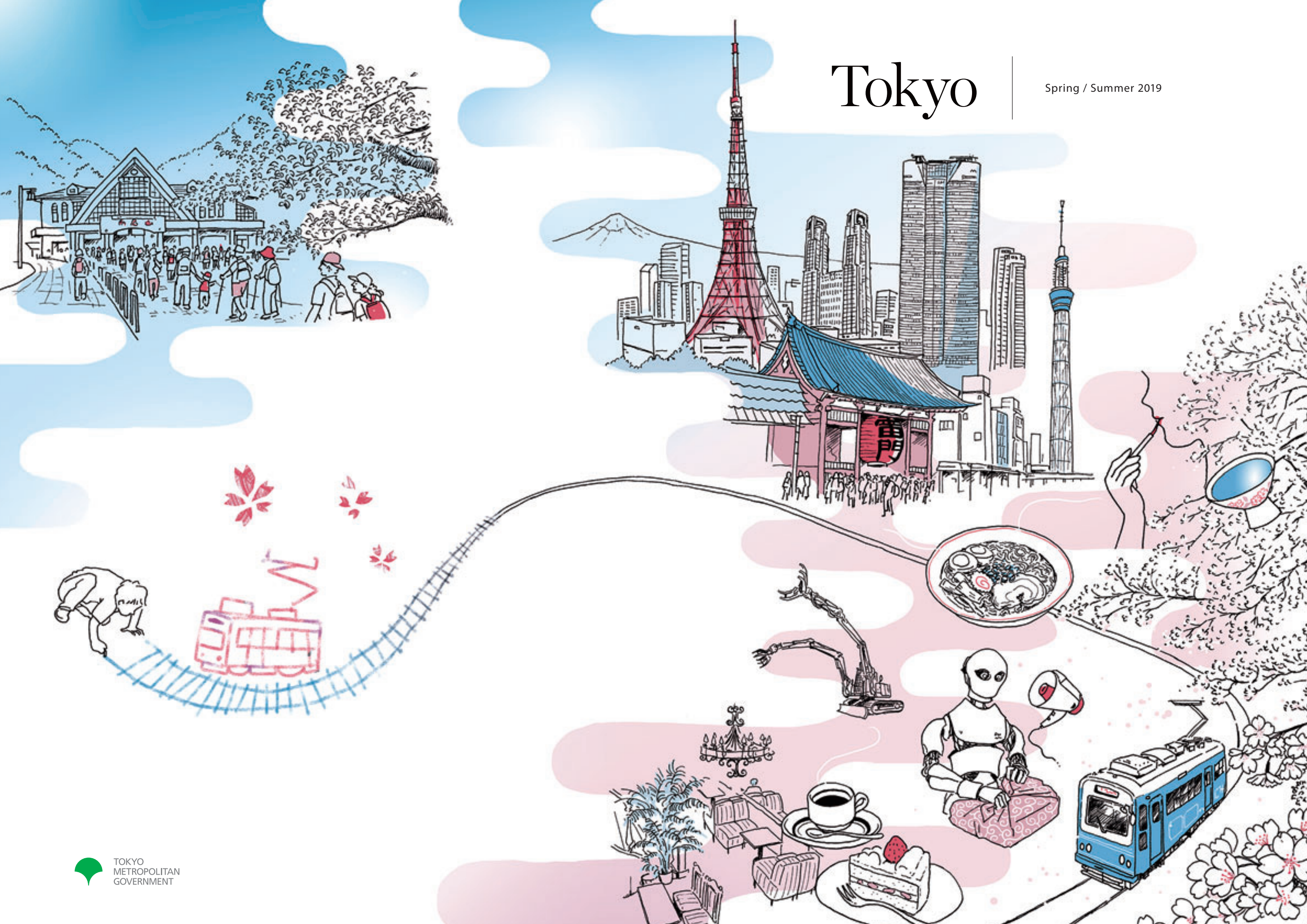


# Tokyo

Spring / Summer 2019



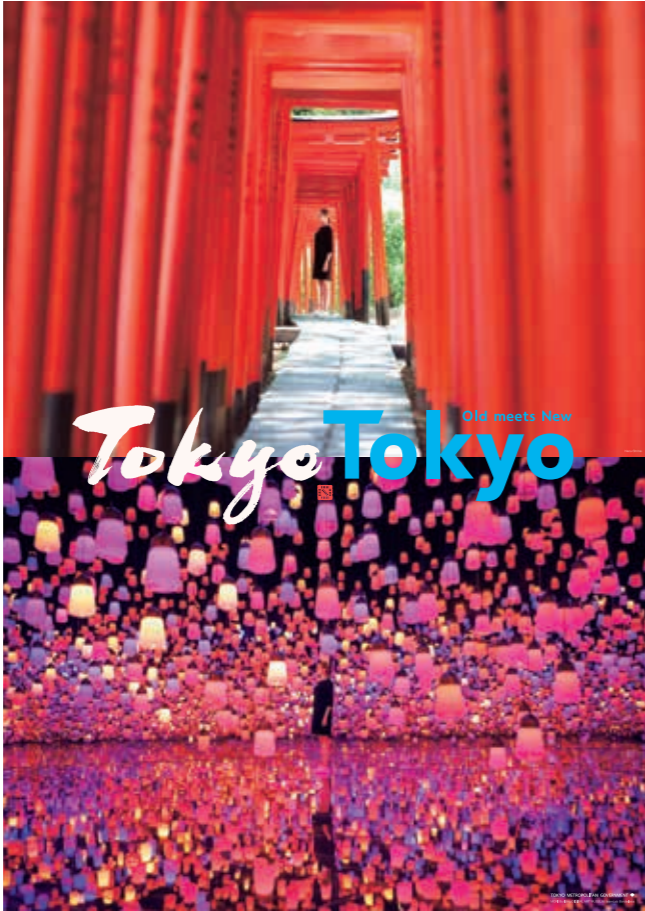
# Tokyo

Spring / Summer 2019



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.



The image above is the logo and slogan for Tokyo. The unique aspects of the city are conveyed in two different fonts representing the coexistence of old and new: The brushstroke expresses the traditions that date back to the Edo period (1603-1868), while the sleek block typeface expresses the cutting edge culture of a modern city and is done in sky blue to represent an innovative future. The traditional square stamp in red which graces the logo illustrates the famed crossing in front of Shibuya Station, one of Tokyo's symbolic landmarks.

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# The World's First Eco-Bag

Tokyo and Paris help raise worldwide ecology awareness through a practical collaboration.

Linked by a friendship city agreement since 1982, Tokyo and Paris are two iconic mega-cities that share a close bond. Last year they celebrated that relationship with a cultural exchange project known as Tandem Paris-Tokyo 2018. It was conducted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the City of Paris, and the Institut Français. The program featured a variety of stimulating and entertaining events that promoted the cultural allure of these two world-famous capitals.

One of the most intriguing events on the calendar was “FUROSHIKI PARIS,” which took place in front of the historic l’Hôtel de Ville (the city’s municipal government building) in November. Renowned architect and social artist Tsuyoshi Tane acted as art director for the project. In the plaza in front of this building, a large rectangular pavilion wrapped in a *furoshiki* (traditional Japanese wrapping cloth) was presented as a gift from Tokyo to Paris.

Inside the pavilion a wide range of *furoshiki* displays, including some from acclaimed creators, dazzled audiences with their artistic designs. Visitors were able to see *furoshiki* exhibitions from highly respected TV personality and film director Takeshi Kitano, prominent polka-dot artist Yayoi Kusama, con-



Photo: Yujiro Ichioka (TAM.inc)

The pavilion wrapped in a *furoshiki* in the Place de l’Hôtel de Ville in Paris.



The walls of the l’Hôtel de Ville in Paris and notable statues in the vicinity were also adorned with *furoshiki*.

temporary photographer Mika Ninagawa, fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier, plus many more. Long lines of people formed to see the demonstrations, workshops, displays about the history of *furoshiki*, various installations, and a video projection about how the Japanese wrapping cloth has been used up to the present day.

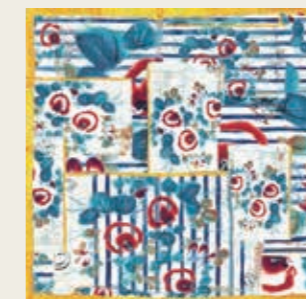
The origin of *furoshiki* is believed to date back more than 1,200 years to the Nara period. By the Edo period (1603-1868), it had become very popular, almost a fashion item. The kimono-clad people of all classes used them as handbags or carry bags.

Following the development of the plastic bag in the 1970s, *furoshiki* fell out of fashion and was almost forgotten. However, in recent years it has seen a revival in Japan. The world’s first ever eco-bag, *furoshiki* is viewed as an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic bags and present-day wrapping paper as it is versatile, flexible and, most importantly, reusable. For centuries the word *mottainai*, which is used to express regret when something has been wasted, has been embedded in Japanese culture. *Furoshiki* is a wonderful example of the *mottainai* spirit—having a mind to devise ways not to waste things but to cherish things.

Usually square in shape, *furoshiki* comes in a variety of sizes with some being as small as a handkerchief and others being larger than a bed sheet. There are techniques for wrapping bottles for safe convey-

ance and other techniques for wrapping round or spherical objects. The possibilities are endless.

Whether being taken to wrap gifts or a lunch box, compartmentalize clothes and accessories in a travel bag or neatly store items from your home, there is no denying the adaptability of *furoshiki*. The uses range from slightly creative—wearing *furoshiki* as a scarf—to the practical—using it as a sling to cradle an injured arm. The options go on and on. That is the beauty of *furoshiki*.



