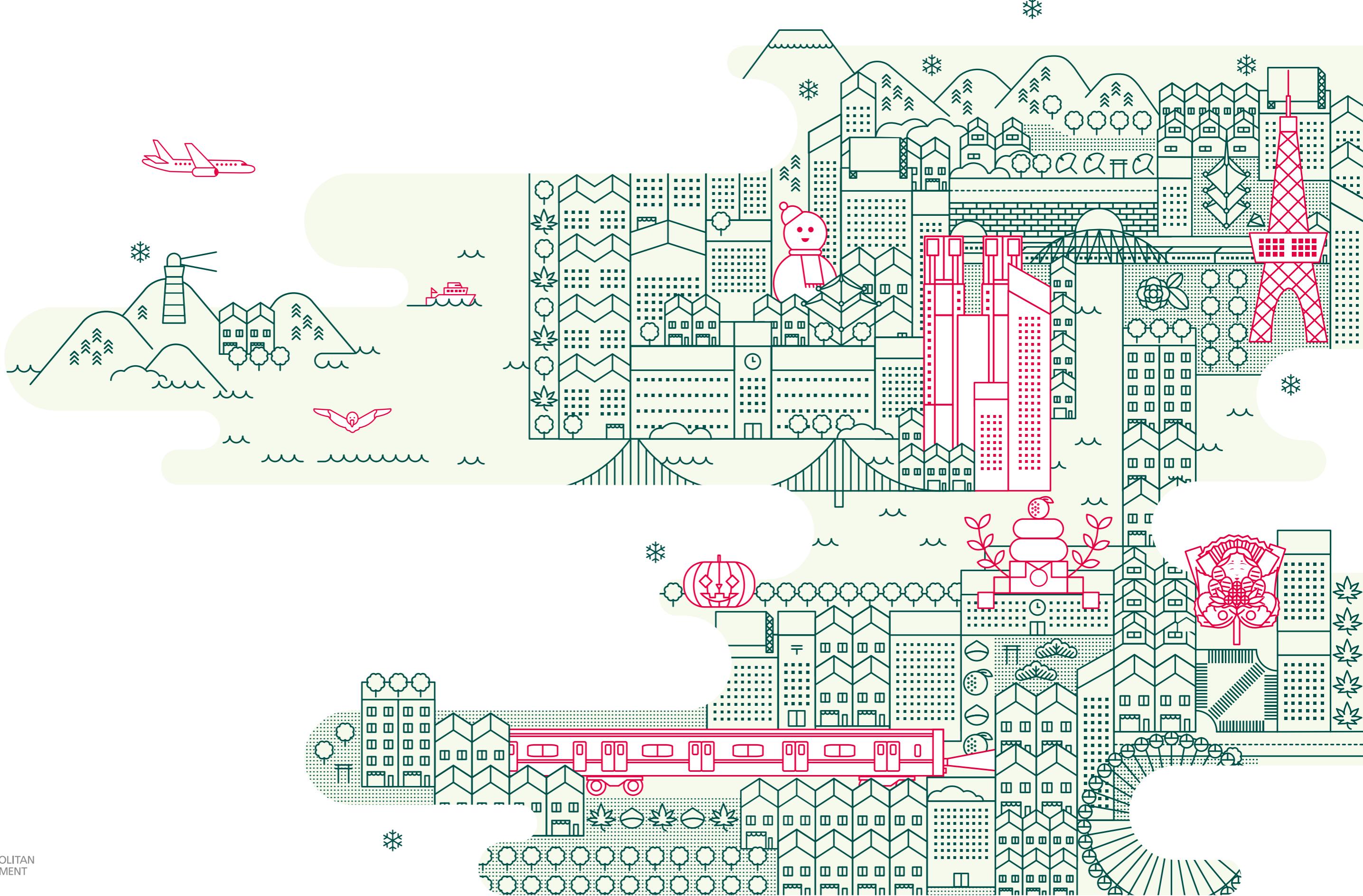


# Tokyo

Autumn / Winter 2017



TOKYO  
METROPOLITAN  
GOVERNMENT

Tokyo

Autumn / Winter 2017



HOST CITY



The image above is the new 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 Timeless Allure of the Stage

*The appeal of the ancient stage arts of Noh and Kyogen lies in their traditional roots, and modern audiences can still experience their rich nuance and symbolic artistry.*



Noh "ENMA" Kita Noh School. Photo by Hiroshi Ishida.

