

niponica

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Discovering  
Japan

no. 22



Special Feature

Tokyo, a 400-Year Narrative





*niponica* is published in Japanese and six other languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), to introduce the world to the people and culture of Japan today. The title *niponica* is derived from "Nippon," the Japanese word for Japan.

Special Feature

# Tokyo, a 400-Year Narrative

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Top: Scramble crossing in front of Shibuya Station, which serves more than 3 million passengers a day. (Photo: Getty Images)

Left: Trams pass in front of Shibuya Station in 1950. (Photo: Mainichi Newspapers)

Cover: Central Tokyo at sunset as Tokyo Skytree towers over the cityscape. (Photo: Getty Images)

no.22 H-291031

Published by: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan  
2-2-1 Kasumigaseki,  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8919, Japan  
<http://www.mofa.go.jp/>

Special Feature

# Tokyo, a 400-Year Narrative

As the countdown to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games continues, the world has become even more intrigued by Tokyo. For more than 400 years, ever since the Tokugawa Shogunate established its headquarters in Edo (present-day Tokyo), people have continued to be drawn to the city. These pages look at the metropolis from different angles, revealing its tremendous energy and influence.



# Tokyo: Dynamic Urban Regeneration

War, natural disasters and major changes over the years have all been part of the history experienced by the metropolis, which is always ready to redevelop and reinvent itself. These photos offer a decade-by-decade comparison of Tokyo and an idea of the dramatic changes that have taken place since the early 1900s.

## Then and Now— A Century Time Slip

The black and white photograph below was taken in 1904, more than 110 years ago, with a camera sent aloft on a balloon. It is reputedly the first aerial photo taken in Japan. The buildings laid out in an orderly fashion in the center foreground were in the Ginza district. Trees occupy a large area (background, center) around the Imperial Palace, just as they do today. The buildings grouped in a somewhat triangular fashion in the left foreground were around Shimbashi Station. The two photos demonstrate how buildings have stretched upward and the city has expanded outward.

(Old photo, taken in 1904: JCII Camera Museum; New photo: Getty Images)





# お台場 Odaiba



Around the end of the Edo period (19th century), Japan ended its policy of seclusion after pressure from a number of Western countries. The defensive military base constructed at the time was an island fort armed with cannon that still stands in Tokyo Bay. The offshore area is now reclaimed land home to TV stations, retail buildings and more.

(Old photo, taken in 1955: The Mainichi Newspapers; New photo: amanaimages)

# 新宿 Shinjuku



More people pass through Shinjuku Station each day than through any other train station in Japan. The old photograph was taken in front of the station in the early 19th century. Near the west entrance to the station, where horse-drawn wagons and streetcars once passed, now stand the offices of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which relocated there in 1991, making Shinjuku the capital's administrative center.

(Old photo, taken in 1923: Shinjuku Historical Museum; New photo: amanaimages)

# 銀座 Ginza



During the 17th century, Ginza was the location for the mint that made silver coins (*gin* means silver). After the 20th century, the Ginza district became the most prestigious shopping area in Tokyo, with department stores lining the streets and well-established retail outlets and shops selling luxury goods. In the late 20th century, world-famous brands opened stores in the area, elevating Ginza from Japan's premier shopping destination to the world's foremost shopping experience. New retail buildings have opened their doors one after the other over the last few years.

(Old photo, taken around 1962: Chuo City Kyobashi Library; New photo: Aflo)

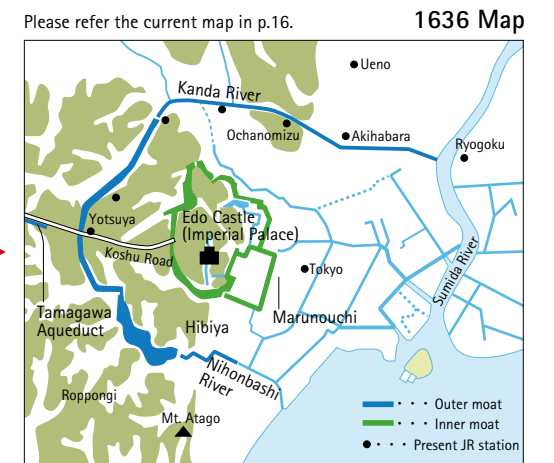
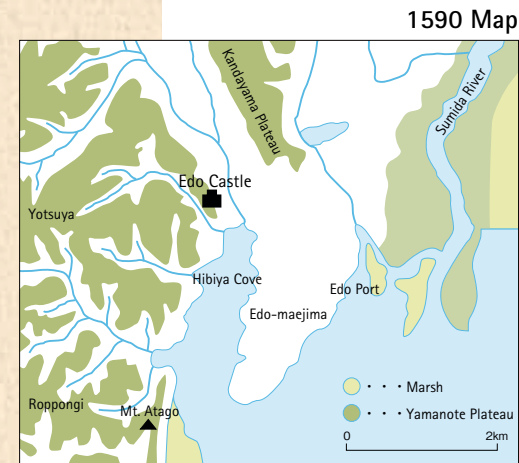
# 浅草 Asakusa



Four hundred years ago, the Asakusa entertainment district for city folk flourished along the banks of the Sumida River as a magnet for visitors to Senso-ji Temple. The Great Kanto Earthquake that struck in 1923 and World War II caused catastrophic damage to the area, but Asakusa recovered remarkably well. In 2012 the Tokyo Skytree tower was erected on the far side of the Sumida River, and today both sides of the river attract a growing number of sightseers out for a good time. People still use Azuma Bridge to cross the Sumida River.