Some of the wide range of *furoshiki* designed by prominent creators. “Fleurs du ciel” ©Jean Paul Gaultier (left), “Once the Abominable War is Over, Happiness Fills our Hearts” ©YAYOI KUSAMA (right).

# A Streetcar Named Nostalgia

The Toden Arakawa Line provides a glimpse into Tokyo's past.

One of the first things that many visitors to Tokyo often notice is the striking contrast between the very old and the very new. The city's oldest temple sits near the base of its tallest and most modern tower, and people in traditional dress can often be seen passing the gleaming luxury shops in Ginza. But what many may not know is that there is also a section of Tokyo that seems frozen in a simpler era, where time moves more slowly.

The first streetcars began operating in Tokyo around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when electricity replaced horses as the means of powering the transportation system. At one point the network of trams was incredibly extensive, covering most of the main areas of the city. They remained the primary mode of transport in the city for over 50 years, when they were phased out between the late 1960s and early 1970s. The increase in automobile traffic meant there was no longer space for them on the roads, and they were replaced by buses and trains.

Today, only one section of the former far-reaching Toden network, the network operated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, remains. The Toden Arakawa Line, nicknamed the Tokyo Sakura Tram due to its route that passes several spots where sakura (cherry) blossoms can be viewed in the spring, operates in the north of Tokyo over the 12.2 kilometers between the charming downtown neighborhood of Minowabashi and the student town of Waseda. Riding it feels like you are going back in time about 60 years: the single-car tram rattles between stations with short platforms, some of which are new wooden structures

replicating the stations from a century ago.

Most days, the Arakawa Line is used mainly by area locals going about their daily business. But it is also popular with tourists and train aficionados, especially on the weekends. Certain sections and stops along the way give even more of a glimpse into Tokyo's past. At Minowabashi there is an old shopping arcade filled with a wide variety of shops specializing in fruit and vegetables, meat, flowers, miso, and even shoes. It has a friendly, small-town vibe and a 1950s style feeling to it.

Toward the middle of the line is Arakawa Shakomae Station, located next to the depot where cars are cleaned and serviced. Here at Toden Memorial Square you can also see some of the former rolling stock. On weekends when the depot exhibition space is open, you can even go inside the cars, where photographs from decades ago and dioramas show the streetcars in their heyday.

Other attractions along the line, in addition to sights famous for cherry blossoms and the beds of roses that are cared for by the local residents, include the beautiful Oji Inari Shrine, dedicated to the fox deity, the rich greenery of Asukayama Park, and Zoshigaya Kishimojindo Temple where the goddess of healthy and safe child-bearing and child rearing is enshrined. Riding from one end to the other takes about one hour, but it is worth spending a leisurely afternoon getting off and on along the way. Not only will you visit some interesting and unusual sights, you will also be able to get a sense of what Tokyo was like in another lifetime.

The Tokyo Sakura Tram passing by cherry blossoms in full bloom in spring.

# Tokyo 2020's Legacy Venues Steadily Shaping Up



The abundant use of wood is impressive in this completed perspective drawing of the New National Stadium.

The rendering is intended to show conceptual image at completion and may subject to change. Copyright © Taisei Corporation, Azusa Sekkei Co., Ltd. and Kengo Kuma and Associates Joint Venture

The vision laid out by renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma's architectural firm, Kengo Kuma & Associates, with the collaborative design of Taisei Corporation and Azusa Sekkei, is taking shape for what will be the centerpiece of the world's most watched sporting event: the New National Stadium. The Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 are an opportunity for Japan to become a more tolerant and diverse society, and at the same time showcase their flair for technological innovations, especially with regard to safety. Oil dampers on the lower floors, from the second basement floor to the first floor, of the New National Stadium, for example, have been designed to efficiently absorb the energy produced by

earthquakes, whilst the materials used for the trusses of the large roof are a combination of steel frames and wood that can resist distortion due to earthquakes, strong winds, and any other inclement weather.

With such a high-capacity stadium, however, it is not just the structural safety of the building that has to be considered. The ability to calmly and safely evacuate spectators is also of the utmost importance. To that end, the stands have been designed in a way that ensures anyone from any seat across all three levels can be safely evacuated within 15 minutes. Special evacuation elevators to help with people in wheelchairs have also been strategically placed throughout the stadium, as have temporary evacuation areas.

New structures for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 will continue to be valuable assets that serve the citizens and the visitors to Tokyo well into the future.

Fusing safety with traditional Japanese aesthetics, Kuma's design philosophy was geared towards the creation of an environmentally-conscious stadium. Wood has been an integral feature in Kuma's work, and one that he has managed to harness in the design of the New National Stadium. Wood for elements in the stadium's structure has been sourced from all 47 of Japan's prefectures. "It will be a stadium where the warmth of trees can be felt from all auditoriums," Kuma says. "We set up the eaves canopy on the outer periphery to block solar radiation and rain, making it suitable for the climate of Japan, to connect the building and the environment together and make it a Japanese-like stadium that harmonizes with nature." Being surrounded by the beautiful, lush green landscape of Meiji Jingu Gaien, the structure was given an unobtrusive flat roof and designed to be no taller than 50 meters. In addition, the roof's canopy will enable it to efficiently capture wind, allowing air to flow naturally into the stadium and discharge air from both the field and the stands.

All across Tokyo, other Olympic and Paralympic projects are progressing smoothly. Based on a guiding principle, the "Tokyo 2020 Accessibility Guidelines," a higher level of barrier-free facilities will be required for the Games. By the year 2020, multiple exemplary venues will be opened for use by various people, including Paralympic athletes and spectators with special needs. Among them, in Tokyo's lush green Tama area, the Musashino Forest Sport Plaza was the first to open, and has been open to the public since 2017. The main arena has a large space for wheelchair users. A sufficient height is secured between the rows of seats so that the sports action can be clearly seen even if the crowd in front stands up.

Also high on the agenda is the creation of a lasting legacy of the Tokyo 2020 Games. Ariake Arena, for example, aims to become the new sporting and cultural center of

Tokyo and is due for completion in late 2019. It will continue to provide people with high-quality sports watching opportunities after the Games, but also has plans to expand into hosting other cultural events, such as concerts.

As these projects continue to move further away from conceptual drawings and into reality, Tokyo's citizens are getting a better idea of the positivity that hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 will bring. Not only will they help elevate social awareness of people with impairments, but they will also provide a wealth of opportunities for everyone in Japanese society to enjoy for years to come.



The curved design of the Musashino Forest Sport Plaza.

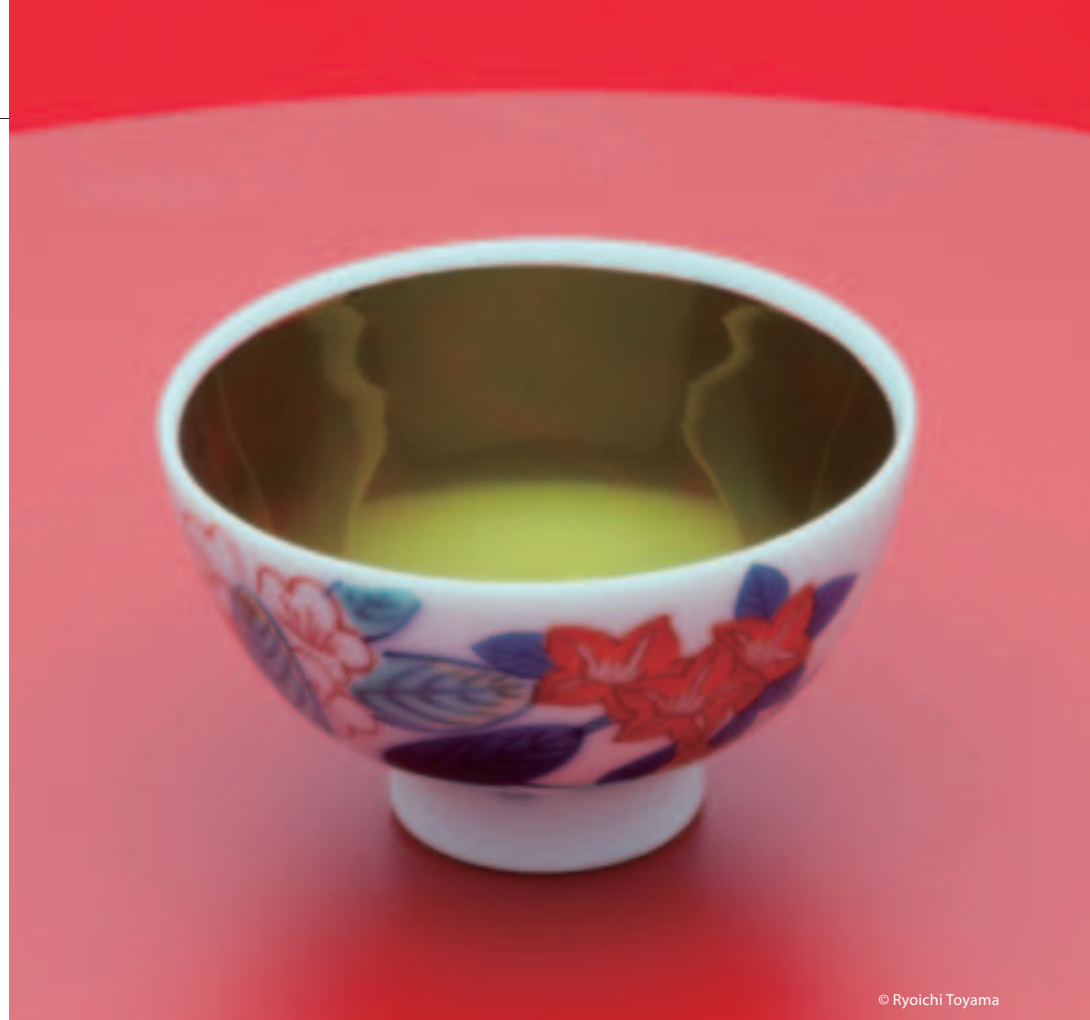


The open atmosphere of the waterside location and the impressive purity of Ariake Arena is shown in this completed projection drawing. (Simulated image as of October, 2015)

The “Edo Tokyo Kirari Project,” launched by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike in 2016, aims to discover businesses that have long made excellent products using traditional methods, polish them from new perspectives, and disseminate them globally in order to keep the craft alive. Businesses full of the

charm of tradition and the innovation needed to become brands representing Tokyo are chosen under the project. One of the companies recently selected is Isehan-Honten, the only remaining establishment that makes the highest quality safflower rouge, or “Komachi Beni,” in the traditional way.