Like a shrine to minimalist theater design, the Noh stage hosts only an ancient pine tree painted on the backdrop, and no curtain separates the stage from the audience. This less-is-more design may appear too simple to theater fans more familiar with the lavish sets of opera and stage musicals, but it is in this empty space that the dramas of Noh and *Kyogen*, the oldest surviving Japanese performing arts, come to life.

Noh is a symbolic musical drama, combining three genres: a narrative *utai* chant using distinctive vocalization; slow, stylized *mai* dancing; and the *hayashi* ensemble of traditional instruments. It is often based on tragic tales from traditional literature featuring supernatural beings, and uses eye-catching costumes and masks. Noh attains the highest levels of artistic perfection, embodying what is expressed through the word *yugen* (profound and refined beauty)—an important concept of Japanese aesthetics.

Another form of theater called *Kyogen* is a form of

comic theater often performed in the intervals between Noh plays. In contrast to Noh, its central part is dialogue and laughter, and masks are seldom used. *Kyogen* stories are often based on events and situations from the everyday lives of the common people in feudal society, and tend to be realistic and easy to understand.

Both originated from *Sarugaku*, a popular style of entertainment since ancient times, and developed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century into what are essentially their present-day forms. Protected and controlled by the ruling Tokugawa shogunate during the Edo Period (1603–1868), Noh became even more ceremonial, as troupes preserved their established high standards by replicating every detail of the great masters' dances, from the proper standing positions to their sliding-feet movements. *Kyogen* was also codified into an established form and was further refined.

As the shogunate crumbled and modernization began in the 1860s, Noh and *Kyogen* lost support. Before long, however, the new government, which had learned

about the West's focus on traditional culture, decided to protect Japan's classical performing arts. Noh and *Kyogen* came to be called *Nohgaku*, and a new type of theater called *Nohgakudo* was created especially for it. Though indoors, the stage retains its own roof.

Throughout history, Noh has had a tremendous influence on Kabuki and other art forms, both in Japan and overseas. For example, the 20<sup>th</sup> century English composer Benjamin Britten was inspired to compose his 1964 opera "Curlew River" based on the Japanese Noh play "Sumidagawa." Today, *Nohgaku* is highly acclaimed around the world and was added to a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2001.

Noh performances begin with the faint sound of the *nohkan* flute, while the audience sits with bated breath, eyes fixed on the hushed, empty stage. "There's no other place where one can enjoy such a feeling of tension," says Japanese artist Yasuko Hasumura, who has been a big fan of Noh for many years.

"I have seen groups of non-Japanese leaving a Noh



A foreign visitor tries on a Noh mask at an event organized by the Arts Council Tokyo.

performance in the middle of the performance," Hasumura recounts. "It's true that the introductory and middle parts are very slow and long. Perhaps the ponderous narrative during the temporary exit of the *shite* (main character) made them feel that the play would continue like that to the end. But what follows is different," Hasumura explains. "It's a shame that they left before the *shite* returned."

This is clearly the highlight. Wearing a sumptuous costume and an extraordinary mask, the main character nobly comes back to the stage and performs a special dance, as the *hayashi* musicians gradually pick up the tempo. The whistle of a *nohkan* flute grabs the audience's attention while the various drums, large and small, thunder out a rock music-like beat. As the tempo rises, it is as if the *shite*, the *hayashi* musicians and the *jutai* chorus group are racing each other to the climax. "And everything echoes under the extreme tension on stage," Hasumura says.

In March, Arts Council Tokyo (Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture) organized a Noh event on the open lawns of a modern museum in central Tokyo, as an opportunity for more people to experience the traditional performing art. The program included Noh performances as well as workshops where visitors could enjoy playing the instruments and trying on the costumes and masks.

Some Noh theaters today provide subtitles, audio guides and other aids designed to help audience members keep up with the action on stage. The sonorous chanting of old Japanese-language scripts is hard to understand even for native speakers, so it may be helpful to read the synopsis prior to the performances.

Noh aficionados, however, say that visitors shouldn't worry too much about the depth of their knowledge. Audiences should give in to the "force" of Noh, believe in their feelings, and wrap themselves in the calm and the tension that can only be experienced—and enjoyed—at Noh theaters.



