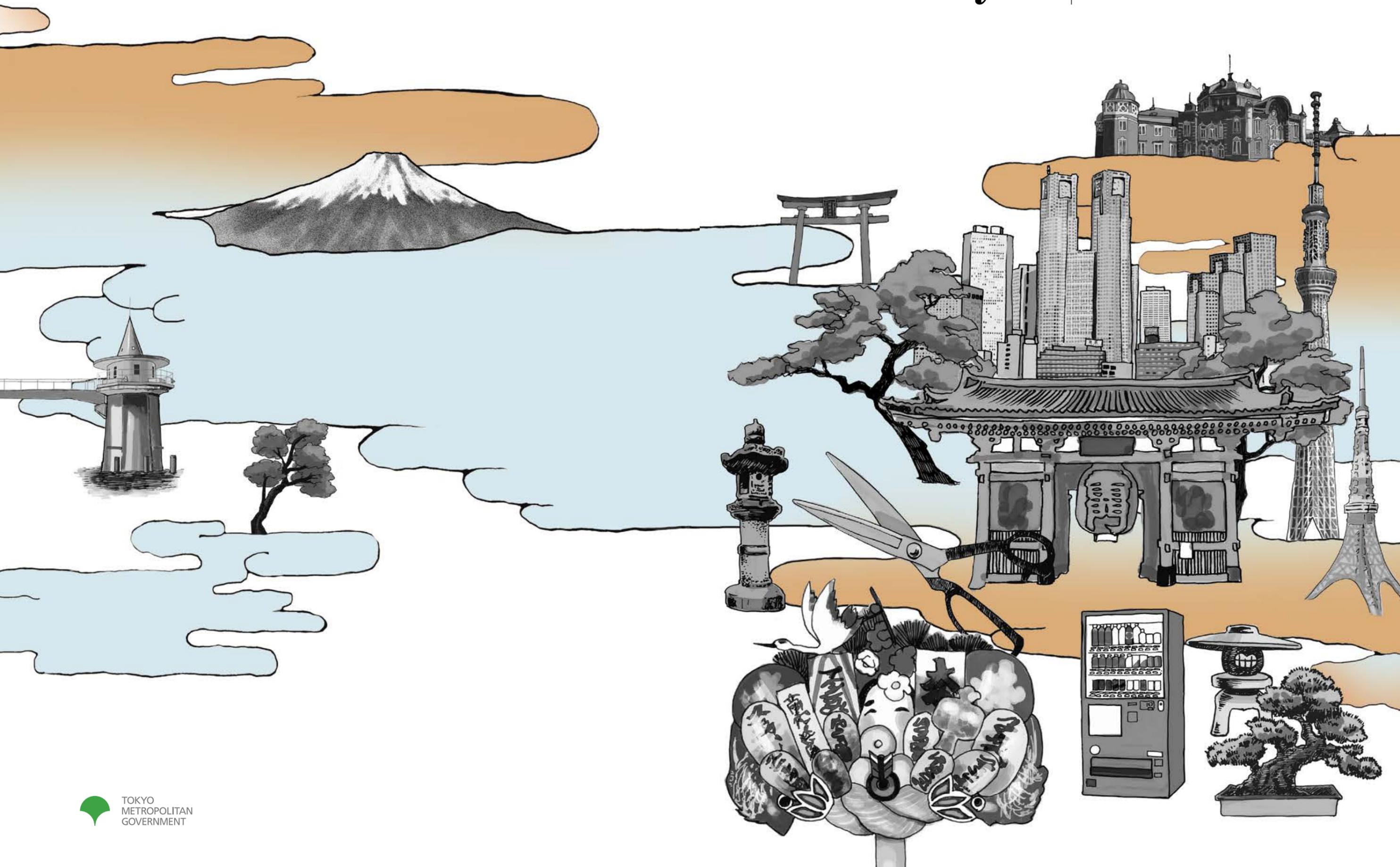


Tokyo

Autumn / Winter 2018



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HOST CITY

Tokyo is a publication issued periodically by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government with the aim to provide readers with the latest information on various aspects of Tokyo, including events, programs and experiences.



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Old meets New
Tokyo 150



© Koji Nakaya

2018 marks the 150th anniversary of the renaming of Edo to Tokyo and the establishment of Tokyo-fu (prefecture). To commemorate this special year, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is rolling out the “Old meets New: Tokyo 150 Years” program to enable everyone, both residents and visitors, to experience the charm of this city where “tradition” and “innovation” coexist.

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Good Taste on Tap

Advanced technology and strict standards makes Tokyo tap water about as tasty as bottled water.



The iconic red brick intake tower of the Kanamachi Purification Plant, on Tokyo's Edogawa River.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 will be scorching hot. Not only from the athletic competition but also the heat—they'll take place in July and August, when the mercury in the capital can easily top 30 degrees Celsius. What's the best way to beat the heat? For starters, try quaffing lots of Tokyo tap water. You might find that it's surprisingly tasty.

In March 2018, the Bureau of Waterworks of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) kicked off a new campaign to promote Tokyo water as being clean and delicious thanks to advanced purification and rigorous standards. Staff installed a dispenser, about the size of a vending machine, at the Tokyo International Forum's plaza in Chiyoda Ward. It's supplied by an underground pipe and dispenses chilled water every day from 7:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Some thirsty passers-by who tried it expressed disbe-

lief that the liquid wasn't spring water.

The bureau is combating notions that tap water may taste or smell differently than bottled water because of methods used to ensure it's clean and safe. The key message is that the bureau has been implementing advanced purification technology to make Tokyo tap water the best in the world.

Tokyo's waterworks delivers an average of 4,167,000 cubic meters of water per day to more than 13 million people, a population that tops 15 million during the daytime. It's sent through a pipeline network that's over 27,500 kilometers long and features more than 130 automated water-quality meters.

The water comes from three rivers that irrigate the Kanto plain—the Tamagawa, Tonegawa and Arakawa. The latter two supply about 80 percent of the capital's water, and the Tamagawa accounts for the rest. The Tamagawa begins at Lake Okutama

in the mountainous western part of Tokyo. There, and in the Tamagawa upstream area, volunteers conduct reforestation activities to ensure the woodlands are a good source of water.

River water from all three sources undergoes standard purification treatment to be potable. But water from the Tonegawa and Arakawa also goes through advanced steps, specifically ozonation and biological activated carbon adsorption, which are known as Advanced Water Treatment.

Of course Tokyo's tap water meets the 51 standards set by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. In addition to this, the TMG has 200 additional standards regarding safety and taste that are checked before the water is piped to consumers. The TMG has an independent target for deliciousness. Under Japanese law chlorine used for water sterilization must be more than 0.1 mg per liter but no more than 1 mg per liter. However, the standards that the TMG requires are even more stringent; more than

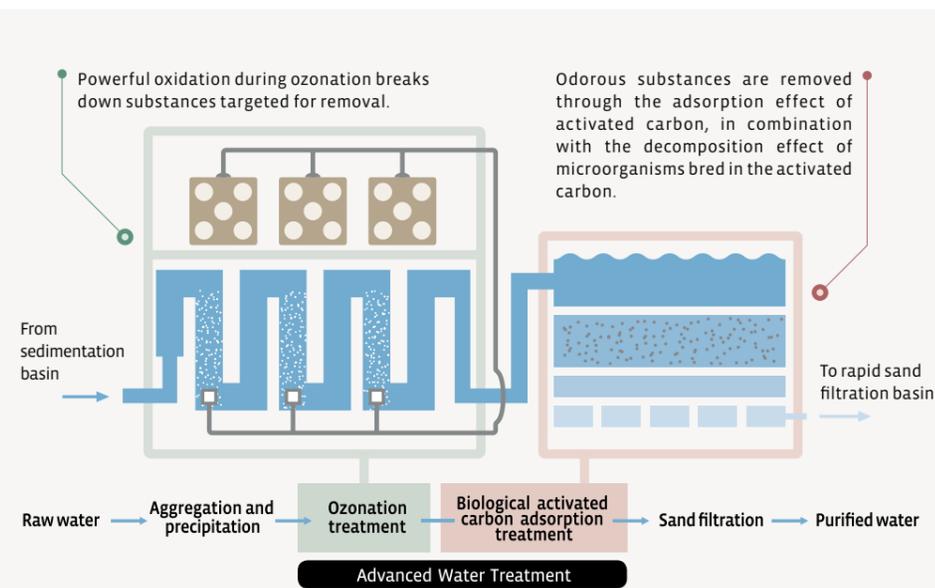
0.1 mg per liter and no more than 0.4 mg per liter. Thanks to that, residual chlorine is so low that it is

hard for consumers to perceive any taste of chlorine. According to the drinking comparison questionnaire targeting 30,613 people that the Bureau of Waterworks carried out in 2017, 58.9 percent of the people answered that Tokyo tap water is tastier or tastes just as good as bottled water.