Established in 1825, Isehan-Honten has been making *beni* for nearly two centuries. The technique used to produce this luminous scarlet has been passed on by the craftsman’s intuition—only by word of mouth. Today there are just two craftsmen remaining who have inherited this knowledge. However, visitors to the Isehan-Honten Museum of Beni in



© Ryoichi Toyama

The glowing iridescent green of “Komachi Beni” dried onto a small porcelain vessel.

Tokyo’s fashionable Minami Aoyama district can learn a little about the production process and try *beni* for themselves. This is the place where the true *beni* can be purchased.

Anyone who has ever seen traditional Japanese art from the Edo period (1603-1868) will recognize one very particular ideal of beauty from the time: bright red lips. But what most probably do not realize is just how much time and effort went into making the very special rouge that was used by the top entertainers and fashion leaders of that time.

*Beni* is made from the petals of safflowers, which are yellow, but also contain a tiny percentage of red pigment.

This color is painstakingly refined through an extensive, labor-heavy process. Around 1,000 safflowers are needed to make a regular portion of *beni* rouge.

Safflowers are only harvested in early summer. Early in the morning when the thorns are still soft because of dew, the flower petals are picked and washed in water. Fermentation changes the petals from yellow to red. The fermented petals are pounded into a paste, which is made into flat oval shapes and dried in the sun to become what is called *benimochi*. The *benimochi* is put into water, then alkaline and acid solutions

Unlike modern lipsticks, *beni* feels completely weightless and natural, as if the user is wearing no makeup at all. And it complements the natural skin tone of the wearer, so that if three different women use it, it is likely to look like a completely different color on each. Depending on how many layers are applied, it can produce shades ranging from soft pink to a deep, bright red.

A spokesperson for Isehan-Honten said that “Komachi Beni” is still a popular gift from men to women, and from friends to new brides, as there is no need to worry about choosing the

## A New Look at Traditional Makeup

Isehan-Honten aims to keep the custom of superior quality safflower rouge, or “Komachi Beni,” alive.

are added to make *beni-eki* (red liquid). Next a fascicle of hemp is immersed in this liquid and, mysteriously, only red pigment is adsorbed. This is squeezed out of the hemp into another container. The extra moisture is then carefully filtered to leave just the red mud. It is painted onto small porcelain vessels and left to dry. As it dries, the bright red turns iridescent green.

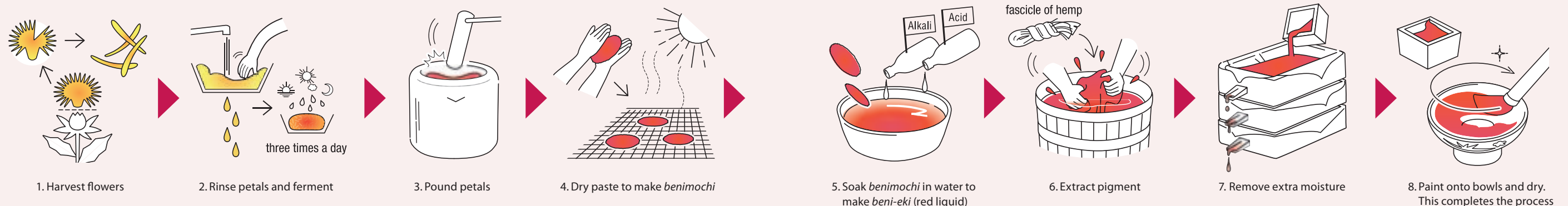
But the alchemy and magic does not stop there. When applying *beni*, a wet lip brush is used to dab onto the dried metallic green substance, and astonishingly, it reverts to brilliant red! In the Edo period it was fashionable to apply more *beni* in this way only on the lower lip.

right shade to purchase. It is also great for sommeliers and musicians, as it will not rub off on a glass or instrument. With its beautiful porcelain bowls, metallic green tint, and fascinating backstory, it is a gift that is practical, meaningful, and magical.



Just by sweeping with a wet brush, “Komachi Beni” changes to red.

### The process of making “Komachi Beni”





The dignified and calm interior of Cafe L'ambre in Shinjuku.

## The Pure and Simple Cafés of Tokyo

Coffee and so much more:  
Tokyo *kissaten*

Tokyo is awash with globally recognized coffee chain stores, as are most cities around the world. However, the deluge of American West Coast coffee culture that began to permeate Japan in the late 90s did not extinguish the *jun-kissa*, or “pure and simple café”—two examples of which are introduced here.

The history of coffee in Japan can be traced back about 300 years, and the first coffee shop (or *kissaten*) opened for business in 1888. *Kissaten* continued to flourish up to the period before the Second World War, developing certain specializations, such as the *jun-kissa*, which did not serve alcohol.

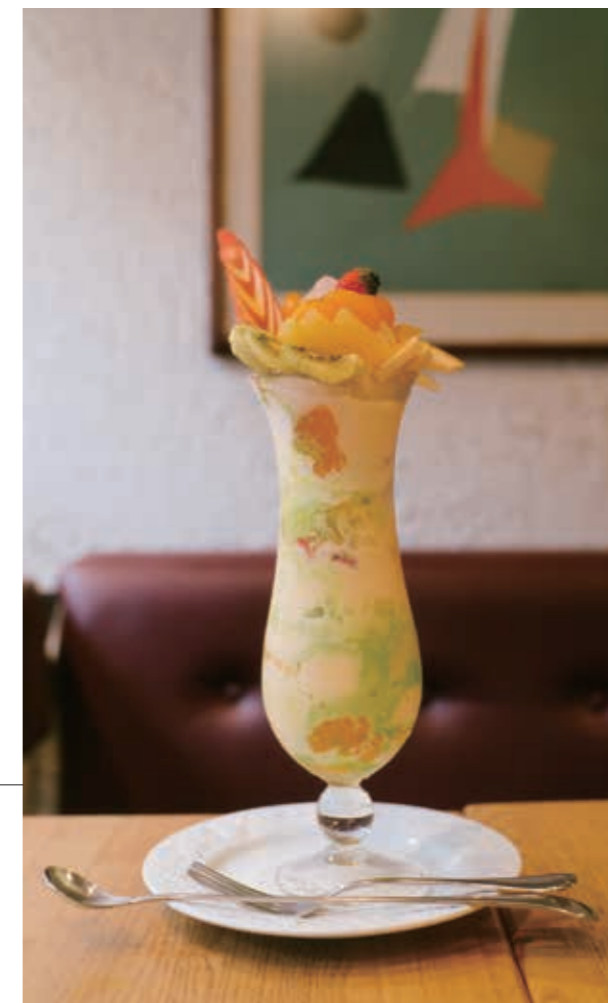
### Coffee with added indulgences at Benisica

The Chinese character for *jun* (純) in *jun-kissa*, with its connotations of simplicity or being unadulterated, may create expectations of a certain Japanese asceticism. However, one look at the menu at Benisica will immediately disabuse you of such notions. Benisica opened in 1957 next to the train tracks near Yurakucho station. Its early claim to fame was as the first establishment to serve “pizza toast”—a Japanese homage to the Italian staple—and the menu has grown steadily since then, to include a wide variety of dishes both savory and sweet.

The coffee itself is brewed using syphons; a delightful hangover from the pre-war era but originating in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, *kissaten* are an expression of Japan’s enduring fascination with western culture, and Benisica is no exception. The real standouts on the menu are the desserts: extravagant *parfaits*, decadent hotcakes, and crisp puff pastries that are a perennial draw for many customers who might stop by after spending an afternoon in the nearby up-market shopping district of Ginza.

Another distinct section of the clientele are fans of the Takarazuka Revue. The Tokyo home of the celebrated, all-female musical theater troupe is close by, and members of the cast are known to patronize Benisica from time to time.

One of the extravagant seasonal fruit *parfaits* of Benisica in Yurakucho.



### Coffee with a classical accompaniment at L'ambre

Cafe L'ambre in Shinjuku offers a very different experience—both aurally and visually—to the comfortable clutter and unobtrusive jazz of Benisica. A staircase leads down from the ground floor and opens out on to a cavernous space resplendent with chandeliers and a mezzanine. Classical music ebbs and swells from large, antique speakers. The stately, slightly faded grandeur is all the more arresting due to its clandestine existence right beneath the hustle and bustle of Shinjuku, one of Tokyo’s most frenetic hubs. The menu is comparatively brief, but a pleasingly bitter coffee jelly leaves a lasting impression.

L'ambre is an example of *meikyoku* *kissaten*, or “famous classical music café.” The exorbitant price of vinyl records in the middle of the last century led to a proliferation of such establishments, where fans of classical music could come and enjoy their favorite works via audiophile sound systems. While their heyday is long since past, *meikyoku* *kissaten* still exist to cater to a wide range of customers.

