

The expansive *Shibachi* lawn is a quiet place to relax and enjoy nature, against the backdrop of the impressive contrast of the skyscrapers of Shinjuku in the distance.

Various species of ducks, including mandarin ducks, can be seen swimming on the Kita Ike, or North Pond, near the *Shibachi* lawn. For the annual *hina matsuri*, the doll festival or girls' festival celebrated on March 3 (the exact date of festivities may differ), the pond is used for the *nagashi bina* ritual. Dolls made from soluble paper are set afloat on the water. In this ancient tradition, impurity is ritually transferred to the paper doll and washed away.

Next to the pond is the *kame ishi*, literally 'turtle stone', after its likeness to the animal. Along with Kiyomasa's Well inside Meiji Jingu Gyoen, this is popularly considered to have strong positive spiritual connotations.

The lawn is part of the shrine grounds, so please relax and enjoy the view but remember that you are still within the shrine. Please dress and behave appropriately. The drinking of alcoholic beverages is not permitted here.