Another contributing factor behind the great taste of Tokyo water is its softness. In contrast to many waters in North America and Europe, water in the Tokyo region has a lower hardness level. It's "soft" because it has fewer dissolved minerals such as calcium and magnesium. This gives Tokyo spring and tap water a milder taste than water in the West. Soft water in Tokyo and the rest of Japan is said to be effective at enhancing the flavors of foods like tofu and soba, drinks such as green tea, and cooking stock such as dashi, a fish broth made from dried bonito. It's perhaps not surprising, then, that one sake brewer uses Tokyo tap water in its production process. Tokyo tap water offered in PET bottles has also been popular among foreign tourists.

Tokyo tap water will take center stage in September 2018 when the International Water Association holds a congress in the capital with 6,000 participants from 100 countries around the world. Climate change, water scarcity, drought, flooding and growing water demand will be on the agenda.

"Tokyo boasts its sophisticated waterworks which allows us to provide remarkably safe and clear tap water of the highest quality," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike has said. "As the host city we will use this conference to actively share Tokyo's accumulated technologies and know-how."



Tokyo tap water offered in PET bottles has also been popular among foreign tourists. The label design incorporates a traditional Edo kiriko pattern.





Today, kids could try table tennis and basketball from a wheelchair.

A Day without Limits

An innovative, inclusive Tokyo Metropolitan Government program is promoting the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Games. Today a Paralympic athlete gives us all a lesson about winning.

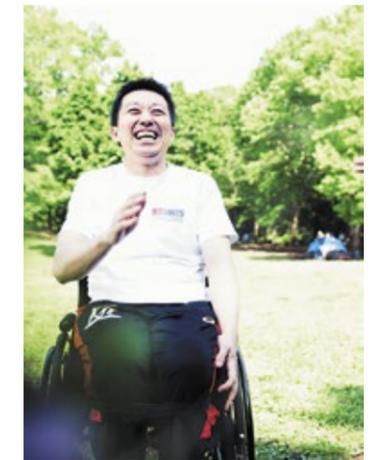
Soon after Tokyo won the bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) initiated the Paralympic Games Competition Experience Program—NO LIMITS CHALLENGE—to raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Paralympic sports among the general public, regardless of age or gender. The idea behind the program is that we are only limited by our mental outlook. Many of the Paralympic sports are featured, including Archery, Badminton, Boccia, Table Tennis, Wheelchair Basketball and Wheelchair Fencing. There are over 30 events planned for this year, and over 76,000 participants have been involved in the dozens of events that have been held each year so far in various locations around Tokyo. The NO LIMITS events are held so that we can all understand the rules and experience the fun, and the difficulty, of Paralympic competition. By actually participating in a game with a Paralympic athlete, we get a true idea of the high level of athletic technique involved and we get to know these people. This definitely raises everyone’s interest in the Tokyo 2020 Games.

it’s in no way as easy as he makes it look!

We went along to a recent NO LIMITS CHALLENGE event that was held in conjunction with the Nerima Children’s Festival in Hikarigaoka Park in the west of Tokyo. Today, kids could try table tennis and basketball, but from a wheelchair. Paralympic athlete Tsuyoshi Watanabe was on hand, and for sure,



(left) NO LIMITS CHALLENGE—to raise awareness, understanding and enjoyment of Paralympic sports. (right) Paralympic athlete Tsuyoshi Watanabe.



wheelchair table tennis is in no way as easy as he makes it look!

Watanabe was enthusiastic: “It’s great how so many kids were here. They know table tennis from TV, but I think they got a real kick out of trying it for themselves. For many of them it was their first experience.”

The kids were enthusiastic too, their reactions to the experience ranging from “It was fun!” and “It was more difficult than I thought it would be,” to quite detailed explanations of their interest in the sport and their knowledge of the Paralympics, and many of them said they wanted to go and see the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. The TMG’s NO LIMITS program seems to be working.

“gotta make sure all my jokes are actually funny”

“I feel very lucky, table tennis is an indoor game; usually you don’t meet so many people, but now, because of being involved with NO LIMITS CHALLENGE, I get out more, I make speeches.” Watanabe continues cheerfully, “I just have to be careful not to make a fool of myself—gotta make sure all my jokes are actually funny.”

In 2006, a bike crash left Watanabe in a wheelchair. Around that time he met an old school friend who, incredibly, had suffered the same fate some years before him. But this guy had become an athlete. He had gone on to win the Tokyo Marathon, become the Japan record holder and to compete in

three consecutive Paralympics: Beijing, London and Rio.

Wheelchair athlete, Kota Hokinoue, had remembered that Watanabe had been in the table tennis club back in junior high. “You can play table tennis in a wheelchair—why don’t you get back into it?” Hokinoue told Watanabe that he’d be waiting for him at the Paralympic Village. At the time, the despondent and overweight Watanabe could not imagine anything of the sort.

Now 20 kilos lighter and, because of his involvement with the NO LIMITS program, a charismatic, confident public speaker—and of course a very good table tennis player—Watanabe will be meeting his old school friend, Hokinoue, at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

how to get to the top of a pyramid in a wheelchair

So, of course, the Paralympics are interesting and exciting, as they showcase all the advances in technology and science that can transform the human body and enable us to overcome “hard barriers.” But it is through programs like the NO LIMITS CHALLENGE, where we all have opportunities to interact with challenged people, and vice versa, that the more abstract attitudinal “soft barriers” will be overcome.

Putting it into perspective, Watanabe teaches us all how to get to the top of a pyramid in a wheelchair: “Everything depends on how you look at it,” he tells us. “I would have never made it to any Games before my accident.”



A truly awesome array of tools.



The shop front exudes historical charm.

Cutting Edge Technology, the Traditional Way

Explaining about downtown culture, an eighth-generation craftsman who works with knives and scissors tells us that “Being a local in Tokyo is not about being sharp, or blunt.”

Tokyo has over 3,000 companies that have been established in the city for more than 100 years. This impressive history was one of the factors that led Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike to spotlight technology and manufacturing based on the tradition of Edo-Tokyo in the “Edo Tokyo Kirari Project.” Launched in November 2016, the project aims to position selected businesses that make superior products using traditional methods into “Tokyo Brands,” and to convey their value and appeal from a new perspective.

Ubukeya is one of the select few. Located in Tokyo’s downtown area of Nihonbashi Ningyocho, Ubukeya is a knife and scissors shop and sharpening service, originally founded in Osaka in 1785. The family-run business has also been operating in Tokyo for over 175 years. They are Tokyo locals.

“It’s extremely ‘Tokyo’ like that”

Ubukeya’s eighth head craftsman, Yutaka Yazaki, was born and raised in Ningyocho. He gives us his take on the charms of his neighborhood and what it is to truly be “from Tokyo.” “The way we treat each other here in the *shitamachi* (literally, low city) is just right. It’s very calm, settled and in harmony. We maintain a perfect sense of distance. You don’t want to step on anyone’s toes, and at the same time you don’t want to appear standoffish. It’s extremely ‘Tokyo’ like that.”