Benisica and L'ambre are just two examples amongst a host of *jun-kissa* that continue to do business all over Tokyo and the country as a whole, anchored in tradition while coffee culture continues to evolve. Their sense of authenticity is enhanced by continuity at management level; with the founder’s wife still involved in the day to day running of the former, while the grandson of the founder has taken the reins at the latter. While superficially very different, all *jun-kissa* provide a place for respite and reflection, friendly conversation, appreciation of simple pleasures, and a good cup of coffee with something sweet on the side. Why not uncover some of the more secluded charms of Tokyo and find your own pure and simple café?





Wrapped in brilliant green, Mt. Takao is only one hour from Shinjuku in central Tokyo.



The view from the top of the mountain overlooking the city center of Tokyo (above). Statues of *tengu* are to be found everywhere (right). The Yakuo-in Temple, dedicated sake barrels, the impressive *takosugi*, or octopus cedar (bottom, from the left).

## Mt. Takao: Tokyo's Friendliest Mountain

Enjoy a mountain day trip without leaving Tokyo.

Japan is a mountainous country, with around 70 percent of the landmass being covered in thickly wooded peaks and valleys. The northern and western limits of the Kanto plain—on which the Greater Tokyo Area sits—border on mountain ranges, with the legendary Mt. Fuji a couple of hours away, straddling the boundary of Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures. While many tourists find Mt. Fuji an irresistible draw, an equally enjoyable day out in the mountains can be had without ever leaving Tokyo.

Mt. Takao is a mountain in Hachioji City, in the west of Tokyo. At a height of 599 meters and boasting a three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide, it is a popular hiking spot and sees more than two-and-a-half million visitors every year. Mt. Takao can be reached in under an

hour by taking a Keio Line train from Shinjuku Station in central Tokyo.

When stepping off the train at Takaosan-guchi Station, the change in environment from downtown Tokyo is a pleasurable sort of shock. The air is fresh, and the neon and concrete of the city are replaced by steeply climbing woodland and the overarching sky.

You are provided with three ways of scaling the mountain: there is a cable car and a chair lift that transport you up to a height of over 460 meters respectively, and also various trail routes (paved and unpaved) for the more enthusiastic visitors. The cable car ride takes six minutes—and boasts the steepest incline of any funicular railway in Japan—while the chair lift takes a comparatively leisurely

12 minutes. Whichever way you choose, you will soon find yourself enveloped in the lush cedar forests of the mountain, home to many species of flora and fauna.

Mt. Takao is a sacred mountain and various “power spots” can be found on its slopes. One such spot is *takosugi* (octopus cedar). This huge Japanese cedar tree is 450 years old and has gnarled roots that resemble an octopus. Next to the tree sits a friendly-looking octopus sculpture called “Hip-paridako,” which is said to bring good luck when stroked.

The mountain is closely associated with *tengu*, a mythical flying creature with a long nose. Imposing statues of *tengu* can be found at the Yakuo-in Temple near the summit of the mountain. The temple complex clings to the side of the mountain on different levels, connected by increasingly vertiginous staircases.

After paying your respects at the temple, press on even further and you will soon be rewarded with a panoramic view of Tokyo and the surrounding mountains. It really is a spectacular vista from the summit of Mt. Takao; all the more amazing for being so readily accessible.

On your way down, make sure to stop off at Kasumidai Observatory. You can enjoy an all-you-can-drink buffet at the Mt. Takao Beer Mount during the summer months, before deciding whether to carry on your descent on foot, or allow yourself the luxury of the cable car or chair lift.

From elementary school kids to the elderly, Mt. Takao is an extremely pleasant mountain to climb: imposing yet approachable, spiritual yet welcoming. Despite its popularity and the number of visitors, the hiking routes are clean and well-maintained, and the various sights and attractions well-signposted and accessible. Refreshments are readily available, and the whole experience can be enjoyed in a few hours, depending on your schedule.

There is one more pleasure to be had upon your return to Takaosan-guchi Station: an *onsen* (hot spring) facility. The entrance to the spa is part of the actual station building, so you can easily take a reinvigorating soak in the hot, natural spring water baths before heading back to the downtown lights. Congratulate yourself on conquering Tokyo's friendliest mountain.

# Tokyo's Teamwork Approach to Safety and Security

Tokyo, and Japan in general, has a deserved, globally recognized reputation as being one of the safest places in the world. However, the Tokyo Fire Department is always raising their game.



Fire Rescue Task Forces the 6<sup>th</sup> Fire District HQ Team about to start training exercises.

One outstanding example of the steps taken by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government toward achieving the highest level of safety possible is the Fire Rescue Task Forces, also known as Hyper Rescue. After the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that struck Kobe in western Japan in 1995, it became clear that highly advanced rescue units utilizing special skill sets and equipment would be needed to tackle future large-scale disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and terrorism, more effectively.

Tokyo is divided into 10 fire districts. Hyper Rescue units are strategically located in five of them so they can offer better protection to all of Tokyo. Additionally, there is an aviation unit specializing in skyscraper disaster rescue activities. The super men and women that make up these Hyper Rescue units are divided into four disciplines



The remotely operated water discharging "Dragon" being deployed.

The powerful "Two-Armed Debris Remover" in action.

focused on rescue, hazardous materials, specialized machinery, and on-scene first aid activities. This maximizes the Tokyo Fire Department's efficiency across the widest range of scenarios. Their skills are not just for large-scale disasters though; they can also be deployed to assist regular emergency crews in local neighborhoods. Also, they are not limited to the boundaries of the administrative area of Tokyo, they cooperate in relief activities in Japan and around the world. They were deployed to Mexico after the earthquake disaster there in 2017.

The breezy residential area of Adachi Ward, on the banks of the Arakawa River in the northeastern part of Tokyo, is home to the 6<sup>th</sup> Fire District Headquarters of the Fire Rescue Task Forces. Specializing in large-scale earthquake disaster and flood damage response, the 20-strong team undergo rigorous daily training in order to be in optimum condition, ready to be called upon at any given moment.

They are constantly learning from every disaster

situation, honing their skills and adjusting their tactics accordingly, thanks to the extensive on-site training facilities that simulate many different types of disaster sites. "We work as a team and our aim is to tackle and handle every disaster situation," says the mobility department captain. "We are continuing training so that we can rescue safely, promptly and reliably while taking into consideration the needs of the victims and evacuees," he explains. "We train a lot, 10 times a month on a 24-hour basis with three shifts working ... depending on the content, we might easily train for more than 10 hours straight in one session."

Equally impressive are the state-of-the-art machinery, equipment, and vehicles available to the units, including remote-controlled options. Areas and situations that are difficult to access due to high temperatures, poor visibility, or toxic gases and the like are always a concern. Fortunately, two assets collectively known as "Dual Fighter" can help out: "Saver" (for obstacle removal) and "Dragon" (for

firefighting)—which has a self-defense spray to protect itself from fire and can discharge water or foam up to 5,000 liters per minute. Both can be remotely operated from up to 100 meters away. Looking like something out of a science fiction movie, the "Two-Armed Debris Remover" is another valuable asset. Its dynamic dual arms and claws allow it to lift and move heavy objects. An experienced operator can use it to hold things with one arm and cut with the other—it is incredibly useful for dismantling damaged roofs and pillars.

Over the next couple of years, Japan is going to find itself the focus of much of the world's attention as the host nation for both the Rugby World Cup 2019™ and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. The well-being of visitors to the capital and its citizens has always been a high priority for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. Everyone can rest easier knowing that any potential disaster can be met head-on and tackled successfully by the highly skilled and dedicated teams of Tokyo's Fire Rescue Task Forces.



"The winter moon"  
by Kokona Nakamura



"My Sunflower, Summer Mosaic"  
by Neo Ichikawa

## Students with Special Needs Showcase Their Talents

Every year the Art Project Exhibition and Art Caravan Exhibition display a delightful selection of artworks by students from special needs schools.



"TAKOYAKI PARTY"  
by Taisei Yamamoto



"Under the Ocean, Multicolor Colors of Light"  
by Kenji Kamikura



"The pyramid of Giza"  
by Yuto Suehiro

Celebrating the artistic talents of students enrolled at schools for special needs education in Tokyo, the Art Project Exhibition, followed by the Art Caravan Exhibition, are two wonderful events that continue to grow bigger and better with each year that passes. Both exhibitions provide the general public with a fantastic opportunity to witness some amazing pieces of work by these children, showing that when it comes to art there really are no barriers.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Art Project Exhibition took place from December 5-19, 2018 at Itochu Aoyama Art Square, in the heart of one of Tokyo's trendiest districts. Building on the success of the previous event another big crowd turned out for the exhibition. Those who missed the joyous occasion need not despair. There is an opportunity to see some of the displayed artwork at other destinations around Tokyo as part of the Art Caravan Exhibition that tours the city.

As with the 2018 edition the theme this time was "To the Future—Colors and Shapes that Move the Heart." 50 pieces were selected from over 950 applications—the highest ever number of applicants and a number that has more than doubled since the event was first held. The majority of works on display were paintings and prints, though there were also over 10 three-dimensional pieces including some ceramics, sculptures, and paper models, as well as photographs and calligraphy.

The original creations, selected by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Board of Education, came from elementary school, junior high school, and high school students, all who have special physical or intellectual needs. The main goal of the exhibition is to showcase the artistic flair of these students and demonstrate what they are able to accomplish when given the opportunity.