# Going for Gold, Together

*In a historic initiative, Tokyo 2020 organizers ask the public for help in sourcing Olympic and Paralympic medals from “urban mines” of obsolete electronic devices.*



A gold medal from the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games. The design of the Tokyo 2020 medals is being awaited with great anticipation.

**O**n May 18, 2017, a large group of visitors assembled for an unusual ceremony at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government office in Shinjuku. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike stepped up to a tall yellow box with a slot in front, labeled “Medal Cooperation Box” in Japanese, and began to address the gathering. “On May 10, we reached the 30,000-unit mark,” she announced. “As of today, we have received 31,288 cellphones and other small electronic devices.” Standing beside the governor was a middle-aged man who had recently donated the cellphone of his late wife, a keen athlete. Invited to share his memories with the audience, he said, “I think my wife would be happy

knowing that her phone was being used for this purpose.” The young lady who contributed the milestone 30,000<sup>th</sup> cellphone voiced her thoughts as well. Smiling broadly, she stated, “As a Japanese citizen, I’m delighted to be able to engage in this way in the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.” It was a memorable day for the Tokyo 2020 Medal Project.

Launched on April 1 by the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee, the Tokyo 2020 Medal Project is an unprecedented venture that aims to produce every single medal for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games with metals extracted from small, obsolete electronic devices. Of course, Tokyo is not the first host city to recycle metals for medals. The silver and

bronze medals at Rio 2016 comprised 30 percent recycled materials, and Sydney 2000 famously made bronze medals from discontinued one- and two-cent coins. However, Tokyo 2020 will be the first to target 100 percent recycled content in 100 percent of its medals. In another Olympic “first,” Tokyo 2020 is calling on all of Japan’s citizens to join in this herculean effort. As a Tokyo 2020 spokesperson says, “An Olympic medal is the crowning achievement for athletes from all over the world. Now, every person in Japan can share in this achievement.”

The scope of the Tokyo 2020 Medal Project is immense. A total of approximately 5,000 gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded—requiring about eight tons of metal in the manufacturing process.

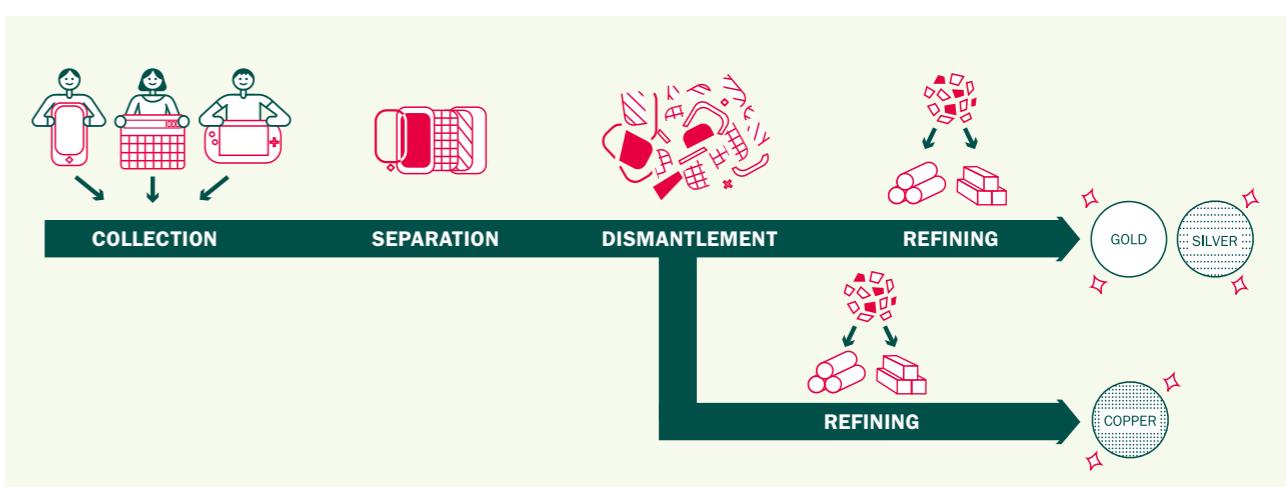
In the past, host cities have solicited donations from mining companies for their medals. However, natural mining exacts a heavy environmental toll, as many tons of rock and soil are removed to extract small amounts of metals. Instead, Tokyo 2020 will take a more contemporary direction, tapping Japan’s so-called “urban mines”—the vast reserves of scrap metal already available inside used electronic devices.