When asked about the future of Ningyocho, Yazaki remains intriguing: “It’ll probably stay the same, no?” (In Tokyo, that means it’ll continue to change.) Ningyocho used to be a busy center for fabric and kimono accessory wholesalers. Recently, with

many new apartment towers being built, Ubukeya’s business is becoming more for domestic use.

...a delicate balance between engagement and surrender...

And Ubukeya has become a popular destination for foreign tourists wanting to experience a glimpse of old Edo. One can choose from a truly awesome array of professional kitchen knives, and all sorts of scissors and shears, down to the finest tiny clipper, tweezers and straight paper knives, and recent innovative additions to the range including a curved paper knife and an iron type paper knife.

Ubukeya is run in the *shokuakindo* style, the craftsman-merchant style. Yazaki doesn’t just sell knives; he sharpens them as well. Throughout our conversation, in the back room, Yazaki’s son was honing blades by hand, honing his skills to take the family business into the future. “I can usually tell by the state of the knife how the owner uses it, and in that way, how it needs to be sharpened.” Yazaki continues. “I’ll leave a thicker edge if the owner tends to hack; you can tell. We’ll sharpen scissors so they’ll cut most fabric just with their own weight. But this doesn’t satisfy everyone. One famous tailor once told

me, ‘I don’t want the scissors to cut the fabric without me; I want to know I’m cutting the fabric!’ With most professionals, whether it be with knives or scissors, we leave the final delicate tuning up to the owner.”

And that’s the way it is—always a delicate balance between engagement and surrender, or alignment and detachment. Good advice when it comes to sharpening knives, or living in Tokyo, or pretty much everything.



After sharpening the blades by machine, he refines their edges by hand.

The Art Museum Story that Reads Like a Screenplay

There's a prince and a princess, a beautiful place and beautiful people, art and fashion, turbulent times and machinations. It's a love story, but it's more than just a walk in the park.

The former residence of Prince Asakano-miya Yasuhiko is now the Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum. The gardens (or *teien*, which give the museum its name) are splendid. The Japanese Garden remains from when this was an imperial residence, and there is now also the Lawn Space. The Koka teahouse in the Japanese Garden, deemed an Important Cultural Property, has begun sponsoring a popular series of tea ceremonies. The tea ceremony with English guidelines is very popular. However this story is more about the wonderful Art Deco villa.

“Art Deco is about materials, beautiful materials”

While in France in the 1920s, fascinated by the beauty of Art Deco, Prince Asaka and Princess Nobuko decided to incorporate its glories into their new residence. They commissioned the French artist Henri Rapin to design the interiors of the principal rooms. Architectural design and construction were realized by the Imperial Household Ministry's Construction Bureau. The residence is itself a work of art—the result of the enthusiasm of the prince and princess and the combined abilities of Japanese and French designers, architects, and craftsmen.

Museum Director Toyojiro Hida explains. “Art Deco is about materials, beautiful materials, and skilled production or manufacture. Look at the details. And consider the passion and sense of the main director of the project, Princess Nobuko. She designed and made many specific requests herself.”

The Anteroom and the astonishing Perfume Tower that predominates the space were designed by Henri Rapin. It was due to the princess's creativity that the purpose of this piece was changed from a fountain, to that of a perfume diffuser. The glass relief doors of the entrance hall were specially designed by René Lalique, to Nobuko's stipulations. The entire structure was developed in this way with her advocacy. There are few Art Deco villas remaining in the world, but the Asaka Residence, in one of Tokyo's luxury residential areas, Shirokane, is a stunning example.

a dazzling array of iconic monuments epitomizing the style appeared

Art Deco, one of the first truly international styles, is named after the International Exposition of

Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts held in Paris in 1925. It had a major influence in the design of fashion, jewelry, furniture, glass, metalwork, textiles and other decorative arts. In the years immediately following the exposition, the art and design shown there were reiterated around the world. Almost overnight a dazzling array of iconic monuments epitomizing the style appeared. These include the Academy Award statuette known as the Oscar® (1928), the Empire State Building (1931), and the Los Angeles City Hall (1928).

Princess Nobuko was the ultimate modern girl

And the Roaring Twenties were dazzling times. There was social and political turbulence. There was modern technology such as automobiles and telephones, radios and airplanes. There was jazz. It was into this world that the eighth daughter of the Emperor Meiji, Princess Nobuko, ventured, and she loved it. She was the ultimate modern girl.

And this is a love story! Like most royalty, Prince Asaka was a soldier. In 1923, while the dashing, then lieutenant colonel was in France studying, he was badly injured in a terrible automobile accident, and Princess Nobuko went to Paris for a number of years to nurse him. It was during this time the couple visited the 1925 Art Deco Exposition and the rest is history. But dark clouds were gathering. Tragically, Nobuko would pass away, just six months after the residence is completed. As a soldier, the prince had already fought in two wars, and his battle days were not yet over, but that, dear readers, is his story.

The glass relief doors of the entrance hall designed by René Lalique.



The view from the Anteroom and Perfume Tower through to the Salon, all designed by Henri Rapin.

©The Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Art Museum

Nihonbashi: Forever the Center of Tokyo

From the days when the best fish and shellfish were sold from boards laid out on the river bank, to today when Japan's leading equities or other trading services are available at the TSE, Nihonbashi has always been the place to go in Tokyo.

Even today “the true Tokyoite” calls himself or herself *edokko*, literally “child of Edo (former name of Tokyo).” This would be someone who was born and raised in the downtown area of Tokyo. True *edokko* have a strong love and respect for the culture, customs, history and traditions of the Edo period (1603-1868). These people have a strong but restrained pride. They don't really care for outsiders but they are never impolite. They care for each other but are never intrusive. This is Edo style.

Explaining Tokyo is not simple

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the renaming of Edo to Tokyo and the establishment of Tokyo-fu (prefecture), the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is conducting the “Old meets New: Tokyo 150 Years” program. Commemorative events and related PR projects have been held and are planned to assist Tokyo citizens and overseas visitors to rediscover the attractiveness of a Tokyo where tradition and innovation have coexisted from Edo, to modern times, to the present. Tokyo 150 Years will also serve as an opportunity to focus on the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and beyond.

Explaining Tokyo is not simple. Visitors to Tokyo often ask, “Where is the city center?” Tokyo is a very complex city; there is very often no simple answer for even the most simple of questions. There are various concentrations of activities in distinct areas all around the city, so there are many different “centers” or main hubs for many various enterprises. But one of the centers for trade and commerce is, and always has been, the area around Nihonbashi Bridge.

In the Edo period one of the great attractions of Nihonbashi Bridge was its view of the thriving fish market and the bustling shops around it. The bridge had long been the center of Edo and



was thick with foot traffic; the neighborhood at its base served the citizens of Edo as a kind of public square. As early as 1606—two years after the bridge was completed—official notice boards appeared on the west side of the south end of the bridge. There, official decrees and instructions to the populace were posted. And from time to time, the reverse occurred, as common people posted satirical verses that sharply criticized the government.

Four impressions of Nihonbashi; (clockwise from top left) Fukutoku Shrine nestled amongst modern buildings; Nihonbashi Bridge in the 1950s; *ukiyo-e* print of Nihonbashi during Edo times; the bridge as it is presently.



“a town where every day a thousand *ryo* is dropped”

Ichi nichi sen ryo ochiru machi was, and is still, often said of Nihonbashi: “a town where every day a thousand *ryo* is dropped” (i.e., changes hands). In the Edo period a *ryo* was the largest denomination of the official central currency. A *ryo*, a large gold ovaloid coin, was a huge amount of money. Simple calculation based on its gold weight at today's rates

makes one worth more than \$600. And that's without factoring in inflation over the intervening two or three hundred years! Of course this is just a popular maxim that was said of the Nihonbashi area but there is no doubt that it was the mercantile center of Edo.