Over the past few years, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Board of Education, working closely with a local art university, has been extremely proactive when it comes to promoting art education programs at special

needs schools. With an emphasis on self-expression, its initiatives have helped build confidence and increased motivation amongst the pupils. This, in turn, has had a positive effect in other classes, helping to develop technical and inventive thinking skills.

As well as having a lot of fun, the students are also realizing their artistic potential. Those selected for the Art Project Exhibition and Art Caravan Exhibition have a great platform to show the Tokyo public their true capabilities. As their self-esteem grows, they are more likely to apply again for the competition in the future.

The joy on the faces of students who are chosen to participate in the exhibition is a heart-warming sight. It is also a very special moment for the teachers and parents as they see the hard work and dedication of their students and children being rewarded. "I had never experienced seeing my son's work on display like that before," said one parent at last year's exhibition. "It just made me so happy. The artwork of the other children was wonderful as well. I'm really glad I came to see it."

Members of the general public were equally impressed, with one person describing the event as "soul-stirring." Another visitor spoke about the students' "freedom of thought and expression," adding, "I was amazed by their skills and technique. I hope they can find an environment to further nurture their talents in the future."

The feedback was all very positive. Many of these visitors come back again and again, while the exhibitions also welcome new crowds each year. The popularity of the Art Project Exhibition and the Art Caravan Exhibition is growing all the time and there are now talks about expanding the number of works on display in the future.

As one of the world's greatest cities gears up for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, expect more innovative and awe-inspiring events like these being staged in Tokyo.



## Crushing Bowls, Tokyo Style

An event for all ramen lovers  
—the Tokyo Ramen Show 2018.

A display of the various kinds of ramen to be crushed at the Tokyo Ramen Show 2018.

For fans of ramen, Tokyo may be the best place on earth. With an estimated 7,000-8,000 shops serving ramen in Tokyo, a hot and delicious bowl can usually be found within a few minutes' walk from nearly every train and subway station. Almost any ramen-lover you talk to has their favorite shop or their favorite style, and the number of new exciting places to eat at is never ending. Tokyo really is an urban paradise of noodle experiences waiting to be had. Yet as vast as Tokyo's ramen scene is, it is just one part of Japan's ramen scene, which stretches to the furthest and most remote areas of the country. Regional styles available only in small geographic pockets make up a landscape containing an abundance of tastes and unique local styles. Furthermore, we are now in an age of ramen with new trends and never before used premium ingredients being

incorporated. The possibilities for ramen seem endless, and the world is happily waiting to see what comes next.

Ramen has a history of about 100 years in Japan. However, as the times and generations changed, so too, the popular tastes and flavors also varied. Any ramen shop that did not keep up with the trends might have had trouble sustaining their business. These days many young ramen shopkeepers are making ramen that is trendy. There was a time when ramen simply involved soy-sauce, salt, miso, or *tonkotsu* (pork bone soup stock), nowadays ramen soup stocks are being made from chicken, fish, and duck, and some chefs are being even more adventurous and experimental.

This growing world of ramen is highlighted each year during the peak of autumn, in an ever-popular event that has fans from far and wide coming together to slurp bowl

The line of ramen stalls, luring customers with colorful *nobori* (banners) announcing their respective features and flavors.



after bowl—the Tokyo Ramen Show. Held in Komazawa Olympic Park in the quiet residential area of Setagaya Ward, and in 2018 celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the main draw of the show is, of course, the countless styles of ramen available to be eaten. As one enters the event area, the first thing noticed is the long line of ramen booths each serving up a unique piping hot bowl representing both Tokyo ramen and that of different areas of Japan. Unique to this Tokyo event, one can sample tastes and styles from all over the country without ever leaving the city. Some booths may serve regional styles, such as Wakayama style ramen, or Taiwan style ramen, which is actually a speciality of Nagoya. Others create totally new “limited” bowls created especially for the event—such as a triple shellfish *baitang* style white broth made with soy milk, topped with shrimp oil and a tiger prawn. The show is ramen galore, and because the bowls are roughly half size, sampling multiple genres can be accomplished easily. Seasoned slurpers come ready with their stomachs empty and have no trouble crushing several bowls in one sitting. In addition to the delightful ramen, the atmosphere is a festive one, with music, live performances, and various forms of entertainment.

A young Japanese couple from the northern island of Hokkaido were visiting the Ramen Show for the first time while they were also enjoying other tourist destinations of Tokyo during their vacation. “We just finished sharing three different styles of ramen, but we’re both ready for another couple of bowls each!” they enthused. Another couple from Hawaii, visiting Tokyo for sightseeing, told us they had found out about the Ramen Show before leaving home and especially wanted to experience it. A ramen aficionado himself, the man said “The broth in Hawaii is

often thick, so I wanted to come to the true source and taste authentic *shio* (salt broth) ramen.”

The show founder and chairman, Hiroshi Osaki, is widely regarded as the most reputable ramen expert on the planet, having crushed a staggering 25,000 plus bowls in Japan over the past few decades. Osaki curates the show each year himself, bringing in a wide range of shops from across the country, both famous and up-and-comers alike. Many shops even collaborate with one another. He samples each menu constantly before and during the event to check standards and help consult with the chefs.

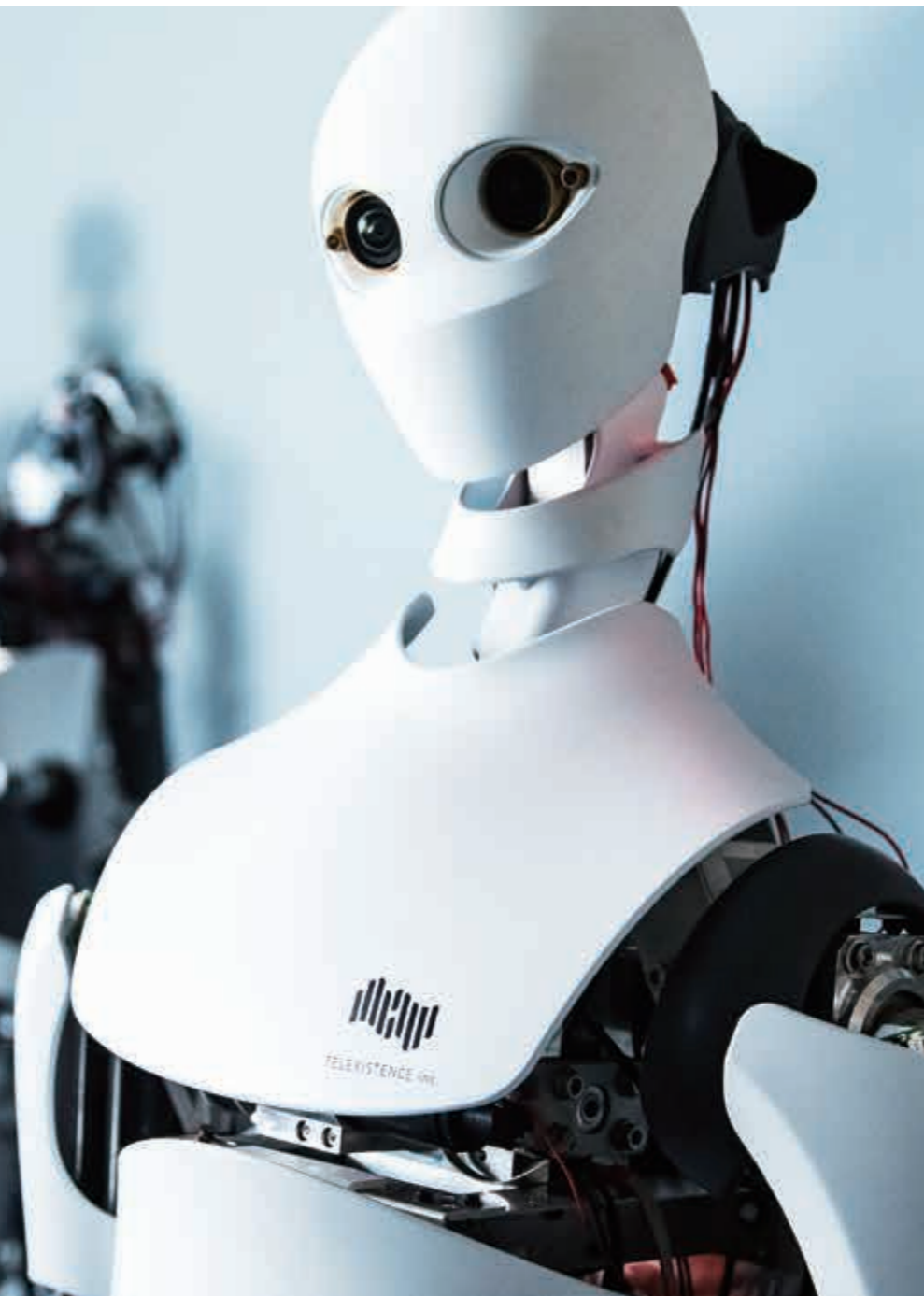
If this year's show is any indicator, ramen is most definitely surging in a positive and progressive direction, to the delight of both Japanese and foreigners alike. To some it is a delicious bowl of noodles in soup, to others it is the soul food of Japan. Regardless of personal opinion, no one can argue that ramen is getting bigger than ever, and the Tokyo Ramen Show is an ideal place to dive in and see for yourself.



A fresh bowl of steaming hot ramen is served.

# Building a Robotic Workforce

Tokyo startup company Telexistence is building avatar-style robots that can be remotely operated through the Internet. Could these humanoids form the basis for a new breed of laborer?



Telexistence technology welcomes workers to a new era.