About 650,000 tons of electronic devices are discarded in Japan every year. These e-waste mountains pose enormous challenges, but they also offer a “golden” opportunity for resource-poor Japan. All electronic devices contain metals such as gold, silver, palladium and copper. Approximately 280,000 tons of metal with a total worth of 84.4 billion yen are buried in Japan’s urban mines. And since an average cellphone contains 0.03 grams of gold—a much higher ratio than in its equivalent in mined ore—metal recovery is surprisingly efficient. Just 200 cellphones will yield the minimum six grams of gold plate required for each gold medal.

Unfortunately, only about 10 percent of used electronic devices are currently being recycled in Japan. There are still countless phones, tablets, digital cameras and other appliances gathering dust in homes because people simply are not ready to dispose of them. Each idle gadget is a prospective urban mine, waiting to be “excavated.” If the Tokyo 2020 Medal Project can persuade owners to recycle these devices, it could awaken a sleeping giant, and everyone in “Team Japan” will emerge a winner in 2020—including the environment. “People are attached to their devices,” a Tokyo 2020 spokesperson says. “We need to switch their mindset from hanging on to old memories to creating new Olympic ones, not just for athletes, but for everybody.”

By August, more than 50,000 cellphones and other small electronic devices had been collected at the Tokyo Metropolitan Government office in Shinjuku. To keep the momentum going, municipalities and participating organizations have set up boxes for obsolete electronic devices at thousands of locations throughout the country, while Japan’s largest telecommunications company has installed cellphone collection boxes at each of its more than 2,400 outlets. Japan’s Olympic athletes are also doing their part, passionately promoting the project on SNS.

“Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic medals will be made out of people’s thoughts and appreciation for avoiding waste,” says gymnast Kohei Uchimura, a three-time Olympic gold medalist. “I think there is an important message in this for future generations.”



# Wrapped in Artistry

*Traditional fabric dyers collaborate with the peak event of sporting excellence to showcase their world of fine craftsmanship and a willingness to adapt.*



The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Emblem Tokyo Somekomon Wrapping cloth (left) and the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Emblem Tokyo Somekomon Wrapping cloth (right).

Tokyo has been one of Japan's three major fabric dyeing centers since the Edo Period (1603-1868). As the population swelled in Edo (present-day Tokyo), many dyers set up businesses in the Kanda and Asakusa areas, where good water was abundant, to meet the demand for kimono fabric.

As the rivers became polluted in the process of Japan's modernization, many of the dyers relocated and eventually settled in the present-day

Shinjuku area, with access to the clean waters of the Kanda River. While Shinjuku is known for skyscrapers and shopping today, the area is still home to these craftspeople, who have passed down their traditions over generations. Around 60 dyers are still operating as a local industry.

Tomita Some Kogei (Tomita Dye Craft) is a long-standing producer of traditional Tokyo Somekomon fabrics. "Our ancestors moved from Kyoto to Tokyo 150 years ago, and our family has been in the dyeing business in Shinjuku since 1914," said the fifth head of the firm, Atsushi Tomita, who has been designated as a master traditional craftsman by the national and local governments.

Tokyo Somekomon is a dyeing technique that results in finely detailed geometrical patterns that can only be seen up close. The technique largely developed during the Edo Period for samurai warriors' ceremonial *kamishimo* clothing. Various patterns, such as hailstones, sharks and bamboo baskets, were each used exclusively for a particular family. In the middle of the Edo Period, common people began to use such patterns for their daily kimono, leading to the development of more sophisticated dyeing techniques and a wider variety of free-minded, chic and smart designs.

The quaint old dyeing studio of Tomita Dye Craft has sat on the bank of the Kanda River for over a century. A young craftswoman showed visitors around the studio while explaining the Tokyo Somekomon dyeing process—from cutting the paper stencils, creating the colored starch and printing the patterns to steaming, washing and drying. The studio stores around 120,000 paper stencils, including basic patterns as well as unique tiny motifs of animals and letters, some of which date back 200 years.