Today still it must be said that Nihonbashi remains the center of Tokyo. “Kilometer zero,” the point from which all distances are measured to the capital, is at the middle of Nihonbashi Bridge. Japan's highway signs indicating the distance to Tokyo actually state the number of kilometers to Nihonbashi. And the area remains one of the centers of Tokyo's financial and business activity. Many corporations, financial institutions, hotels and department stores maintain a major presence in Nihonbashi. The Bank of Japan is there. Nihonbashi's main market is now the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE), a world leading stock exchange, and there, still, a lot of money changes hands every day.

It has never been just about the money

Edo-Tokyo has been devastated by disasters and calamities many times in its history. The Great Fire of Meireki in 1657, the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 and the Second World War are three times Nihonbashi was almost completely destroyed. Nearly nothing remains of old Edo in Nihonbashi today. But there is one thing, the Ikkokubashi Maigoshirase Sekihyo. The “Sign for Lost Children,” a stone pillar signpost at the foot of Ikkoku Bridge, near Nihonbashi Bridge. If you had lost your child in the busy market, you could put a description on one side of the pillar, if you had found a lost child you could put a description on the other side. Hopefully there were many match-ups and many lost children were reunited with their distraught parents. The signpost speaks wonders of the love the people of old Edo had for each other. It has never been just about the money. This spirit of old Edo still lives on in downtown Tokyo today.

Autumn: the Warmest Time of Year

Hot reds, burnt oranges and fiery yellows. The turning of the leaves in Japan, or the time of *koyo*, is to autumn what cherry blossoms are to spring.

One of the most popular places to admire this seasonal transformation is the Tokyo Metropolitan Government managed Rikugien Gardens, set in a quiet residential neighborhood in northern Tokyo. Established in 1702 during the Edo period, the name Rikugien is derived from the six classifications of *waka* poetry. Within the garden's nine hectares are different areas, which together, reflect a total of 88 scenes from *waka* poems.

Ask any local, and they'll tell you that Rikugien Gardens is one of the city's most beautiful gardens at any time of the year. It's a visit during the time of

koyo, though, that really warms Japanese hearts. In autumn, a wander among the *momiji* (maple trees), over the iconic Togetsukyo footbridge and to the Fukiage-chaya teahouse for a traditional green tea, will almost have you believing that the Edo period never quite ended.

Rikugien Gardens is open nearly every day of the year. The autumnal colors can also be explored after dark from mid November to early December, when the gardens are illuminated with special lighting. A night-time stroll amid the lit-up colors adds a modern feel to this historical landscape.

Autumn is the perfect time of year to visit Tokyo if you wish to experience one of the city's spectacular natural displays.

Rikugien Gardens is one of many historic gardens and parks in Tokyo.



Kyu-Iwasaki-tei Gardens combines eastern and western architectural styles.



Koishikawa Korakuen Gardens is also renowned for its autumnal colors.

A Stay Unlike Any Other

Unique and affordable accommodations are popping up all over Tokyo.

As the number of overseas visitors to Japan continues to increase each year, so do the types of accommodations available to tourists. Now, more than ever before, travelers from all around the world have a much wider variety of options for where to lay their weary heads after a busy day of sightseeing, business meet-

At First Cabin, first class rooms offer space and plenty of amenities.



ings, or visiting friends.

The world's first capsule hotel opened in Osaka in 1979 as a place for overworked and overtired businessmen (or "salary-men," as they are known in Japan) to get a good night's sleep even after missing their last train home. The capsules, which originally could only be rented by men, were small sleeping



The minimalistic look of the Nine Hours capsule hotel.

Pods stacked on top of one another and including a television, a privacy screen, and air conditioning and lighting controls. While these types of capsule hotels certainly still exist, there is also a new wave of more modern, boutique-style capsule hotels that is becoming more popular in Japan.

the capsules have a futuristic look, with no sharp corners and minimalist detailing

Nine Hours Hotel is a chain of capsule hotels with many properties in Tokyo and all over Japan. Its designer gave the hotel's original capsules a futuristic look, with no sharp corners and minimalist detailing. Rather than a television or radio, there are simply outlets for plugging in electrical appliances and USB devices such as a smartphone. The hotel's main focus is to provide guests with an excellent night of sleep, and therefore the mattresses and pillows are designed to be as comfortable as possible. The name is derived from the idea that most people on average spend nine hours in a hotel: one hour getting ready for bed, seven hours sleeping, and one hour before leaving in the morning.

I recently had a chance to spend 4,900 yen and stay a night in the newly opened Nine Hours Hotel in

the affluent central area of Akasaka. It was my very first experience in a capsule hotel, and I must admit I was a little apprehensive. But in the end, I needn't have worried. Once inside, the capsule felt surprisingly spacious and comfortable—I was even able to sit up comfortably without hitting my head on the ceiling, and I never once rolled into one of the walls in the middle of the night. The common areas were also very clean and spacious, with plenty of showers, sinks, counter space, and toilet stalls so that I never saw anyone having to wait their turn in the women's side. The loungewear, towels, and other amenities provided were also impressively high quality.

First Cabin offers a simulation of what it's like to fly first class

First Cabin is another new chain of concept hotels that takes the capsule idea and expands upon it further. First Cabin offers a simulation of what it's like to fly first class by offering four types of cabins: first class, business class, premium class, and premium economy class. The various classes offer varying degrees of space, with premium class rooms being nearly as large or larger than rooms at a business hotel, with some rooms able to accommodate up to four guests.

a library concept, with beds amongst the stacks, hidden behind curtains

Looking for something even more unique? Book and Bed Tokyo bills its hotels as "accommodation bookshops," even though it sells no books. It's more of a library concept, with beds amongst the stacks, hidden behind curtains. Three sizes of beds are available, and guests can browse the shelves for reading material before turning in for the night.

So whether you're a design freak, an airplane aficionado, or a lover of the written word, there is a concept hotel in Tokyo that will offer a unique experience just for you. And the best part is that you won't even have to part with much of your hard-earned cash to stay there.

At Book and Bed Tokyo, book lovers can curl up with their favorite author in a cozy space.



The Forecast for Tomorrow

A Roppongi based designer predicts high humidity and a chance of showers across the space-time continuum. And she's sultry, warm and sunny as well.

It was said that absolutely nothing went to waste in old Edo (1603-1868). Today too, Tokyoites are very conscious about separating their trash. Except the day after a storm in Tokyo when the disposal of a battered umbrella can be quite tricky. The ubiquitous transparent vinyl umbrellas made of steel and plastic seen everywhere in Tokyo are con-

Products designed by Shibata are renowned for their textures and simplicity.



venient and cheap, hence usually quite flimsy. And separating an umbrella into burnable and recyclable materials takes a little bit of time. However, there is an umbrella with a different construction and concept. At first glance, it looks similar to the familiar vinyl umbrella. But this one is completely made of reusable plastic. It's the first of its kind, which considers its environmental impact. Safe, with no sharp or pinching parts, and clever—it holds open with the reverse tension of the struts—this umbrella makes rainy days fun. It was designed by Fumie Shibata.

an overwhelming presence without making extreme assertions

Shibata has designed many very successful products. Mobile phones, medical thermometers, sofas, sleep-pods and, umbrellas. In the world of product design there are not many chart-topping women. Shibata's designs are sultry. Soft curves and surfaces, delicate colors, polite finishes, dare we say, feminine. And like Shibata herself, the products have an overwhelming presence without making extreme assertions. As with the phrase "form follows function," Shibata's product morphology is an expression of high functionality, just like her umbrella. We went to meet her.