Last summer, an unusual visitor disembarked from a ferry docking in Tokyo's Ogasawara Islands. It was a humanoid robot, a sophisticated machine that can project the presence of a user to a remote location. Since the islands are 1,000 kilometers south of central Tokyo, it was a great place for the prototype robot to be put through its paces. While a user in central Tokyo controlled the robot through special gloves, a head-mounted display, and a high-speed Internet link, the machine did something perfectly natural given its tropical setting: it fed some local sea turtles.

Model H, as the robot is known, is the creation of a Tokyo startup that is at the cutting edge of avatar robotics. "Telexistence" is both the name of the company and the term it uses to describe the field of robotics that it is opening up. Think of science fiction films in which people remotely control robots, and you will get a rough idea of the possibilities.

"The concept of Telexistence means you can be any place without physically travelling, because with the Internet, we can transfer our kinesthetic abilities anywhere,"

says chief operating officer Yuichiro Hikosaka. "That's why a distant robot that can move by using our abilities should be close to the form of a human being, with a head, two eyes, five fingers, and so on."

Built in 2018, Model H is one of four prototype robots that Telexistence has developed. Equipped with cameras for eyes and joint sensors, the robots can move around on a wheeled base and have multi-jointed arms and fingers. A fingertip haptic sensor developed by Telexistence can convey a sense of touch to the user when the robot is

handling or touching objects. The Model H prototypes now have 35 degrees of freedom, or the number of axes their joints can move, and will have 49 in the future. That is a relatively high total compared to the world's most advanced humanoid robots.

Telexistence chairman Susumu Tachi, an emeritus professor at the University of Tokyo and head of its Tachi Lab, first came up with the concept of Telexistence in 1980.

"Telexistence lets you work remotely, travel all over the world, entertain distant guests, or play sports you couldn't play otherwise," says Tachi. "Children who are hospitalized long-term could visit Disneyland and share real experiences with their friends and family. Elderly people with mobility issues could attend a grandchild's wedding. There are endless applications."

Telexistence could be one solution for Japan's shrinking labor force and rapidly aging population. In one scenario, Telexistence robots could be used to staff convenience stores and their human operators could be in foreign countries; businesses could be open around the clock if operated by workers in various time zones.

While commercialization of the robots remains a few years away, Telexistence could be a natural fit with the Japanese government's program to promote Society 5.0, a "super-smart society" that will leverage technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, big data, and robotics to digitize all aspects of society and overcome demographic issues and other social challenges.

"Any robot can be used for this—what's important is how you connect the user to the robot in a natural, seamless way," says Telexistence cofounder and CTO Charith Fernando. "This technology can help free people from repetitive, tedious work so they can focus on creative activity."

"Telexistence is a device to change the world and a worthwhile task with a great potential," adds Tachi. "AI and Japanese technologies are perfectly compatible. By using Telexistence, we can build a system in which many people who want to work can really work, and thus make the impossible possible."

# Curbing Food Loss through Awareness and Engagement



Parents and children enjoying their experiences at a "salpa" or salvage party.

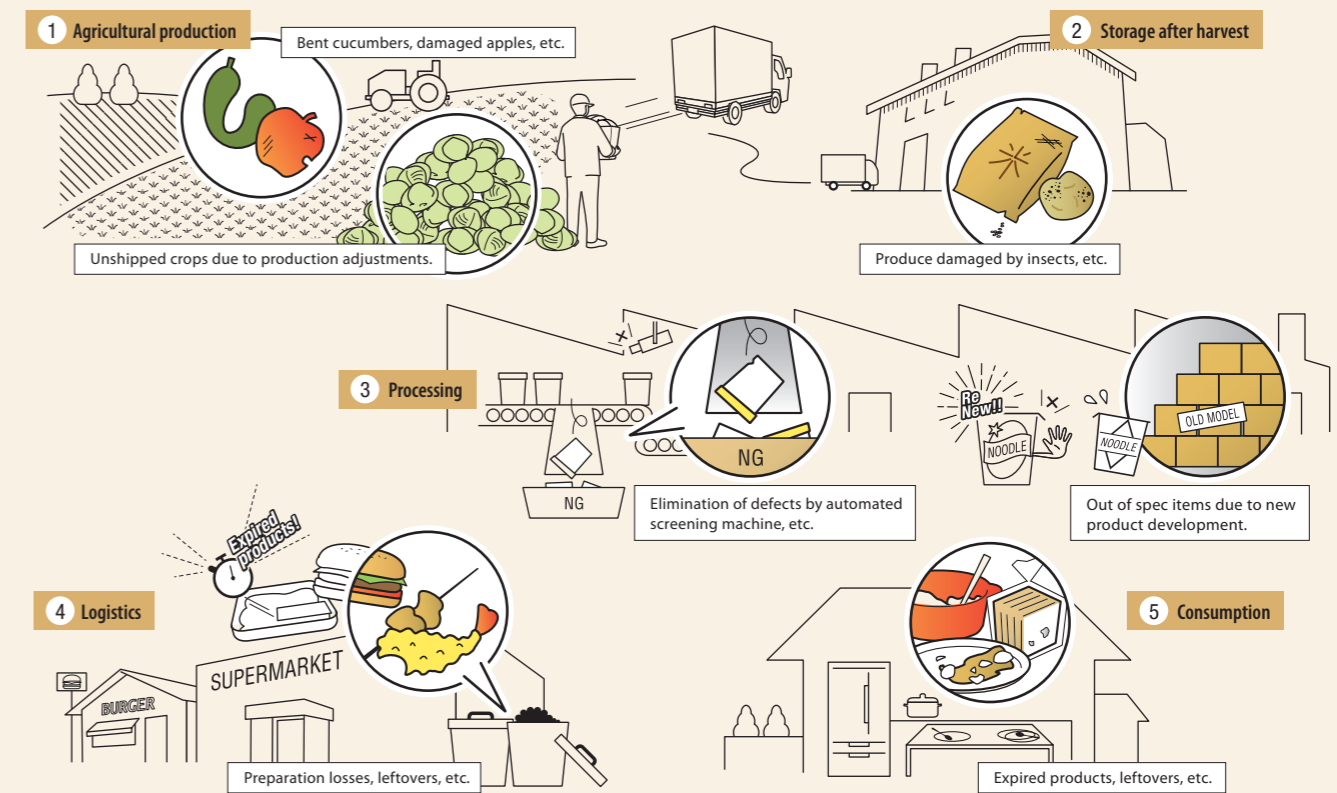
With an alarming amount of food loss and waste being seen on every continent, raising awareness and engaging all of society around the issue have become an urgent necessity.

While approximately 124 million people across 51 countries and regions are experiencing a food security crisis or worse, in 2017 the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported a worldwide average of 1.3 billion tons of food loss and waste—enough to feed as many as 2 billion people a year! Although the patterns and figures for this phenomenon are significantly affected by the specific socioeconomic and cultural context of each country, it is an unfortunate situation that directly affects all parts of the globe, and Tokyo is no exception to the rule. In 2012, Tokyo saw 1.97 million tons of food loss and waste. Around half of this was discarded by the food industry with the remainder being discarded by households. This alarming situation is now drawing significant attention and heightening the urgency of debates about sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and social awareness.

What is the difference between food loss and food waste? Actually, food loss arises throughout the successive stages of the food supply chain, from the production of crops to the refrigerators of consumers and restaurants. However, the term food loss is often considered to refer to losses in the first stages of the supply chain (harvesting and post-harvesting operations, industrial processing

and distribution) and to be the responsibility of farmers, producers, industries, and retailers. Food waste, on the other hand, refers to the waste produced in the final links in the food chain, namely from restaurants and consumers.

More than half of Japan's food loss and waste is currently being recycled. Ways to even further improve this situation include raising greater awareness by doing more to create environmentally-friendly mindsets and a deeper promoting of new lifestyles from the perspective of ethical consumerism. The Bureau of Environment of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is dedicating a great deal of attention to these points. The bureau is collaborating with other public agencies and the private sector in its attempt to gain a holistic understanding of the structure of the problem so that it might create more solutions. Many Tokyo-based startups are also taking on this challenge, bringing innovative ideas and concepts to the table in order to open and maintain dialogue and to take action. Some of the many initiatives gradually developing around Tokyo include food banks distributing surplus food, effective and timely utilization of emergency stockpiles of food, and seminars to raise awareness for the general public. In the long term it will probably be better to solve this issue



by making all of the members of society aware of their responsibilities in a fun, meaningful, educational, and engaging way, rather than blaming and pointing fingers at potential culprits.

Salvage parties, or "salpas," are among those initiatives in favor of promoting engagement instead of pursuing accusations. These events are held by Food Salvage, an organization officially launched in 2013 by Satoshi Hirai, and they promote a very simple lifestyle among individuals as a way to a long-term solution to reduce food waste. "Let's not waste what's still edible! Let's make the most of what's in the kitchen!" Initially thought up as a fun, participative, and engaging way of raising awareness among consumers, salvage parties gather participants together in community cooking sessions where the menus are exclusively based on the unused, but still edible, ingredients they bring in. Salvage parties are an interactive and entertaining (and tasty!) way of exploring alternatives to systematic food waste and they also cultivate ambassadors of good food management practices.

We went along to a salpa that was held recently. The first mission for the four mother-daughter duos on this day was to bring an ingredient from their own kitchen that for some reason they had yet to use and that they would probably

not use in the future. Participants gathered in a community kitchen, piled their ingredients on a table, and listened to a short explanation of the food loss and waste situation. The discussion was started with the question, "Why did you bring this ingredient?" The participants began to reveal their reasons, such as, "I bought it but I don't know how to cook it," "I can't read the label, it's imported," "It's past the 'use by' date," and so on.