(Old photo, taken in 1923, Azuma Bridge collapsed in the earthquake that year: The Mainichi Newspapers; New photo: Natori Kazuhisa)





Above left: Topography of the city of Edo around the year 1590, when Tokugawa Ieyasu took possession of the castle. At the time, the shallow waters of the long inlet came almost as far as the castle. Edo-maejima extends down the middle of the map, and the area in the vicinity of Edo-maejima's tip is now the Ginza district. Above right: The same area in Edo, but around 1636. Land is being reclaimed by filling in the estuary. The inner and outer moats are almost finished, and the Kanda River has been rerouted to a course close to its present channel. (Cartography: Oguro Kenji)



Opposite page: Edo Castle and urban environs in the early Edo period (17th century). The inner moat has already been made to zigzag around the castle, and residential districts for *daimyo* feudal lords have been laid out nearby. The Nihonbashi district is seen in the foreground. The bridges over the waterways are thronged with people, demonstrating the energy and dynamism of the metropolis. (This 17th century "Edo-zu Byobu" folding screen is the property of the National Museum of Japanese History.)  
Left: A scene today within the grounds of the Imperial Palace. The Nijubashi Bridge crosses the inner moat. Photo: Takahashi Munemasa

# Tokyo's Roots Go Back 400 Years

High buildings pressing closely together, transportation routes spreading like a spider's web, green spaces scattered about the city core... Much of this picture has its roots in the old city of Edo, which has become present-day Tokyo.

From a conversation with Okamoto Satoshi

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), who established the Edo government in 1603, marched into Edo in 1590. Edo was about 500 kilometers east of Kyoto, which was the capital at that time. Edo was quite rural, with large mixed forests and waterlands. He quickly began making major improvements to Edo Castle and laying out the city. First, he had water channels cut so that boats could crisscross the area. The old castle area, where the Imperial Palace locates now,

was at the inner end of an estuary, and he had it filled in. Today, the Marunouchi area, between the Imperial Palace and Tokyo Station, and the Hibiya district just south of the palace, are packed with office buildings, but they were once part of the saltwater bay. After the estuary was filled in, nearby hills were cut to make a new watercourse for the Kanda River, guiding it to the Sumida River.

After all this tremendous work, a moat was constructed to surround the castle. This was the inner moat. Around it, the outer moat, 12 kilometers long, was developed as a major line of defense against enemy attack.

The water channels were also used to promote urban expansion. Back then, 300 feudal lords (*daimyo*) were posted temporarily to Edo from different parts of the country. These were just some of the many who swore allegiance to the government of the Tokugawa shoguns (military leaders in Japan until the middle of 19th century). The government assigned them homes in large areas along the watercourses and streets. The *daimyo* districts are said to have taken up

70% of the urban land. As more became established around the water channels, the city became larger and larger.

In 1654, the newly constructed Tamagawa Aqueduct began drawing water from higher ground in the west. Some of the water flowed to the outer moat, and from there to the inner moat, then to the Kanda River, the Nihonbashi River, and finally to the sea. The audacious urban plan was now complete. Conceived by Ieyasu 50 years earlier, it had spanned more than a generation. Edo thrived as a "city of water," and would eventually grow to become a metropolis of one million people.

Edo ended up serving as the nation's primary castle city for almost 300 years. Why was Edo able to take the place of Kyoto, which had been the capital for many centuries? There are a number of reasons, one of them being that the region's terrain offers great potential. Recognizing this fact, Ieyasu developed his grand plan to transform Edo into a "city of water." Today, we can only be astounded by his bold concept, impossible to conceive of today, and the tremendous energy of the people who transformed his concept into reality.

If you compare a map showing the city in the 17th century with a map of modern-day Tokyo, you will see that Tokyo's layout is built on top of the old Edo layout. Expressways were constructed above the water channels, which were filled in. Sections of railway and subway lines follow the castle's outer moat. The wide swaths of land once occupied by *daimyo* residences are now used for other purposes, such as government buildings, schools and parks.

Meiji Jingu Shrine and the Shinjuku Gyoen National Garden were also *daimyo* residential lands at one time. Many of the high buildings crowding the city center were built on land where *daimyo* residences once stood. Ambitious urban developments, such as those of the Marunouchi and Roppongi districts, also trace their roots back to those times.

What was once an undeveloped settlement on the seashore was transformed over a period of 400 years into one of the world's largest metropolises. The groundwork for it all was the city of Edo, based on Tokugawa Ieyasu's vision. Stroll around Tokyo today, and you can still find traces of Edo history in many places.



**Okamoto Satoshi**  
Born in Tokyo in 1952. Graduated from the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Hosei University, Tokyo. Doctor of Engineering, and president of the Okamoto Satoshi Urban Architecture Research Institute. Field of expertise: urban morphology. For more than 40 years, has studied and researched the history of Tokyo's development, pursuing the subject from different angles.



# Time Travel with *Ukiyoe* Woodblock Prints and Photos of Tokyo

The citizens of old Tokyo in the 18th century were outgoing. When they found some free time, they would take off to enjoy themselves. Blossom viewing, festivals, gorgeous scenic spots, tourist attractions—there were plenty of places to have a good time. Tokyo today is much the same. These *ukiyoe* woodblock prints by Utagawa Hiroshige show some of the places which have remained most popular over the years.

- Kameido, Ueno, Ryogoku and Ochanomizu *ukiyoe* woodblock prints: Courtesy of Hagi Uragami Museum, Yamaguchi Prefecture.
- Asakusa print: Courtesy of Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library)
- Photos of Kameido (Kameido Tenjin-sha Shrine), Ryogoku (Sumida City), Asakusa (Senso-ji Temple) and Ochanomizu: Onishi Mitsugu

## Kameido 亀戸

Plum blossoms bloom here in spring, while in fall there are chrysanthemums. Kameido Tenjin-sha Shrine has long been a popular spot for viewing flowers. Among its many floral varieties, the wisterias of early summer here were said to be the best in town. With purple petals adorning the banks of the pond, people would sit on the benches and revel in the view. This shrine is also famous as the home of "the god of learning," so many students visit before taking their entrance exams.

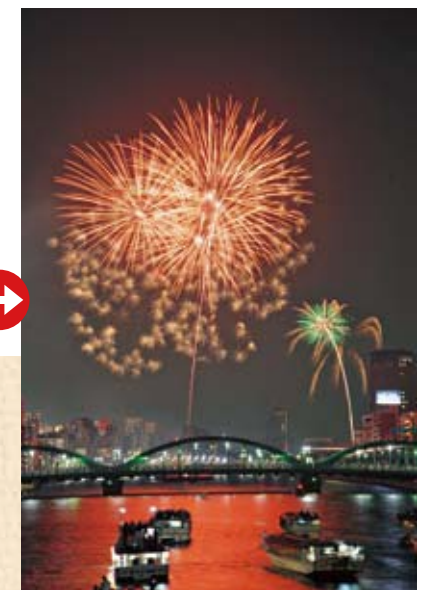
Utagawa Hiroshige, "Kameido Tenjin Keidai"



## Ueno 上野

The Ueno Park of today was once land belonging to Kanei-ji Temple, the family temple of the shoguns who were the military leaders of Japan until the middle of the 19th century. In one corner of the park overlooking Shinobazu-no-ike Pond stood the Tsuki-no-Matsu (Moon Pine Tree). The delightful circular branch was the work of horticulturists. People of taste might have imagined that it resembled a full moon, fancying they were viewing a beautiful moon at night.

