

Sanko Yume Minato Tower

The Sanko Yume Minato Tower is self-deprecatingly promoted by locals as “the lowest tower in Japan.” While its observation deck rises only 43 meters, it affords a 360-degree view of the Japan Sea coastline of the Yumigahama Peninsula, with Mt. Daisen in the distance and the port of Sakaiminato below. On clear days, several distant islands are also visible. The building, designed by architect Hirofumi Sugimoto, consists of a pair of tubular steel towers that form the core of the tower, surrounded by a curved outer enclosure of laminated timber and glass. The various structural elements are connected by a network of steel tension cables, forming a tall, light-filled atrium. A large dome connected to the tower is the entrance hall on the ground floor; its upper floors contain event spaces, conference rooms, and a theater. A café with a panoramic view of the ocean is on the fourth floor.

A Look at International Trade

The main attraction is the Pan-Japan Sea Laboratory on the third floor. This space depicts traditional and contemporary life in six regions that have cultural exchanges with Tottori Prefecture. Five of the six—Hebei Province, Jilin Province, and the city of Dalian in China; Primorsky Krai in Russia; and Gangwon-do in Korea—border the Japan Sea. The sixth is the country of Mongolia. Each of the six regions is represented by crafts, clothing, artworks, and other items of historical and cultural interest.

International Cosplay

A Mongolian yurt is one of the centerpieces of the Sea Laboratory. The felt covering is attached by cords to a carved and painted wooden frame, and the interior is furnished with traditionally decorated tables, stools, storage chests, and a high divan. The Primorsky Krai region is represented by a collection of 300 matryoshka dolls, most of which are of traditional design, but there are also humorous caricatures of Michael Jackson and other celebrities. A large model of a traditional Chinese residential compound is another highlight. One of the more interesting sections of the Pan-Japan Sea Laboratory is its large costume room, where visitors can try on traditional clothing from each of the regions, along with Japan. This includes hats, footwear, and accessories for children, men, and women. Many of the items are of very high quality and authentic design, and large backdrops with scenery from each region are provided for souvenir photos.

Yume Minato Tower is next to the passenger-ship terminal, and all signage and information is in multiple languages. This internationally minded complex serves as a good gateway to the region.