"No worries, let's make something delicious out of it!"

With the support of a professional chef, participants figured out a menu based on the available ingredients, cooked the ingredients, and in the end enjoyed together the meal they had collectively created: "Itadakimasu!" (Let's eat!)

The children were amazed by their achievement, with one stating, "I'm so glad I came and was able to cook something so tasty!"

As for their mothers, the experience was the first step towards a new lifestyle: "I used to think that being conscious of food waste at home wouldn't make such a big difference, but now I see how individual action is important!"

These parties are a simple process for achieving three goals: raising awareness, sharing new cooking methods to reduce food waste, and having a good time!

# Takako Suwa: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century *Machi-Koba* Leader

Meet the charismatic Daiya Seiki president who rescued her father's company thanks to her innovative leadership skills.

Suwa until he suddenly passed away in 2004. That was when his energetic and extremely passionate daughter, Takako Suwa took up the reins. Although she had worked for her father's business in the past, at just 32 years of age and a full-time housewife at the time, she was suddenly thrust into a leadership position, answering the collective call of her father's employees. It was a huge challenge that she met head-on. Courageous and decisive, she made reforms that helped save the company. Just two years after taking over, its operating profits increased. Since then, things have continued to march along nicely, and the firm is now flourishing.

At a time when the population is shrinking, Suwa has remarkably managed to increase the workforce at her factory while also decreasing the average age of the employees from 53 to 38. Young workers receive constant training from older members of the team, who become their mentors. Senior operators are not forced to retire at 60 because she believes their experience and know-how are vital to a company that prides itself on the accuracy and reliability of its products.

Suwa likes to take a caring approach to management. New employees, for example, exchange correspondence on a daily basis, a "diary" with the president during their first month at the company. As well as helping her get to know them as individuals, it also gives fresh-faced recruits a better idea of how they are developing.

As a pioneer of diversity, she has modernized and rejuvenated the company while at the

same maintaining its traditions and culture. For that, she deserves a lot of credit. A gutsy, determined, and very passionate woman, she is widely admired for her innovative managerial approach and the way she manages to balance her job and family.

The charismatic Daiya Seiki president is constantly communicating with fellow machi-koba managers and leaders in Ota Ward. There is a real close bond between the numerous small factories in the area. Suwa plays an important role in what is a very warm and unified community.

Having now written and published a book which has been since made into a television miniseries, she has become a rather well-known figure in some circles. Because of this she is seen as an emblematic figure of the modern workingwoman and the new generation of brave female leaders in Japan. As a powerful role model and inspiring Tokyoite, Suwa is more than happy to pass on her wisdom to future generations. Her main piece of advice is simple: "We only have one life, so we had better do our best to make the most of it!"



Shoulder to shoulder with her employees, Suwa at work on the factory floor.

Takako Suwa, president of Daiya Seiki Co., Ltd.

An industrial powerhouse boasting the world's third-largest economy, Japan is a country known for its sophisticated market structure, efficient work-practices, and meticulous attention to detail when it comes to manufacturing. Famed for their high-quality and reliable products, Japanese brands are often studied and emulated by various companies around the globe. Such a reputation would not have been possible without the hard graft and unique skills displayed by workers at *machi-koba*.

A crucial component of the country's industrial success, machi-koba is the name given to small, factories in Japan usually operated by families or a handful of craftspeople. Though rarely in the limelight, the importance of these factories cannot be underestimated. There are thousands of them all over Tokyo. They can be found in the city's back streets, next to high-rise buildings, and sometimes in between or even inside houses. That is one of the beauties of Tokyo, it is a unique and diverse capital city where industrial zones, commercial districts, and residen-

tial areas all exist, however these zones are sometimes less distinct than they may appear in other cities.

One area of Tokyo with a wide range of machi-koba, often nestled in between houses, is Ota Ward, the gateway to Japan and home to Tokyo International Airport at Haneda. Here you will find Daiya Seiki Co., Ltd. a dynamic industrial parts manufacturing firm founded by Yasuo Suwa in 1964 that is currently garnering a lot of attention. It has a small, committed team that works together to produce precision gauges for transportation vehicles. The micro detailing required for these products can only be achieved by human hands. It is a perfect example of *monozukuri*, an almost ineffable and untranslatable Japanese term that literally means to make things, but in reality, goes well beyond that. It is like a philosophy with an emphasis on first-rate quality, intense scrupulousness, and *kaizen* (continuous improvement).

For over 40 years the company was run in a traditional Japanese manner by the highly-respected president Yasuo

# Technology that Bridges the Language Gap

Smart translation devices make Japan travel hassle-free.

In 2017, the number of overseas visitors to Japan topped 28 million, a record high. While the influx has been a boon for the economy, it has also presented challenges—how can Japanese people communicate effectively with people who do not speak their language?

While some foreign-language education, mainly English, is standard in Japanese schools, fluency is rare. Another issue is that most inbound tourists are from Chinese-speaking regions, a language not widely taught in Japan. It is no wonder, then, that public and private-sector service providers and companies are looking to technology for help.

Panasonic has stepped up to the plate with two innovative B2B solutions to smooth communications with tourists as well as foreign residents of Japan. The first is a smart megaphone called Megahonyaku, a play on “megaphone” and *honyaku*, or translation. Waterproof and powered by six AA batteries, Megahonyaku combines a standard megaphone with a rechargeable smartphone, but it does not require an internet connection to work. It can instantly translate Japanese into English, Chinese, and Korean, as well as play over 400 preset phrases and more than 4,000 sentence patterns in all four languages, on a loop if desired.

Launched in 2016, Megahonyaku is designed for use with crowds—at maximum volume, it can be heard about 100 meters away. It is ideal for use in airports, railway stations, public spaces, and large shops, such as department stores. These, along with security companies and local governments, have been its first users. In a recent demonstration by Panasonic, the device played back phrases, such as “Please line up in single file,” and “The train is departing. Please be careful.”

“Sometimes airports are faced with massive congestion,

with thousands of people waiting due to flight delays, and foreign travelers may not understand information given by staff,” says Kazuyuki Tanaka, a manager in Panasonic’s Connected Solutions Company. “Megahonyaku can help out in these situations, as well as in times of disaster.”

The firm’s other solution is for one-on-one settings. Taimen-honyaku, or face-to-face translation, is a tablet with two tabletop microphones. Unlike the Megahonyaku, it is connected to the cloud and uses deep learning technology to translate speech in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, and Thai. Commercialized in 2017, it is being rolled out at tourist information centers, hotels, tax refund counters, car rental agencies, local governments, and other places where

non-Japanese speakers might need communication support.

While there are many mobile device translation apps, Taimen-honyaku has dedicated hardware that makes communication a snap. As with smartphones, voice recognition is not perfect, but its twin microphones ensure a high degree of fidelity while recording. Users tap on-screen buttons while speaking, and their words are translated instantly and displayed as text. With a voice-activated Web search function, the 10-inch display can also be used to show maps, directions, and images of souvenirs that a tourist might be seeking.

“This translation technology was developed with the National Institute of Information and Communications

Technology, and for Japanese and foreign languages, we believe it’s the best in the world,” says Tanaka. “But having the ability to display images can help when it’s difficult to explain something in words, like what exactly a *yukata* robe is to someone who’s never seen one.”

Panasonic plans to continue improving the accuracy of the tablet ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, which will likely mark a further expansion in the number of visitors to Japan.

“We’re working toward a world with error-free translation,” says Tanaka. “By deploying multilingual translation technology, we would like to resolve lost in translation problems with large numbers of visitors to Japan.”



Megahonyaku is expected to be used at airports, train stations, and intersections, places where lots of people gather.



# The Gentle Way

A modern martial art for a modern world.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan was going through a period of seismic cultural change from feudal society to modern nation. Practice of traditional martial arts like jujitsu was on the wane as society looked to the West for inspiration. However, in 1882 a school and a dojo (a place to practice martial arts) known as the Kodokan was founded in Tokyo by Jigoro Kano and a new form of martial art was born: one primed to take on the world.

The word judo shares its root with jujitsu—the first character of both terms being the Chinese character *-ju* (柔), meaning gentle or flexible. However, the *-jitsu* (術) suffix (meaning technique) in jujitsu is replaced with *-do* (道), meaning “way,” in judo. This “gentle way” was conceived as more than just a form of physical combat as practiced in jujitsu, where the aim was simply to subjugate the opponent—judo was, and is, a set of principles according to



The ability to adjust to and evade opponents' attacks is also key to unbalancing them.

which the practitioners can lead their lives.

The central principle of judo is that of *seiryoku zenyo* (maximum efficient use of energy). Originally a jujitsu concept, it became the philosophical backbone of judo along with *jita kyoei* (mutual welfare and benefit). These principles are observed through training in attack and defense techniques. Being able to adjust to and evade opponents' attacks is also key to unbalancing them, and leaving them open to defeat: this is the concept of *ju yoku go o seisu* (softness controls hardness). As the body becomes stronger from regular training, so does the mind. With a strong mind and body, the practitioner's life outside the dojo can be enhanced in a myriad of ways, and as a result, society at large can benefit.

Judo made its Olympic debut at the 1964 Games in Tokyo. It had gone from being the brainchild of one man to being part of the international cultural and sporting lexicon in less than a century. The subsequent years have seen judo cross-pollinate with other disciplines, with different forms developing and branching off. Even in Kodokan judo—the original and most popular style—this expansion has been accompanied by what some commentators see as lapses in the quality of combat. Some contestants seem to focus solely on winning contests while overlooking the moral and philosophical underpinnings of the “sport.” It could be said that

the practice of competitive judo internationally has veered away from the founding principles of *seiryoku zenyo* and *jita kyoei*. A challenge going forward is, therefore, to refocus on and reemphasize judo's central tenets of respect, friendship, gratitude, and morality in large-scale competitions.