Utagawa Hiroshige, "Uenosannai Tsuki no Matsu"



## Ryogoku 両国

Fireworks over the Sumida River celebrate summer in Tokyo. The Sumidagawa Grand Fireworks tradition began in 1733 during the rule of the 8th shogun, Tokugawa Yoshimune. In this *ukiyoe* print, roofed *yakata-bune* pleasure boats float on the river and sightseers throng about on the banks. Things are just the same today. Yoshimune had cherry trees planted along the banks of the river for city folk to enjoy. Now, almost 300 years later, the riverside is one of the best places in Tokyo to enjoy cherry blossoms.

Utagawa Hiroshige, "Ryogoku Hanabi"

## Ochanomizu 御茶の水

In the foreground is Shohei Bridge, a crossing point that today can be found near Ochanomizu Station on the Chuo Line. If you were to climb the slope to the right you would come to a Confucian temple that was called *Seido* (nowadays called Yushima Seido). The hilly area around here was cut to make a new channel for Kanda River. The steeply walled valley created by human engineering was a popular place to enjoy nature without going too far from the city center.



## Asakusa 浅草

Senso-ji Temple is the oldest Buddhist temple in Tokyo, with a history of almost 1,400 years. These views take the eye through Kaminari-mon ("Thunder Gate") to Nio-mon (the Hozo-mon, or "Treasure House Gate"). It was a boisterous place of entertainment for city dwellers during the Edo period (17th-19th century). Today, the alley is still one of Tokyo's most popular spots, with plenty of sightseers.



Utagawa Hiroshige, "Asakusa Kinryuzan"



Utagawa Hiroshige, "Shohei-bashi, Seido, Kanda-gawa"



The various elements of the lounge interior create a motif defined cohesively by *kiriko* cut glass. Note the light-and-shade effect achieved by the intricate shapes.

Top right: The lights above the lounge counter are made of glass, each one carved individually by Horiguchi Toru. (Kiriko Lounge, Tokyu Plaza Ginza; photo: Nacasa & Partners Inc.)

Bottom right: Cups decorated with *ki-kuka-mon* (traditional chrysanthemum crests). Place one of the tumblers in your hands, or pour in some liquid, or let light shine through—each lifestyle situation creates its own effect.



# 江戸切子

Edo Kiriko

## Traditional Skills Live On, from Generation to Generation



Horiguchi Toru was born in Tokyo in 1976. He is active in the foreign exhibition scene as well. "I really want more people to discover the charm of Edo *kiriko* cut glass."

Worktables are lined up neatly in the atelier, where white is the predominant interior color. Horiguchi Toru is sitting at one of the tables, pressing a cup against a spinning grindstone. As soon as the cup touches the grindstone, its colored surface is shaved off and sparkling clear light comes through the glass from inside.

Edo *kiriko* is one type of cut glass, a traditional craft passed down from generation to generation in Tokyo. It is known for its bright colors and gorgeous patterns. Among the many varieties, Horiguchi's work is especially remarkable—the form is not particularly decorative and appears simple at first glance, but behind that is an astonishingly delicate accuracy. Place one of his glasses in your hands and the attention-to-detail will astound you.

Horiguchi's refined style is highly praised even among those not involved in the cut glass market. He tackles many projects unrelated to glassware, like interior furnishings for hotels and accessories.

Presenting works that go beyond the boundaries of Edo *kiriko*, Horiguchi has brought a breath of fresh air to his craft. And yet, his artistic perspective is surprisingly focused on tradition.

"If you really want to know the soul of something, you have to study its history. If I get enough time someday, I want to research the Edo *kiriko* made many years ago."

With youthful energy, this artisan is etching new traditions into glass.



Left: The *masu* wooden cup at right in the second row has the Kiri-mon (Paulownia) crest of the Japanese government on its left side and the Aoi-mon (hollyhock) crest of the Tokugawa clan on the right side.

Top right: The *Moncho* is a register of classic family crests.

Bottom right: Innumerable circles on a computer screen. Only some arcs are selected, to be used as the lines of fanciful crests.



The culture of old Tokyo has come down to the present day without losing its luster, as the world of crafts certainly shows. Come visit contemporary artisans who embrace tradition with new artistic feeling, while maintaining the skills and sensibilities of those who have gone before.

Photos by Ito Chiharu

# 紋章上絵

Monsho Uwa-e

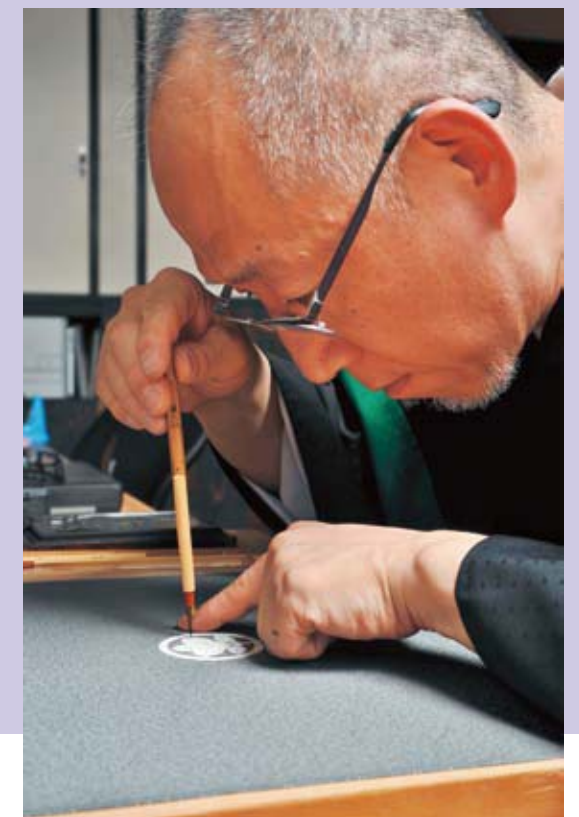
A particular kind of *monsho* (crest) is handed down from one generation to the next within Japan. They are icon-like designs representing the status and lineage of the family, symbols printed on kimono and personal accessories. *Monsho uwa-e* are crest illustrations drawn by hand on kimono. Hatoba Shoryu is a third-generation artisan in this craft, following the path started by his grandfather. He is keen to try out new approaches, using crest designs for interior furnishings, product logos and more. One of his innovations was to use a computer as a design tool.