Tokyo's midtown, Roppongi, with its art museums and skyscrapers, is a city of art and design. Shibata's office, Design Studio S, is in a gap between the tall buildings. Shibata revered Tokyo as a young girl and always wanted to have an office right in the middle of town. That admiration has never changed, and here she is. "Roppongi is a very easy place for design," she says. "The things come to you here, you don't have to go to them." Shibata, a member of the local Roppongi Commerce Association, is a local.

"It was a dream, like wanting to be an actress"

Shibata attended Musashino Art University in the 1980s and learned about product design. "I thought that through design we could make the world a better place," she says. After graduation, she worked at a leading home appliance manufacturer. "Becoming a product designer was not really my goal," she laughs. "It was just a dream, an impossible dream, like wanting to become an actress." But in just a few years she was awarded the coveted Good Design Award. Still frequently winning design awards, she soon became one of Japan's leading product designers. She became



Product designer Fumie Shibata in her studio.

a Good Design Award jury member in 2005, and in 2018 became the Chair of its judging committee.

dewy, like beautiful healthy skin

Shibata made an intriguing comment, "There is essential moisture in nature and in human beings, but few industrial products have this feeling. Since we live our lives with industrial products I want to make them sort of sultry, to feel like I feel. Carefully formed things are easier to touch." Many of Shibata's products touch the body. The atmosphere of every product made by Shibata feels dewy, like beautiful healthy skin. Her designs are all intended to become

part of our lives.

Shibata's aim is to make standard items that go beyond space-time. "There are many general items that may be avant-garde when they are released, but they will not become standard or universal unless they make an impact that changes the era. With a general item's wide acceptance, its avant-garde strength will change to universality." Shibata speaks passionately yet moderately about her ideas, her designs and her products. But at the same time she wants them to be ours. Shibata, who speaks of herself as just another human being searching in her heart for universality, is lovely. Sultry, very like Tokyo—just like her designs.

Enchanted Forests in the City

The agony and the ecstasy. Is bonsai an art or a craft? The passion of an artist and an artisan in Tokyo takes bonsai to the world, and helps bring the world to Tokyo.

A YouTube video shows bonsai master Kunio Kobayashi pruning an ancient yew tree at a contest in Italy. The tree is fairly large for a bonsai—about half a man's height. Kobayashi, who is short and stocky, sometimes strains to tackle it.

But he never hesitates, and the Western audience is fascinated. People hold up their phones to film as he delves into the foliage, snipping, sawing, wiring the branches, even pounding the trunk with a chisel to create areas of dead wood. People gasp when he makes final adjustments—with a chainsaw. His vigor may surprise many who, when they think of bonsai, might otherwise picture very old people, pottering about slowly.

bonsai encompasses everything: beauty, happiness, hardship and even pain

A spry 70 years old, Kobayashi was born and bred in downtown Tokyo. He has the old-fashioned showmanship and swagger the Japanese call *iki*. It is with this energy he has spread the word of bonsai to international audiences.

Speaking at his popular Shunkaen Bonsai Museum in Tokyo, Kobayashi says bonsai encompasses everything: beauty, of course, but also happiness, hardship and even pain. For example, using dead wood in a tree connects with our drive to survive. Kobayashi says that ever since its introduction to Japan from China a thousand years ago, bonsai has been about “respect for life.”

Formal bonsai is a world of tradition, regulated by rules. Trees are divided and judged in categories, including size and shape, and must conform to established ideals. Competitions are held worldwide. “To appreciate traditional bonsai,” says Kobayashi, “look for four factors: Character. Harmony. Elegance. And Essence—the tree must express the essence of its species, so a pine must have about it the air of a pine.”

Having won the nation's top prizes—including the Prime Minister's Award—many times over, and built a thriving business, Kobayashi says he now wants to focus more on his art. “I'm not so interested in money, or competing,” he says. “I'm an artist.”

Another aspect of Kobayashi's work is teaching. He trains apprentices who apply through his website, and says he has taught around 100 so far. They stay on-site at the bonsai museum for periods starting from one month (the shared accommodation is one reason he takes only males). Many are from Europe, but most are from China. “They're very keen to learn about soil management and other techniques,” he says.

“small shape, large feeling”

He recognizes the irony in teaching Chinese students what is originally a Chinese art. But he says, “Today's bonsai is uniquely Japanese. The Japanese aesthetic is about subtraction—not addition. Consider in the West, you find churches with frescoes almost on every wall” he says. “But the Japanese temple is almost bare. And poems like haiku are so short.”

Kobayashi takes a thick felt pen and on a big piece of paper writes four characters that mean, “small shape, large feeling.” The craftsman's job is simple—to bring out the towering essence of a tree. The “tree-ness” of a tree, one could say.

Everything else is just performance.

Healing Trees

“Some people say there's a healing aspect to small bonsai”

Bonsai's appeal is universal, but one of the most popular styles among the young is miniature bonsai—trees around 15 centimeters high. Hideo Noguchi is a former fashion agency staffer who became a bonsai artisan about eight years ago. He sells his trees every Saturday at the Farmer's Market @ UNU in Tokyo's trendy Aoyama. “Since I was working with foreign models all the time, I wanted to give something Japanese to the world,” he says. He adds that bonsai's foreign popularity has helped feed their resurgence in Japan. “Some people say there's a healing aspect to small bonsai,” says Noguchi. “In Tokyo many people reside in small spaces with little or no garden. You can bring them inside and have them near you.” A major part of his business is in export to Europe. His biggest seasons are spring and autumn, when the trees are most striking. His most popular tree is the Japanese maple.



Small bonsais are also popular, as they reflect the living styles of many Tokyoites.



The museum's largest bonsais are arranged in lines at the main building.

The Search for Tokyo's Heart and Soul

An amazing variety of treasures can be found and rich memories can be made, by venturing off Tokyo's main streets.

Yokocho in Japanese literally means side street. But in English, alley is probably a closer definition. Narrow, noisy, cluttered, crowded alley is even closer. And close is a key word too. Many of the bars and eateries are tiny, seating less than five customers, if they even have seating space. It is in yokocho where often you will find the proverbial “hole in the wall,” the customers standing in the street eating, drinking, talking loudly and laughing, and happily interacting with passers-by. Some yokocho are mainly bars and restaurants, but we went to Harmonica Yokocho, in the trending-now Tokyo suburb of Kichijoji, which is all this, and much more.

West of central Tokyo, Kichijoji is widely considered to be one of Tokyo's most desirable places to live. It is relatively close and easily connected by train to Shinjuku and Shibuya, but it's also a destination for people living further out. It has leafy residential areas with cafés and bistros, one of Tokyo's most varied and complete shopping areas, and the beautiful, vast Inokashira Park. And there is Harmonica Yokocho.

A member of the merchants association shared the somewhat shady history of the place. It is that of an illicit market in front of the station in the chaotic times following the war. It was a huge collection of tiny stalls selling fish, meat, pickles, eggs, and the like. With the development of the station building and the “super” market in the 1960s the stalls evolved into eating and drinking establishments. Sometime in the 1980s a famous literary critic is said to have likened the lines of tiny shops to the holes in a harmonica and so the name was established.

Colorful lanterns throughout a yokocho serve as an invitation and a welcome to customers.

They even had children's books, and children browsing the stock

Harmonica Yokocho is a family affair. Many of the businesses have been family-run for generations. And it's still a market where ingredients are sold as before, but now the younger members of a family might run the restaurant next door serving those ingredients as meals. Some shops are only open during the day, and others only open at night. Some shops even rearrange the daytime merchandise and stay open at night as a different shop. Harmonica Yokocho has a tiny shop selling cakes for dogs. I found vintage salvage denim jeans with a button fly. Another shop was selling reworked kimonos. There are “pop-up” shops, for one night only. Tonight's pop-up was a used book store with a wide range. They even had children's books, and children browsing the stock.

delivered quickly, excitedly, mixed-up, with frequent interruptions

We made friends with strangers, as you do in yokocho. Melanie, from France, and Marta from Spain are both relative newcomers to Japan. We asked them about their first impressions of Harmonica Yokocho;

“I really love all the colorful lanterns, lighted signs...”