High-stakes tournaments aside, judo is practiced and enjoyed by people all over the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, irrespective of age, build, gender, or religion. The reasons for judo's popularity could be in its inherently positive philosophy, and in the applicability of that philosophy to modern life. In beginning and ending with a bow, respect between opponents is given and received. In using energy



This “gentle way” was conceived as more than just a form of physical combat.



The Kodokan welcomes students and practitioners of all levels, from absolute beginners to Olympic gold medalists.



Dojo members range in age from under six to over 80.

efficiently, potential is maximized. There is an egalitarian allure in the ability of a person of smaller stature to overcome a person larger and stronger. The fundamentals of judo instill a very positive philosophy, and in this sense, are perhaps more needed than ever in today's modern society.

The next time you watch a judo contest on TV, look past the throws, locks, and chokes. Judo is much, much more than just a sport, and the benefits of practice can be reaped by anyone. Why not seek out a dojo near where you live, and experience the gentle way for yourself?

# Tokyo's Startup Market Is on the Rise

A Silicon Valley-based venture capital fund sees potential in Japan's capital city.

James Riney sees a disconnect between Japan's robust financial resources and its comparatively small startup ecosystem, and his team is doing its part to encourage change in the market. Riney is the managing partner and head of 500 Startups Japan, a Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm that launched its Japan fund in 2016. At \$35 million, it is the largest 500 Startups fund anywhere outside of the United States.

"Even though it's the third largest economy in the world, the startups in Japan have been historically undercapitalized," he said. This, however, is already changing. According to Riney, in 2016, \$2 billion of capital was invested into startups in Japan. By 2017 this figure had risen to \$3 billion, and in 2018 it is likely to be even more. Compared with the U.S., where between \$70 and \$90 billion is invested into startups each year, it is still a small figure, but Tokyo can offer entrepreneurs some advantages that other world cities cannot.

One of Tokyo's biggest advantages for startups is its sheer density, Riney says. With one quarter of Japan's population (based on the latest census statistics) concentrated in the Greater Tokyo Area, companies that want to have a presence in Japan only need to penetrate the Tokyo market. Plus, the fact that virtually every major corporation has an office in Tokyo, coupled with the efficient transport system, makes taking several meetings in a single day very easy.

On the other hand, finding the best staff can be a challenge, much like other global startup markets.

"In every startup ecosystem people are complaining about talent, it's just a different set of challenges. In Silicon Valley people complain that they can't hire, but it's not because they don't know where the talent is, it's because they're really expensive and retention is hard," he said. "Whereas in Japan, you don't even know where the engineers are, so it's hard to even try to poach them. But on the other hand, salaries and other company expenditures are generally less than in the US and loyalty here is usually a lot higher."

Riney said that his firm looks at around 200 to 300 startups every month, and only decides to invest in one to two of those. So far, 500 Startups Japan has invested in nearly 40 companies involved in the SaaS field, the space field, and so on.

"We're looking for companies that are not trends, but are creating trends," he said. "We're not fortune tellers; we don't know where the next big innovation is going to come from, and we think that entrepreneurs are thinking a little more deeply about it because literally it's what they do every day. So we like to meet the best entrepreneurs in the market, figure out what they're looking at, and then judge for ourselves whether that might be a big opportunity."

There are many factors that determine whether or not a startup will eventually see success, but Riney said that one important quality is the CEO's ability to continually attract top quality talent. This, he says, is especially a challenge in Japan, where people tend to be attracted to more stable career options. But even so, he believes the startup market in Japan to be moving in a positive direction.

"There's not just one playbook for success," he said.



James Riney, managing partner and head of 500 Startups Japan, in front of an art object in his office in Tokyo.

# Tokyo Basics

## Population

Total Population of Tokyo (2018)

13,859,764

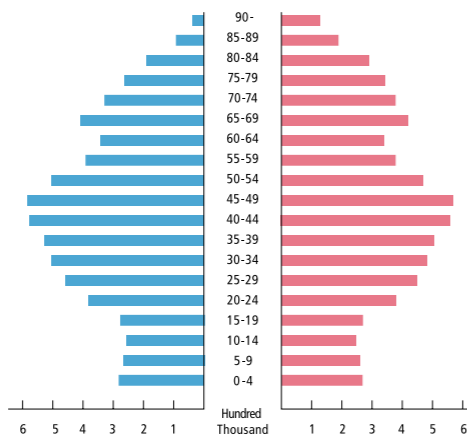
Population Age Structure by Gender (2018)

Men (2018)

6,819,723

Average Life Expectancy (2015)

81.07



Women (2018)

7,040,041

Average Life Expectancy (2015)

87.26

Foreign Residents (2018)

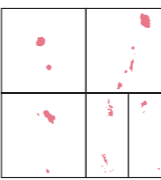
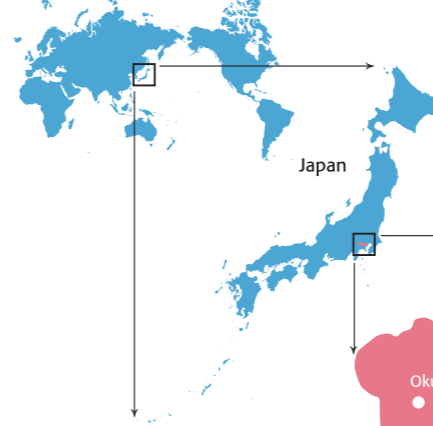
542,916

People Over 100 Years Old (2018)

5,803

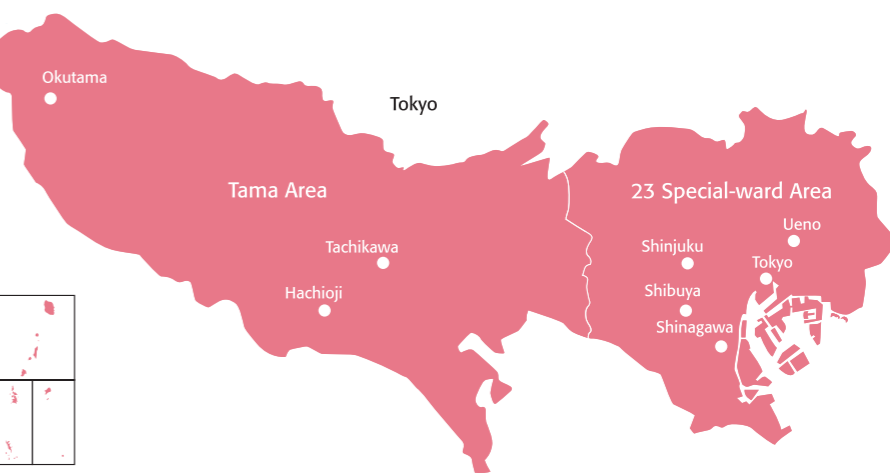
## Location

World

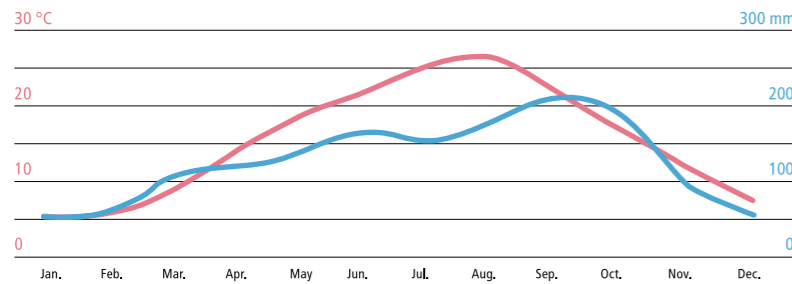


## Area

2,193.96  
sq. kilometers

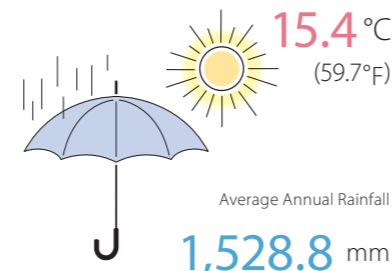


## Average Monthly Temperature and Rainfall



(Source: Japan Meteorological Agency, 1981-2010) ● = Average temperature ● = Average rainfall

Average Annual Temperature



## 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)



## Annual Foreign Tourists (2017)



13.8  
million

A 5.1% increase over 2016

## Tokyo's GMP<sup>1</sup> (Nominal) as a Share of Japan's GDP (FY2016)

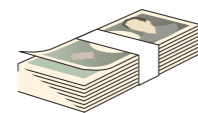
Japan ¥539.3 trillion



19.6% of  
Japan's GDP

<sup>1</sup> GMP: Gross Metropolitan Product  
<sup>2</sup> \$973.0 billion  
(2016 annual average conversion rate ¥1 = \$0.0092)

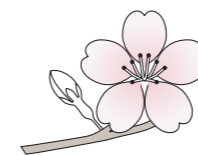
## Tokyo's Budget (Initial FY2018)



¥14,444  
billion\*

\* \$133 billion  
¥1 = \$0.0092 (Bloomberg, January 8, 2019)

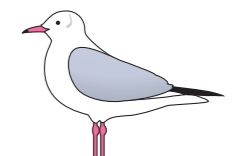
## Symbols



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 at the surrounding ports and rivers until the following April. A favorite theme of poets and painters, it is also called *miyakadori* ("bird of the capital").



TOKYO  
METROPOLITAN  
GOVERNMENT

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