"Crest lines are basically composed of arcs," he explains. "It's all very mathematically based, and a computer is suitable for that."

On the computer screen, circles combine with innumerable other circles, creating lines never seen before. Although he uses advanced technology, his crests still show a true appreciation for Japan's traditional sense of beauty.

"When tradition and innovation merge, what interaction will occur? I enjoy thinking about that."

For the Japanese of today, family crests have a somewhat formal image. Hatoba wants to bring crests into the contemporary mainstream of daily life. His challenge is to carry on an old tradition while seeking ways for family crests to find their place in today's world.



Hatoba Shoryu draws a crest, using a *bun-mawashi* compass specially made from bamboo. His workshop combines intricate handcrafting from another era with highly advanced digital technology.



# Reinventing Urban Space for the Next Century

Shibuya Station is one of Tokyo's major rail terminals, as shown by the photographs on the table of contents page. The area around the station is now undergoing what is said to be a once-in-a-century redevelopment. The urban renewal projects aim to put people first and take Shibuya into the future.

Cooperation: Tokyu Corporation  
Photos: Natori Kazuhisa



渋谷 Shibuya 2017

Right: The area in front of Shibuya Station today. Opposite page: Image envisioning plans for the same area in 2027. New towering buildings will rise, and the diagonal crosswalk in front of the station's west exit will be upgraded to provide a safer, more pedestrian-friendly environment. One of the new buildings will be topped off with an observation deck and leisure facilities. (Illustration courtesy of Shibuya Station Urban Collaborative Building Enterprise)

Shibuya has always generated new fashions and trends, and it is now one of the most sought-after office locations in the metropolis and home to many IT companies. To the many faces of the district, new ones are now being added—seven development projects, including four skyscrapers planned for completion by 2020. People eager to set up new businesses and promote new trends are attracted to Shibuya, bringing even more energy to Japan's creative industries.

One of the major changes will affect pedestrian traffic in the station area. Today, trains on nine different railway and subway lines use the station, with platforms scattered from the fifth underground floor to the third floor above ground. The station interior is basically a maze. The platforms of these various lines will be brought closer together—no more than a few hundred meters apart—to make it easy for passengers to transfer from one line to another. Pedestrian circulation between floors deep underground and buildings above ground will be dramatically improved, offering space that is safe and hassle-free even for the elderly and people with small children.

Many other districts in Tokyo offer their own attractions, but the purpose of these redevelopment projects is to make Shibuya the place in Japan that people want to visit most.

Tokyu Corporation has taken the lead in Shibuya's development since the mid-20th century. Yamaguchi Kantaro of the company's Urban Development Business Unit explains, "Places like Harajuku, Aoyama, Daikanyama and Ebisu, which are all popular among the young and trendy, are within one or two train stops. It will also be fun to walk to those places on promenades built along the Shibuya River. In addition, public spaces are being constructed partway between those places and Shibuya for people to rest and relax. We're promoting plans for large open areas where people can appreciate both Shibuya and its surroundings."

The idea is to make Shibuya a destination where people want to be, a place for enjoying water, greenery and strolling about—in other words, to make it more than just a district of towering architecture. The idea is to shift the focus from buildings to people. Visitors of different ages, nationalities and occupations, with different interests, will be keen to come to Shibuya—a place where different ideas will be welcome, and new lifestyles, businesses and industries will evolve.

As it moves forward into the next hundred years, Shibuya will become a magnet for new energy. Shibuya's future is already in sight.



渋谷 Shibuya 2027



Above: Yamaguchi Kantaro (left) and Kameda Mai are involved in Tokyu's Shibuya redevelopment projects. Left: Building near the station to feature a rooftop deck with space for viewing the Tokyo skyline. Utilizing the entire rooftop, this project will be one of the largest rooftop decks in Japan when completed. (Illustration courtesy of Shibuya Station Urban Collaborative Building Enterprise)



# Shibuya's unique flood prevention plan

To bring back waterscapes and greenery, Shibuya is promoting development along the Shibuya River. The district lies at the bottom of a shallow valley, so there is an urgent need for water control measures. The last few years have seen the occurrence of what is called “guerrilla heavy rain,” with more than 5 centimeters of rain falling in a single hour. Each time this has occurred, the station area at the bottom of the valley has been badly affected.

As a countermeasure, a subterranean emergency water storage tank is being constructed under the east exit of the station; it will prevent flooding during a heavy downpour. At Tokyu's Urban Development Business Unit, Mori Masahiro is supervising construction of the storage tank, and he describes the project in a nutshell: “Our first step is to redirect the flow of the Shibuya River, which currently flows under an area in front of the station, and construct an underground concourse. Then, under this, at the deepest point some 25 meters below ground, we are constructing a storage tank that will be able to hold about 4,000m<sup>3</sup> of rainwater. There, surrounded by subway lines, the river and buildings, the tank will store rainwater during a heavy downpour, preventing flood damage.”

More than three million people use Shibuya Station every day, and the construction is moving ahead without interfering with regular station operations. In some places, the work can proceed for only two hours at a stretch between the last night train and the first morning train. So precision planning is required. Construction continues apace, not constrained as one might expect in a busy place that is one of the largest rail terminals in the world.

The intermediate goal of the redevelopment project time-frame is the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, with everything scheduled for final completion in 2027. By that time, Shibuya will no doubt have become an urban center attracting admiration from around the world.