“Everyone is always so very friendly and communicative.”

“I tried *oden* for the first time.”

“A lot of people were waving and greeting us when we tried to take some pictures.”

“I bought a kimono in a small little shop.

The lady helped me to try three different colors, bringing me a mirror from the back of the store.”

“I found the average of prices very fair and the environment was really enjoyable.”

“Really something I will recommend all my friends.”



One of the most fun facets of a yokocho, is sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with the people around you.



A shop master of a popular ramen shop interacts with customers through a small window.

The girls with cute French and Spanish accents, the communication is warm and positive albeit in language that is novel to them. Their spontaneous impressions are delivered quickly, excitedly, mixed-up, with frequent interruptions. This discourse conveys the diversity, vitality and authenticity of the stores and the people together with the jumbled atmosphere of the place. We're in Harmonica Yokocho.

Oden—a stew made with Japanese white radish, eggs, etc. in dashi (authentic soup stock).



Tokyoites’ Approach to Luck Is a Very Deliberate Business

Killing two birds with one stone? There is a traditional market held in Tokyo where you can get great souvenirs to take home and you can invest in your future at the same time.



Tori-no-Ichi is celebrated at shrines and temples that have some kind of association with birds. The chanting and clapping of hands can be heard throughout the *Tori-no-Ichi*, such as the one in Meguro Ward, as locals purchase their chosen *kumade*.

Literally translated as the “Rooster Market,” *Tori-no-Ichi* is a festive event said to have originated with the custom of offering a chicken to the gods to pray for good luck. It has been continually celebrated since the Edo period (1603-1868), according to the Edo-Tokyo Museum.

Tori-no-Ichi is not held on a single day, but those which, according to the traditional Chinese calendar, coincide with the day of the Rooster and can occur two or three times each month. The festival is always held in November and in 2018 the day of the rooster will fall on November 1, 13 and 25.

The *Tori-no-Ichi* is celebrated at shrines and temples that have some kind of association with birds, all over Japan. The largest event is at Ohtori Shrine in Tokyo, which boasts some 150 stalls in an open air market that buzzes with 700,000 to 800,000 people at any one time. In the past, the popularity

of the Ohtori Shrine was helped by its proximity to Yoshiwara, the officially sanctioned red-light district under the Shogunate government. The courtesans were prohibited from leaving the area apart from on certain holidays, including the *Tori-no-Ichi*. As the equivalent of modern day celebrities of TV and film, they must have caused quite a stir when they walked through the *Tori-no-Ichi* in nearby Asakusa some 250 years ago!

local folklore has helped transform the rake into a talisman bringing happiness and good fortune

Following its roots as an open-air market serving to connect rural areas around Edo as a market for agricultural tools and products, *Tori-no-Ichi* shifted emphasis with the rise of the merchant

classes, and articles that originally served practical purposes became good luck charms.

Perhaps the most famous is *kumade*, originally a rake for gathering up fallen leaves, which local folklore helped transform into a talisman bringing happiness into the household and good fortune upon the possessor. In the Edo period, they were purchased by tea houses, restaurants and shipyards, as good luck charms.

it is thought to be good form to offer to pay more, and not less, for the privilege

There is also a ritual involved in purchasing *kumade*. The price listed on the rake is only a guideline, but not an invitation to haggle, and it is thought to be good form to offer to pay more, and not less, for the privilege of owning the ceremonial rake!

And once a *kumade* has been selected and a price agreed, the buyer and seller strike the deal with a traditional hand clap, while chanting *kanai anzen, shobai hanjo*—literally, safety at home, and success in business. The sometimes raucous event is designed to make the buyer’s dream of good luck or prosperity a shared event.

Kumade are displayed high above entrances and gateways so as to make an easy pathway along which good fortune can enter, or are placed in household altars to greet the New Year.

Good fortune is taken very seriously, individuals buy *kumade* for their homes and even world-renowned companies and organizations visit the *Tori-no-Ichi*, often companies en masse, to buy *kumade* to ensure the coming year’s prosperity. Even at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, a magnificent *kumade* can be found in the entrance hall.

Building on a Green Legacy

Sustainable architecture in Tokyo is more than just respect for nature.

Before Tokyo became Japan's capital in 1868, the city was known as Edo. One of the world's largest cities at one million people, Edo was also home to 1,000 mansions for feudal lords who planted spectacular gardens featuring cherry trees, pine trees and flowers. Indeed, the garden city of Edo also brimmed with waterways and parks. When Scottish botanist Robert Fortune visited in the early 1860s, he called Edo "the most beautiful city in the world."

Nearly 150 years later, Tokyo's population has expanded to 13.8 million but the Edo tradition of living in harmony with nature continues. Tokyo

homes often have miniature gardens overflowing with plants, flowers and perhaps a bonsai tree or two. The same philosophy can be found in the capital's grandest commercial complexes.

Tokyo Midtown Hibiya is a 35-story office and shopping complex that opened in spring 2018. Its most striking feature is its "dancing" concave glass exterior, meant to evoke the elegant balls once held at Hibiya's Rokumeikan, a celebrated Josiah Conder structure where Western and Japanese celebrities mingled in the late 19th century. But Tokyo Midtown Hibiya was also designed to blend in with both the natural environment and the cinema and theater district where it's located. Part of the complex's 2,000 square meters of green space is the Park View Garden, an open terrace on the sixth floor that overlooks historic 16-hectare Hibiya Park next door; viewing the park from the garden is like looking at an infinity pool of vast greenery.

"Tokyo Midtown Hibiya is designed to be a new center for culture, art and greenery, but we wanted to use preexisting features as much as possible," says Tsutomu Mizuno, a project planner with owner Mitsui Fudosan's Hibiya Urban Planning and Development Department. "That's why the preexisting Godzilla statue plaza outside, as well as the graceful curves of the stone facade of the Sanshin Building, which stood on the spot, were incorporated into the overall plan."

As Tokyo Midtown Hibiya welcomes a new generation of culture and nature lovers to Hibiya, another new large-scale project in the central part of the capital will demonstrate the importance of sustainable architecture. Scheduled to open in spring 2020, Tokyo World Gate will revitalize the Toranomon area with a 38-story complex mixing office, commercial, residential and hotel spaces. The tower is a designated national strategic urban planning project themed on linking Tokyo and Japan to the rest of the world. But it's also deeply invested in the history of Toranomon and the natural environment of Minato Ward.

A pedestrian green corridor on the complex surrounded by 5,000 square meters of green space will incorporate a 10-meter elevation change in the



Tokyo World Gate opening in spring 2020 will have a 3,000-square-meter pedestrian green corridor including a stream.

land and include a stream. Dubbed Fukishiro Forest after the existing Fukishiro Inari Shinto shrine, the area will feature open grassy areas, ponds, terrace seating and restaurants; wildlife such as frogs and birds will restore some of the district's biodiversity. A local camphor tree, 20 meters tall and over 100 years old, was painstakingly uprooted, cleaned and transplanted to maintain the site's natural legacy.

"Minato Ward has plenty of nature even though it's downtown," says Yoshihiko Masunaga, director of Real Estate Development Headquarters at developer Mori Trust. "Sometimes this is from the remains of gardens cultivated in the daimyo estates of Edo."

Sustainable architecture, however, isn't just about greenery. It's also about reducing environmental footprints while being resilient in the face of natural disasters. Both Tokyo Midtown Hibiya and Tokyo World Gate incorporate energy-saving measures such as LED lighting, cogeneration facilities and water recycling to save on natural resources. They're also built with seismic isolation systems to withstand the strongest of earthquakes and can serve as emergency shelters for thousands of people in times of disaster.

