread over a hill in Iruma, Saitama Prefecture. The pamphlet offered when sales commenced noted its convenience for commuters, just “48 minutes by limited express from Bushi Station to Ikebukuro Station.” A similar pamphlet for the Tokorozawa Matsugaoka subdivision noted its location

“about 24 minutes from Tokorozawa Station to Ikebukuro,” and the development was popular for its rich natural environment, backed by Hachikokuyama, a ridge of parkland. The Seibu Hanno-Hidaka subdivision, a major residential area encompassing 1.1 million m² straddling the cities of Hanno and Hidaka, was also developed by the Seibu Group.

As these examples show, subdivisions along Seibu Railway lines are distinguished by being a reasonable distance from central Tokyo, and for offering a rich natural environment in which people can lead a more relaxed lifestyle. All of the properties offer easy access to leisure facilities such as the Seibu Prince Dome, the Seibuen Amusement Park and the Sayama Ski Resort.



Pamphlet for Seibu Bushi New Town



Pamphlet for the Seibu Hanno-Hidaka subdivision

Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture. A pamphlet for the cemetery features a photograph of a family, blanket spread out amidst the vast grounds, enjoying their lunches. This suggested a completely new approach to visiting a grave.

Meanwhile, in 1988 Seibu began sales of homes in its Hanno-Hidaka residential subdivision, which straddled the cities of Hanno and Hidaka (formerly Hidaka-cho, Iruma) in

Saitama Prefecture. The subdivision was designed to reflect Seibu's belief that, “To sell a house is to sell a community,” and the sales pamphlet trumpeted how convenient the neighborhood would be for both leisure activities and shopping. Seibu was offering a town, and a community, many salaried men could be proud of, where they could turn around on their way to work and say “Hey, that's my house!”