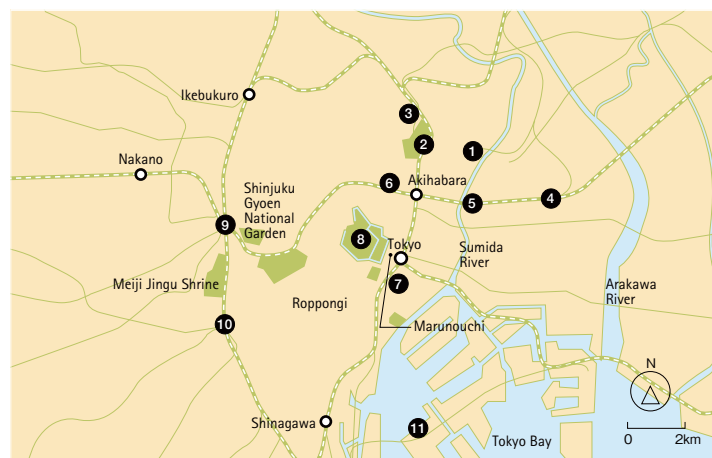


Above: Mori Masahiro, who is head of construction, stands inside the huge emergency water storage tank. Right: While the construction of buildings in front of Shibuya Station moves forward, another important construction project is happening below ground, to protect lives and property.



## Map of Tokyo (2017)

This map shows the places that appeared in the Special Feature.



- ① Asakusa
- ② Ueno
- ③ Ueno Sakuragi
- ④ Kameido
- ⑤ Ryogoku
- ⑥ Ochanomizu
- ⑦ Ginza
- ⑧ Imperial Palace (Old Edo Castle)
- ⑨ Shinjuku
- ⑩ Shibuya
- ⑪ Odaiba

# Rediscovering a Local Community

Photos: Natori Kazuhisa, Ueno Sakuragi Atari



This page invites you to a residential district where, even today, you can see wooden houses from another era. Walk into a certain alleyway and you will be greeted by a scene from yesteryear—three old houses, beautifully restored, and locals relaxing around a communal well. Opened a few years ago, this small complex is known as Ueno Sakuragi Atari. *Atari* is a fluid word that can mean “neighborhood” or “surroundings.” The houses, built in the Japanese traditional style, were constructed in 1938. They have been repurposed as shops and event spaces, creating a refreshing sense of community.

Although much of Tokyo was burned to the ground during the aerial bombardments of World War II, this area miraculously escaped the flames and is still dotted with wood-built shops, houses, and temples.

The shop, workshop and home that make up Ueno Sakuragi Atari, taking advantage of a traditional architectural style, open their front rooms onto a laneway, letting both locals and visitors who are out for a walk share the same indoor and outdoor spaces. Here, people organize events like an open-air markets and classes for tea ceremony and yoga to promote the arts of eating and living, which are so closely tied to life itself. Day in, day out, new ways to connect with others continue to evolve.



Top center: On the right-hand side, the inner right, and the inner left of the entrance to the alley are three houses built in the traditional style. They are now used as shops and event spaces. Bottom: Children and elderly locals alike enjoy each other's company around the communal well. There is a bakery in one of the old houses.



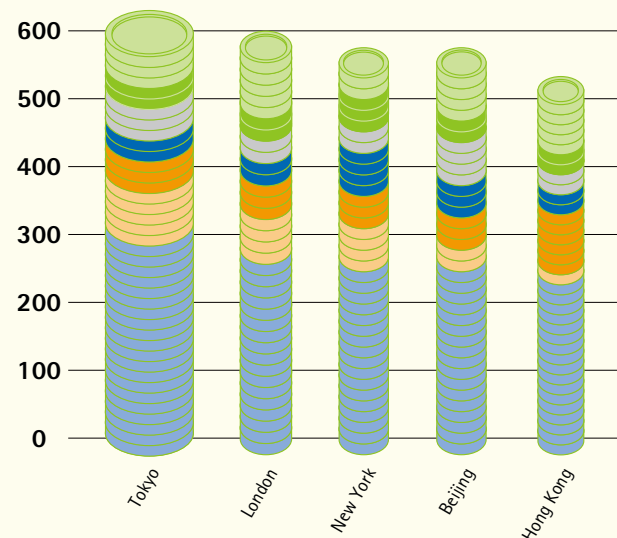
# TOKYO NOW

## Statistics Tell a Big Story

### Tokyo: Metropolis and Economic Magnet

Tokyo, the capital of Japan, has more people than any other metropolis in the world. It is a center for the convergence of people, things, information and so much more, and the pulse of its mighty economy beats strong, day in, day out.

### Urban Economic Magnets of the World: How They Rank

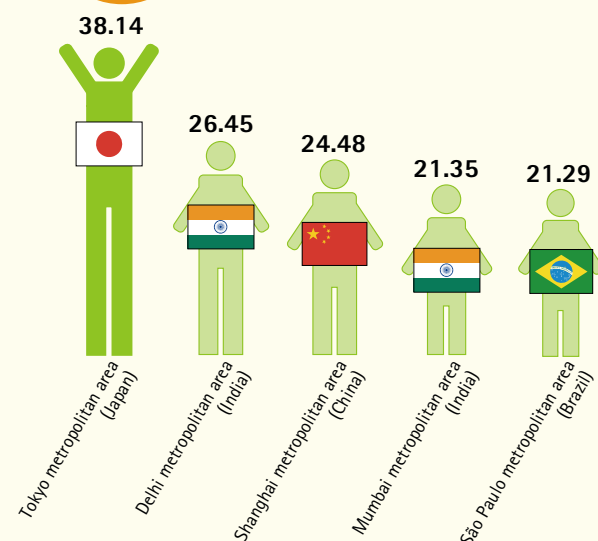


- Economy
- Market size
- Market attractiveness
- Economic agglomeration
- Population agglomeration
- Business environment
- Ease of doing business

Unit: The score calculated by the Institute for Urban Strategies (IUS) at the Mori Memorial Foundation