So next time you walk by one of the capital's newest skyscrapers, remember that these castles in the sky are the heirs of the gardens of daimyo. It's one of many ways in which 17th century Edo remains a living, breathing city in 21st century Tokyo.



From certain angles, Park View Gardens and the nearby Hibiya Park form one seamless green expanse.

To many foreign visitors, Japan is a futuristic, high-tech country where automation is given free rein. One element of this is the country's 4.2 million vending machines that sell everything from drinks and snacks to umbrellas and natto fermented soybeans. But as cameras, sensors and ethernet modules are becoming cheaper and more widespread, vending machines are evolving and taking on new functions.

The concept of ubiquitous vendors in Japan can be traced to itinerant merchants of the Edo period (1603-1868) who carried medicine, daily necessities and even entire noodle stalls slung on poles over their shoulders. Vending machines today don't walk around on legs, but they are increasingly networked as part of the Internet of Things (IoT), and they're getting smarter.

Some vending machines in Japan now have touchscreens that show imagery of products instead

of plastic models. Equipped with computer-vision systems, they can suggest drinks based on the estimated age and gender of customers.

Coca-Cola (Japan) Company, the local arm of the U.S. drinks giant, has been exploring ways in which vending machines can help the community in the event of powerful earthquakes or other natural disasters. Through IoT networks, the company's vending machines can be remotely commanded to show disaster-related information on their displays as well as dispense products for free in the event of an emergency.

In the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, over 400 company vending machines dispensed more than 88,000 drinks for free to people in the affected areas, including stranded commuters in the Tokyo metropolitan area. The bottler has about 8,000 vending machines across Japan that stand ready to help. It's also prepared to use its delivery

trucks to transport emergency relief supplies in the event of a disaster.

"Vending machines are growing beyond their role as sales channels to become a form of social infrastructure with various functions to support people in their daily lives as well as in emergencies," says a spokesperson. "As technology evolves, we are also reducing the environmental footprint of our machines."

One example of that is the bottler's Peak Shift vending machines, which were also inspired by the 2011 quake. The idea is simple: instead of using electricity to refrigerate drinks during the daytime, when electrical grid demand is highest, the machines cool beverages at night. Since drinks remain cool long after refrigeration, the machines reduce daytime power consumption by 95 percent. Some 200,000 such machines have since been installed as of December 2017, and the company aims to have at least half of its

machines using Peak Shift technology by 2020.

There are also vending machines that have been designated so that part of the sales are donated to various organizations and regional sports organizations.

Finally, vending machines are helping make the community more safe and secure. Some companies are experimenting with embedded cameras that can function as security cameras, recording any criminal activity. Another technology being explored is smart tags carried by children—vending machines could communicate with the tags, helping parents monitor the whereabouts of their children. For its part, one company has drivers that keep an eye on the community, reporting suspicious situations or people in trouble to the authorities. It's one more way in which vending machines and the infrastructure that supports them are evolving to become active partners in the daily lives of people in Tokyo.

Drinks Dispensers that Lend a Helping Hand

Tokyo's vending machines are taking on new roles for safety and security.



As technology advances, Tokyo's vending machines now do everything from selling drinks, to playing support roles during natural disasters.



Where Do We Go if We Start from Shibuya?

A young Tokyo start-up CEO is heading to take the internet to space. Out of this world? Emails from Mars? She gives us further directions.

establishing her company in Tokyo was a no-brainer

Kurahara now leads a team of over 20 staff hailing from around the world. They are developing a platform called StellarStation, which will allow antenna owners to sell their idle time to satellite operators via a sharing system. The idea stems from the fact that there are far more satellites in space than there are antennas on the ground that can communicate with them, and the usage rate of many antennas is very low.

“Now there are people making satellites at universities. There are even some high schools and junior high schools making them. As more people in more countries make satellites, the business has begun to look much more viable,” Kurahara said, adding that the infrastructure on the ground lags behind, which is where Infostellar comes in.

“In Tokyo there are more and more people, even students, who are interested in working for start-ups, and there are also a lot of people who are currently working for start-ups. So this has made hiring easier,” she said.

Kurahara has found Tokyo to be a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. In addition to rent, cost of living, and personnel costs being lower than in Silicon Valley, she said she has not found it exceptionally difficult to hire talented staff, even as a new company. The young executive said that for her, establishing her company in Tokyo was a no-brainer.

Infostellar aims to let satellite owners share antennas around the world.

Warm and friendly, with a big smile and even bigger ideas, Naomi Kurahara is out to change the world—and beyond. The 37-year-old satellite systems engineer is co-founder and CEO of Infostellar, a Tokyo-based company that is currently laying the groundwork for creating a global network that will connect satellite operators with antenna owners around the world. Eventually, Kurahara’s goal is to help bring the internet to space.

From her office in Tokyo’s busy area of Shibuya, Kurahara explains how she used hard work and perseverance to take Infostellar from an idea she had over 10 years ago, to a full-fledged start-up with a total of 860 million yen in investment so far.

“if we had built it up little by little, we would have missed our chance”

“During our seed round of funding, I sent so many emails and contacted tons of companies through their websites, and then a friend of mine introduced me to venture capital,” Kurahara said.

“I eagerly tried to make appointments with dozens of companies, and some of them actually met with me. Of those, three of them invested with us: one angel investor, one VC, and one regular business firm.”

This earned her and her partners an initial 60 million yen to get their project off the ground in 2016. The following year, they raised 800 million yen more through Series A funding, with Airbus Ventures, the venture capital arm of the multinational aerospace company, as their lead investor. Kurahara knew from the start that an investment model such as this was the only viable way to realize her ideas.

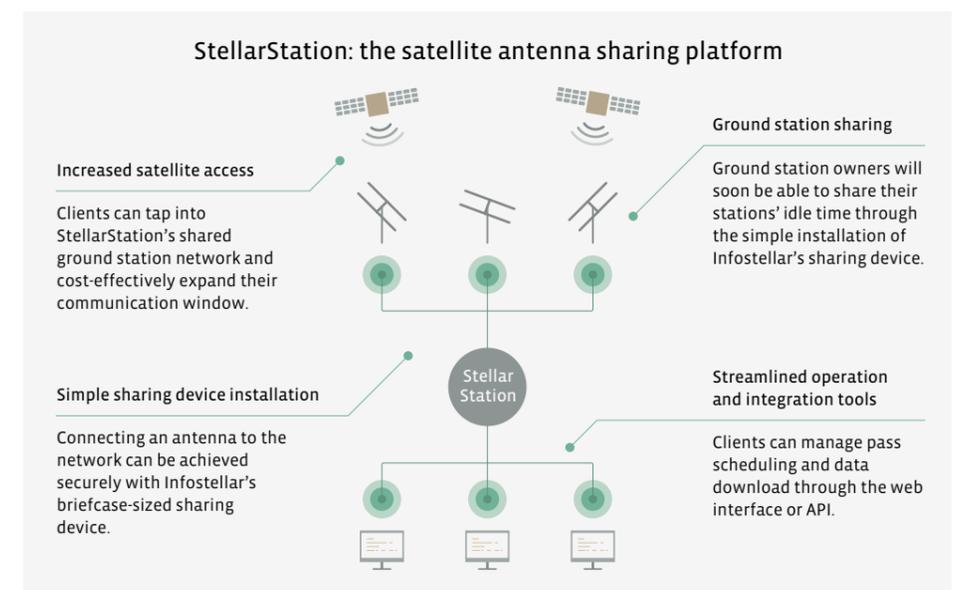
“Our business combines a sharing model with the space industry,” she said, alluding to the fast pace of the industry. “So if we had used a bootstrapping method and built it up little by little, it would have taken much longer and we would have missed our chance.”

“by building this infrastructure, we will help the space business to grow”

Looking into the future, Kurahara sees potential for Infostellar’s success in helping other businesses—

as well as the space industry as a whole—to develop.