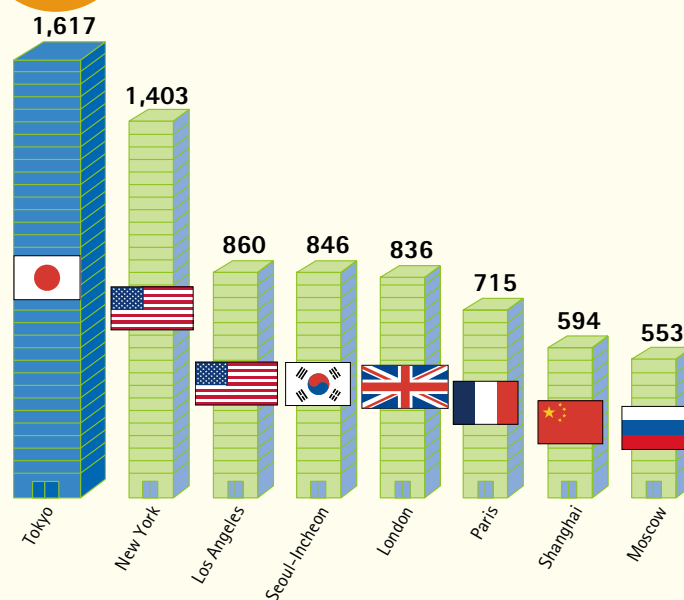
Source: Global Power City Index in 2016, Institute for Urban Strategies, The Mori Memorial Foundation

### Population of the World's Largest Megacities: A Comparison



(Unit: millions)  
Source: The World's Cities in 2016, United Nations

### Global Ranking of GDP by City



Unit: US\$ billion  
Source: Global Metro Monitor 2015, Brookings Institution

### Life in Tokyo: Convenient and Safe

A dense rail network with tentacles spreading out in all directions, and stations within walking distance to just about anywhere in the urban center—yet another description of Tokyo. Research institutes in other countries give high marks to the city's safety record, listing Japan's unique *koban* (police boxes), where policemen work under a 24-hour shift system, as one factor ensuring law and order. Tokyo was placed at the top of the list of most livable cities by the UK magazine *Monocle* for three years in a row, and France's *Michelin Guide* says Tokyo comes first in the world for the number of restaurants awarded stars.

### Livability Ranking

**No.1,**  
three years  
in a row

Source: Monocle July/August 2017, Win Content AG

Urban safety  
**Safest City in the World**

Source: Safe Cities Index 2015, Economist Intelligence Unit

### Number of *koban* (police boxes) in Tokyo metropolitan area

**1,084**  
(including residential police boxes)

Source: Table 5, Statistical Tables, Metropolitan Police Department Statistics, 2015

### Average Number of People Using Shinjuku Station on a Weekday

Approx.  
**3.42 million,**  
the highest  
in the world

Source: Guinness World Records

### Number of Hotel and *Ryokan* Rooms in Tokyo Metropolitan Area

Approx.  
**149,000 rooms**

Source: Industry and Employment in Tokyo: A Graphic Overview, 2017, Bureau of Industrial Labor Affairs, Tokyo Metropolitan Government

### Number of Eating and Drinking Establishments in Tokyo Metropolitan Area

Approx.  
**84,000**

Of these, 227 restaurants awarded Michelin stars

**No.1**  
in the world

Source: 2014 Economic Census: Basic Survey, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Michelin Guide Tokyo 2017



# Prefectural Showrooms in Tokyo

You can see and examine local products from throughout Japan without leaving Tokyo, thanks to shops promoted by the country's prefectures. Come take a stroll in Tokyo on this magical trip through Japan.

Photos: Ito Chiharu



**京都 Kyoto Prefecture**

## Nishijin-ori Woven Cloth

**Kyoto-kan**  
<http://kyotokan.jp/>  
This is a luxurious silken fabric woven in the Nishijin district of Kyoto. Fanciful patterns using threads of many colors have made it famous. Nishijin-ori comes in many different types, each depending on the thread and weave used.

**青森 Aomori Prefecture**

## Tsugaru-nuri Lacquerware

**Aomori Hokusai-kan**  
<https://www.hokusaikan.com/>  
Tsugaru-nuri features ornate, intricate patterns drawn on a shiny lacquered surface. The appearance is gorgeous, and the objects themselves are durable and practical. They are a real favorite as everyday dinnerware.

**岩手 Iwate Prefecture**

## Nambu-tekki Ironware

**Iwate Ginga Plaza**  
<http://www.iwate-ginpla.net/>  
Nambu-tekki cast ironware is admired for its flawlessly beautiful black finish. Many pieces are embossed with patterns and precision designs. Water boiled in a Nambu-tekki iron kettle is said to leave a pleasantly smooth sensation in the mouth.

**島根 Shimane Prefecture**

## Washi Temari Balls

**Nihonbashi Shimane-kan**  
<http://www.shimane-kan.jp/>  
Temari balls are found throughout the country. Temari from Matsue City in Shimane Prefecture have a rustic, homey appearance. Balls made from traditional izumo-washi paper are embroidered to make a flowering collage of colored paper.

**広島 Hiroshima Prefecture**

## Kendama Cup and Ball Game

**Hiroshima Brand Shop TAU**

<http://www.tau-hiroshima.jp/>  
Kendama have attracted an avid following worldwide, especially among the young. Kendama have a long history, and there are a number of theories about their origin. The shape favored today was born in 1919 in Hatsuoka City, Hiroshima Prefecture.

**山口 Yamaguchi Prefecture**

## Hagi-yaki Ceramics

**Oidemase Yamaguchi-kan**  
<http://www.oidemase-t.jp/>  
Hagi-yaki was developed to supply tea ceremony teacups. Pale colors, especially light orange and beige, are a special feature. Over time, the delicate cracks in the glazing add to the charm of the cups.

**沖縄 Okinawa Prefecture**

## Ryukyu Glass

**Ginza Washita Shop**  
<http://www.washita.co.jp/>  
The bubbles of air scattered through the colorful glass are a throwback to the days when, after World War II, empty beer and soft drink bottles were melted down for recycling. The shining hues remind us of nature in Okinawa.

**香川 Kagawa Prefecture**

## Marugame Uchiwa Fans

**Tokushima/Kagawa Tomoni Ichiba**  
<http://www.tomoni-ichiba.com/>  
The materials used in these fans are all from Shikoku, one of the four main islands of Japan, located southwest of Tokyo. The bamboo is from Ehime Prefecture, the washi paper from Kochi Prefecture, and the glue from Tokushima Prefecture. The artisan goes methodically through all the steps to make sure the uchiwa will yield the most refreshing breeze, indispensable for summer in Japan.