“Businesses could take advantage of improved remote sensing from satellites; for example more accurate weather forecasts for farmers or more accurate fish movement data for fishermen. IoT from satellites could provide suppliers with more data about the use of their products, which could be used to improve their service. Infrastructure is needed to implement these kinds of ideas. Whether this infrastructure exists or not will greatly affect the probability for success,” she said. “So for us, by building a platform that will facilitate this infrastructure, we will be able to help the space business to grow.”



Carving a Living Out of Pop Culture

A woodblock printmaker hosts “print parties” from his workshop in Asakusa and continues the tradition of woodblock printing as an everyday popular news medium.



The beauty and refinement of the woodblock print depends on the creator's fine touch and attention to detail.

“Let’s do this!” enthuses energetic woodblock printer and carver David Bull with a clap of his hands, launching into a series of rapid instructions that signal the start of one of his “print parties,” workshop-like experiences that allow visitors to try their hand at woodblock printing themselves using Japanese techniques.

“they want to touch Japan. We give them that experience”

While Bull has been in Japan for over 30 years, slowly but steadily building up his woodblock printing business, his current shop and workshop space in one of Tokyo’s essential destinations for visitors, Asakusa, only opened in 2014. In addition to the print parties, he and his staff also create prints that are sold at the shop and online.

“We constantly hear from the tourists that they want to do stuff. They’ve seen the temples, they’ve been shopping, they’ve eaten sushi, and now they want to touch Japan,” Bull says. “We give them that experience.”

Bull first happened upon Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints in Canada. Ukiyo-e—literally “floating world pictures”—subjects included female beauties,

kabuki actors and sumo wrestlers; scenes from history and folk tales; travel scenes and landscapes; flora and fauna; and erotica. It was the original Edo period (1603-1868) pop culture. They captivated him so much that he began trying to teach himself how

to reproduce them, learning from his mistakes and failures as he went. When he and his family moved to Tokyo over three decades ago, he continued to do printmaking in between teaching English classes. But his real break came when he embarked on an ambitious project to make prints of *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*, a famous anthology of 100 poems by 100 poets that dates from around 1200 and is often published as individual prints or playing cards, each with the poem often accompanied by a portrait of the poet. He sold subscriptions to the series, making a limited run of 100 prints of each of the poems. Reproducing 10 of the poems a year, Bull dedicated himself to the project for a decade, enabling him to finally make a living from printmaking.

woodblock prints of his designs feature themes from modern pop culture

The 100 poems project is also what allowed Bull to save the capital needed to expand his workshop by hiring staff to help him make his prints. However, he quickly ran through his funds. Just as Bull had told all of his staff he would have to lay them off, his next big break came in the form of an email from Jed Henry, a young American artist and illustrator who wanted Bull to create handmade woodblock prints of his designs, which featured themes from modern pop culture. Bull eventually agreed to partner with Henry, and the two got the project off the ground with the largest non-movie-related Kickstarter campaign up until that time, raising \$330,000.

“We’re the right people in the right place at the right time doing the right thing”

Now 66 years old, Bull has expanded his Asakusa workshop and has made the first floor of the building a retail shop. And while it has taken him a lot of hard work and determination to get where he is today, he also says that he never felt ostracized by other craftsmen, even as a foreigner trying to break into a Japanese field.

“There has been no hostility, no barriers, they helped me,” he says.

Bull’s space in Asakusa is on the historic Rokku Dori, just steps from Sensoji Temple. “There’s no better location in the world. We’re the right people in the right place at the right time doing the right thing,” he says.

“This is my dream. I’m living it every day, and I love it.”



Woodblock printer and carver David Bull at work in Asakusa.

Tokyo Basics

Population

Total Population of Tokyo (2018)

13,831,421

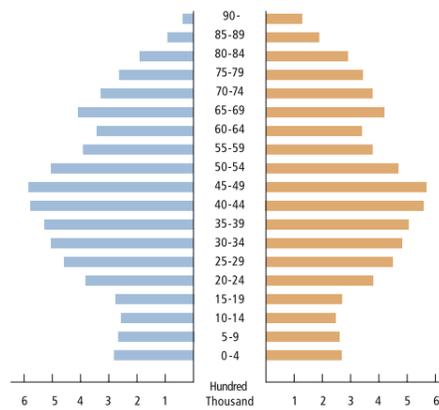
Population Age Structure by Gender (2018)

Men (2018)

6,807,675

Average Life Expectancy (2015)

81.07



Women (2018)

7,023,746

Average Life Expectancy (2015)

87.26

Foreign Residents (2018)

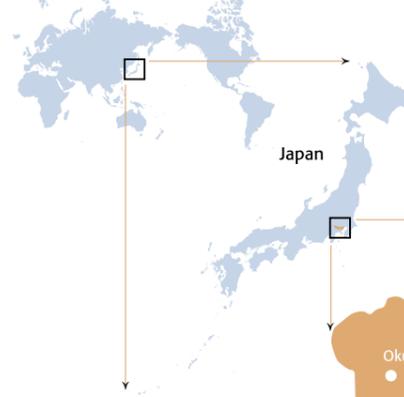
521,500

People Over 100 Years Old (2018)

5,803

Location

World

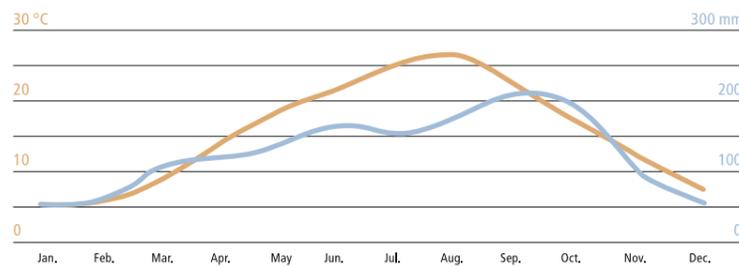


Area

2,193.96
sq. kilometers



Average Monthly Temperature and Rainfall



(Source: Japan Meteorological Agency, 1981-2010)

● = Average temperature
● = Average rainfall

Average Annual Temperature

15.4 °C
(59.7°F)



Average Annual Rainfall

1,528.8 mm

Sister and Friendship Cities / States *

- ① New York (USA)
- ② Beijing (China)
- ③ Paris (France)
- ④ New South Wales* (Australia)
- ⑤ Seoul (South Korea)
- ⑥ Jakarta (Indonesia)
- ⑦ São Paulo* (Brazil)
- ⑧ Cairo (Egypt)
- ⑨ Moscow (Russia)
- ⑩ Berlin (Germany)
- ⑪ Rome (Italy)
- ⑫ London (UK)



Annual Foreign Tourists (2017)



13.8
million

A 5.1% increase over 2016

Tokyo's GMP¹ (Nominal) as a Share of Japan's GDP (FY2015)

Japan ¥532.2 trillion



19.6% of
Japan's GDP

¥104.3
trillion²

¹ GMP: Gross Metropolitan Product

² \$868.6 billion

(2015 annual average conversion rate ¥1 = \$0.0083)

Tokyo's Budget (Initial FY2018)



¥14,444
billion*

* \$130 billion

¥1 = \$0.0090 (Bloomberg, July 31, 2018)

Symbols



The *Somei Yoshino* cherry tree was developed in the late Edo period to early Meiji era (late 1800s) by crossbreeding wild cherry trees. The light-pink blossoms in full bloom and the falling petals scattering in the wind are a magnificent sight to behold.



Ginkgo biloba is a deciduous tree with distinctive fan-shaped leaves that change from light green to bright yellow in autumn. The ginkgo tree is commonly found along Tokyo's streets and avenues and is highly resistant to pollution and fire.



The *yurikamome* gull has a vermilion bill and legs. It comes south to Tokyo in late October every year and sojourns in the surrounding ports and rivers until the following April. A favorite theme of poets and painters, it is also called *miyakodori* ("bird of the capital").



TOKYO
METROPOLITAN
GOVERNMENT

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