**秋田 Akita Prefecture**

## Odate Mage-wappa Bentwood Containers

**Akita Furusato-kan**  
<http://www.a-bussan.jp/shop/tokyo/>  
Thin sheets of cedar wood are bent to make wappa wooden boxes. These containers are both beautiful and very practical, as they even help combat bacteria and keep humidity levels near optimum. When used as a bento lunch box, a wappa is sure to make lunch look delicious.

**福島 Fukushima Prefecture**

## Aizu Erosoku Illustrated Candles

**Nihonbashi Fukushima-kan Midette**  
<http://midette.com/>  
Aizu Erosoku candles are often illustrated with flowers, making them a suitable winter substitute for flowers on household Buddhist altars. The candles are made using the traditional method of repeatedly dipping the wick in wax and allowing the wax to dry.

**石川 Ishikawa Prefecture**

## Kutani-yaki Ceramics

**Ishikawa Hyakumangoku Monogatari, Edo Honten**  
<http://100mangokushop.jp/>  
The ornate, colorful illustrations are the main appeal of Kutani-yaki porcelain. Red, yellow, green, purple and dark blue are the five main tones in the palette, giving a strikingly vibrant impression. Kutani-yaki adds zest to everyday life.



# Sukiyaki

## The Delectable *Wagyu* Treat

Photos: Kohara Takahiro  
Cooperation: Ningyocho IMAHAN Ueno Hirokoji Restaurant



Chef Aoki Katsutoshi explains, "It is important for the beef to be fresh, as well. We prepare the beef not in advance, but just before serving it to our customers."

In rankings of the best dishes in Japanese cuisine, *sukiyaki* inevitably comes in either first or second. Although some variations are made with pork, chicken or fish, traditional *sukiyaki* features loin or round beef sliced into thin strips. The chance to indulge the taste buds with the sumptuous flavors of *wagyu* beef is the secret to the dish's popularity in Japan.

*Sukiyaki* is a one-pot meal eaten from an iron pot as it cooks over a burner on the table, but the style of preparation differs depending on the region. In Japan's eastern Kanto region, a seasoned broth called *warishita* is prepared first, while in the western Kansai region, the beef is first boiled then simmered in sugar and soy sauce. Wherever you are in Japan, preparing the main ingredient, the beef, is the crucial first step. Once the beef slices are cooked to preference, they are lightly dipped in beaten raw egg before they are eaten. Vegetables and tofu (bean curd) are placed in the pot after the broth has been infused with the fat from the cooked beef, soaking up the fat and broth, for an even more exquisite taste.

Some say the difference in how people eat *sukiyaki* comes down to a difference in how *sukiyaki* originated in the two regions. Kansai-style *sukiyaki* began as a dish cooked in the field using a spade (*suki*) to hold wild fowl and animal meat as it roasted (*yaki*) over a fire. By contrast, Kanto-style *sukiyaki* is thought to have been brought in through Yokohama as *gyu-nabe* (beef pot) after Japan opened its doors to the rest of the world at the end of the Edo period (mid-19th century). However it originated, beef was not a common part of the diet for most Japanese people until after the Meiji period (a period of Westernization that began in the late 19th century), and the beef *sukiyaki* known and loved today was not seen until the end of the Taisho period (beginning of the 20th century).

After a history of almost 150 years, *sukiyaki* still reigns supreme among lovers of Japanese cuisine thanks to Japan's cattle farmers, who have worked hard to deliver the most delicious *wagyu* beef to the table. *Sukiyaki* is a sophisticated way of bringing out the best of Japanese beef's rich taste.

### To make *sukiyaki*

- 1 Pour *warishita*, a seasoned broth made with soy sauce, sugar, soup stock, etc., into an iron pot. Bring the *warishita* to a boil and add beef slices.
- 2 Cook beef to preferred taste and remove. Add vegetables such as green onions, *shiitake* mushrooms, *shirataki* noodles, tofu and other ingredients.
- 3 Allow to simmer before adding more beef slices. Eat as ingredients are ready, adding more ingredients as space allows.



Above: Vegetable ingredients are added to one side of the pot, and the remaining space is filled with additional beef. *Warishita* broth is added to the pot with each addition of beef.

Left: The popularity of a *sukiyaki* restaurant is determined by the quality of the *wagyu* it serves. Top-grade sirloin is preferred by connoisseurs. The photograph shows the serving for two people.

Opposite page: Remove the meat from the pot before it is overcooked. Dipping the meat in a bowl of beaten raw egg is popular in Japan, though the meat is delicious undipped, as well.







A Paradise of Nature — Experience Another Side of Tokyo At Its "Big Island"

# Oshima Island

The Tokyo Metropolis is on Honshu, but it also includes 13 inhabited islands, including the Izu Islands and Ogasawara Islands, in the Pacific Ocean. The biggest of these islands is Oshima, a treasure trove of nature crowned by Mt. Mihara, an active volcano. It takes only one hour and 45 minutes by high-speed ferry to experience a whole different side of Tokyo.

Photos: Kohara Takahiro



Above: Oshima Island measures about 9 kilometers east to west, about 15 kilometers north to south. It is a treasure trove of nature, so you can enjoy various fun activities. (Photo: amanaimages)

Top right: Mt. Mihara seen from the caldera. The dark green areas are where the lava flowed in 1986.

Center right: This scenic open air spa is called Motomachi Hama-no-Yu. Soak in the bath with the sea before your eyes.

Right, third from top: Thanks to the influence of a warm current, divers come across all kinds of marine life around Oshima Island.

(Photos: Global Nature Club ft. Umisamurai)  
Bottom right: The Aki-no-Hama swimming spot is a very popular place for diving in the northern part of the island.







Layers of lava were exposed when the road around the island was cut through this area, leaving steep cliffs. The layers were formed by a series of volcanic eruptions that started about 1.5 million years ago. The most interesting visible formation is more than 600 meters long.



A cycling road stretches for about 5 kilometers along the coast from Motomachi in the western part of the island to Nodahama in the north. It is a popular route for beginner cyclists too.



Left and above: *Bekko-zushi* is a sushi made with fish in season that is flavored in *shima togarashi* (hot red pepper) soy sauce. The soy sauce recipe is handed down from shop to shop and family to family in secret. "Today's catch was Japanese butterfish. We're using fresh ones just off the boat, so we don't steep them long in soy sauce," says the owner of the Minato Zushi restaurant.  
Top right: From around the mid-1920s to the mid-1960s, Habu Port was crowded with tourists and fishing boat crews. Today, the history of those days can be felt quite keenly by travelers.  
Right: Marbled rockfish unloaded from fishing boats are prepared for quick delivery.



The ferry races under Rainbow Bridge, skimming over the water. After it passes Yokosuka Port and the Boso Peninsula, an onboard announcement tells us we have entered the natural habitat of large ocean mammals. Here, migrating dolphins can be seen, and we learn we might have a chance to spot a sperm whale.

Oshima is the largest of the Izu Islands, although it measures only about 9 kilometers east to west and about 15 kilometers north to south. It takes less than two hours to drive around the island. The 8,300 people who live on Oshima tend to take life easy, except when the regularly scheduled boats arrive in the harbor. Then the pace quickens for tourists, locals and businesspeople alike. Visitors are especially numerous in the summer, when the sea is a popular destination, and in the winter, when many visit for the Izu Oshima Camellia Festival. At other times of the

year pleasure seekers come for ocean action, especially fishing, diving and snorkeling.

The last few years have seen a growing number of tourists attracted by the abundant nature on this aptly nicknamed "Active Volcano Island." Since ancient times the islanders have venerated Mt. Mihara as a kind of god, and today highland hiking is one way for visitors to complete their island experience.

The trail around the crater opened in 1998, and in 2010 the area was designated as one of the Japanese Geoparks, natural parks highlighting geological heritage. Join a group led by a certified geoguide to enhance your tour with information on the volcano, lava and local plants and animals. From the mountain lookout, which is accessible by car and located at the trailhead to the summit, you will see Mt. Mihara and part of the large caldera that was formed about

1,700 years ago. Turn around and look northwest—when the weather cooperates, Mt. Fuji is visible across the ocean. If you go further, for about 45 minutes on foot, you will come to an awesome crater measuring about 300 meters across and plummeting about 200 meters down. To the south lie the Izu Islands, to the northeast the Boso Peninsula, and to the northwest the Izu Peninsula with Mt. Fuji beyond it. The hike with all these in view is a memorable experience that makes you feel you have set out to explore the planet.

To appreciate the charms of the island even more, how about cycling around it? Close to the southern tip is a beach of black volcanic sand, sheer cliffs showing layers of lava, and other features formed through volcanic activity. Here too you will see proof that you are standing on a volcanic island.

Bicycle road races have been held for a few years now, attracting racers from Japan and abroad. A growing number of them are ace cyclists with their own bicycles, eager to test their muscles on the circumferential road with vertical differentials of more than 400 meters. If you want a more leisurely ride along the coast on a rental bike, pedaling on

a bike path is enjoyable as well. After working up a sweat, various lodgings and the municipally operated hot spring await you.

One type of tree that you'll see everywhere on the island is *camellia japonica*. Camellia groves once played an important role in the lives of the islanders, protecting them from the wind and providing oil extracted from its seeds. Records from the Tenpo era (1830-1844) in the Edo period list camellia oil as a special product of the island. Today about three million camellia trees are said to grow in their natural state on Oshima. When the flowers bloom in winter their red petals color the land. Camellia oil contains more healthful oleic acid than olive oil, and this has created something of a revival in interest over the last few years. Two common uses for the oil are for deep-frying tempura and as a dressing for angelica herb salad.

And then, of course, there are the various types of fresh seafood brought by the Kuroshio Current to grace the table in their own season. Sashimi flavored with soy sauce steeped in spicy *shima togarashi* red peppers is a traditional delicacy of the Izu Islands.



Far left: Carefully selected camellia berries are crushed to extract camellia oil. Left: *Camellia japonica* is native to Japan. Right: These two women are wearing the traditional costume for picking camellia flowers. Below: Locally made camellia-based products, including the bottled oil, camellia flower jam and soap shown here, are popular as souvenirs.



## Oshima Island Area Maps

### ● Access

From Tokyo Station, take a JR Yamanote Line or Keihintohoku Line to Hamamatsucho Station. From there, take a Tokai Kisen high-speed ferry. It takes about 1 hour and 45 minutes to Motomachi Port or Okada Port. Or, from Tokyo Station, it takes about 1 hour to the Chofu Airport. From there, it takes 25 minutes to the Oshima Airport by plane.

### ● Information

Oshima Tourism Association  
<http://www.izu-oshima.or.jp/>  
Global Nature Club  
<http://www.global-ds.com/>  
Takada Oil Factory  
<http://www.tsubaki-abura.com/>





Souvenirs of



Japan 13

Tiny bells add enjoyment to summer

# *Fuurin* Summer Wind Chimes

Photos: Ito Chiharu, Aflo

To feel cool and refreshed in summer, the Japanese have long employed various strategies. One of these is the *fuurin* summer wind chimes, a small bell that rings when it sways in a gentle breeze. It is suspended under the eaves of a house and tinkles softly when its strip of colored paper catches the wind.

These chimes apparently go back to the time when tiny versions of bronze hanging bells were first hung under the four corners of the roofs of Buddhist temples and pagodas to keep misfortune away. Later, it became customary for everyday folk to hang them outside their homes.

Found throughout the country are various types of

*fuurin* that incorporate some aspect of a popular local craft. Those made of iron in Iwate Prefecture, which are shaped like a hanging bell, ring out a soothing, lingering tone. Another iron type, made in Shizuoka Prefecture, is housed within a bamboo cage. Its appearance alone has a cooling effect. And then there is the version handmade in Tokyo, called Edo-fuurin, which is a blown “bubble” of glass featuring a cute, hand-drawn illustration. Other examples include the ceramic ones made in Okayama Prefecture and the porcelain ones from Saga Prefecture.

Still much loved today, *fuurin* help soothe our minds with their soft tinkling.

niponica

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