It requires highly skilled craftsmanship to dye these fine patterns on the fabric. An experienced craftsman put a paper stencil on a bolt of fabric spread on a long wooden board, and applied colored starch in one swift motion with a pallet. Only the carved patterns and motifs were dyed, creating a sharp image. Then he moved the stencil to the next position on the fabric before applying the next color. The stencil must be placed accurately in order to make the patterns run properly. Every process is done by hand, as it is too delicate to make an adjustment by machine. "It takes at least ten years to become accomplished," master craftsman Tomita said.

Such craftsmanship is now being put to good use creating original Tokyo Somekomon *furoshiki* wrapping cloths officially released by the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The cloths feature the Tokyo 2020 Games Emblems. Designed by Japanese artist Asao Tokolo, the unique *Kumi-ichimatsu-mon* checkerboard patterns are

composed of 45 parts: nine square pieces and two kinds of rectangle (18 pieces for each). The same pieces can be arranged in two different formations for the Olympics and Paralympics.

The traditional techniques of Tokyo Somekomon allowed the glossy silk fabric to be dyed deep indigo blue, while preventing any bleeding in the irregular checkerboard patterns and the tiny Tokyo 2020 Games Emblems. "To produce the deep blue color, I used the best-quality Japanese silk from Tokyo's Hachioji area, traditionally known for its silk textile industry. It also took a long time of trial and error to hand mix the deep blue color," Tomita said, recounting the production process. "By combining wonderful Japanese silk fabrics with our excellent dyeing technique, I wanted to create something that demonstrates Japanese traditional craftsmanship."

Tomita Dye Craft has gone through difficult times during its long history, and was facing both a downturn in demand and a shortage of new staff willing to take on the work—challenges that many traditional craft industries face. "I even thought of closing our studio," Tomita said. "But, to my surprise, 13 years ago my son decided to take over our family business." Also, in recent years, the studio has been approached by motivated young women eager to learn dyeing techniques, gradually bringing change to the traditionally male-dominated craft industry.

Tomita is working hard to revive and promote the beautiful kimono culture of Japan, while also creating new products—such as umbrellas and cravats with Tokyo Somekomon fabric. The Tokyo 2020 officially licensed *furoshiki* wrapping cloth could be a symbol of their attempts using time-honored traditional techniques. Such an approach ensures that the centuries-old craftsmanship of the Shinjuku dyeing industry will remain an important part of Japan's cultural landscape.

The Tokyo Somekomon dyeing process requires a number of steps by highly skilled craftsmen.



# A Smooth Ride to the Future

*Some new Tokyo buses make a powerful statement that the city is serious about its commitment to being an environmentally friendly city.*

If passengers on the bus route between Tokyo Station and the Tokyo Big Sight convention center find their ride particularly quiet and far smoother than expected, they can thank a technology that may just be the future of inner-city surface transportation: hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses. Introduced on the route earlier this year, the buses are the first of an eventual fleet of 100 environmentally friendly fuel cell buses (FC buses) that Tokyo hopes to have in operation by 2020. They are part of the city's strategy to contribute to a "hydrogen society."

The buses run on hydrogen, which is stored in high-pressure tanks onboard and fed to fuel cell batteries where a chemical reaction occurs between the hydrogen and oxygen, creating electricity that powers the bus in a safe and eco-friendly fashion. Because the only by-product from this innovative process is water, the buses produce no greenhouse-effect-causing CO<sub>2</sub> or other polluting emissions. The buses are capable of traveling up to about 200 kilometers before needing to be refueled in a quick process.

The elimination of an internal combustion engine offers even more benefits for passengers. Not only are the running and operation nearly silent, but the ride is fluid and virtually jolt-free, thanks to the absence of the clunky gear changes required for combustion engines.

The buses, which currently cover the 8.5 kilometers from the station to the convention center in about

40 minutes, are an important achievement in Tokyo's ongoing transition to a "smart energy city." The public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with people contacting officials to rave about the comfortable, quiet ride and the reasonable fare, which is the same as for other city bus routes.

The buses are also designed to serve an important function in the event of natural disasters, such as earthquakes. With a capacity of 235 kilowatt hours, or enough energy to power the average home for nearly two weeks, the buses can be used as power sources at evacuation centers using special connections, ensuring electricity at times when it is needed most.

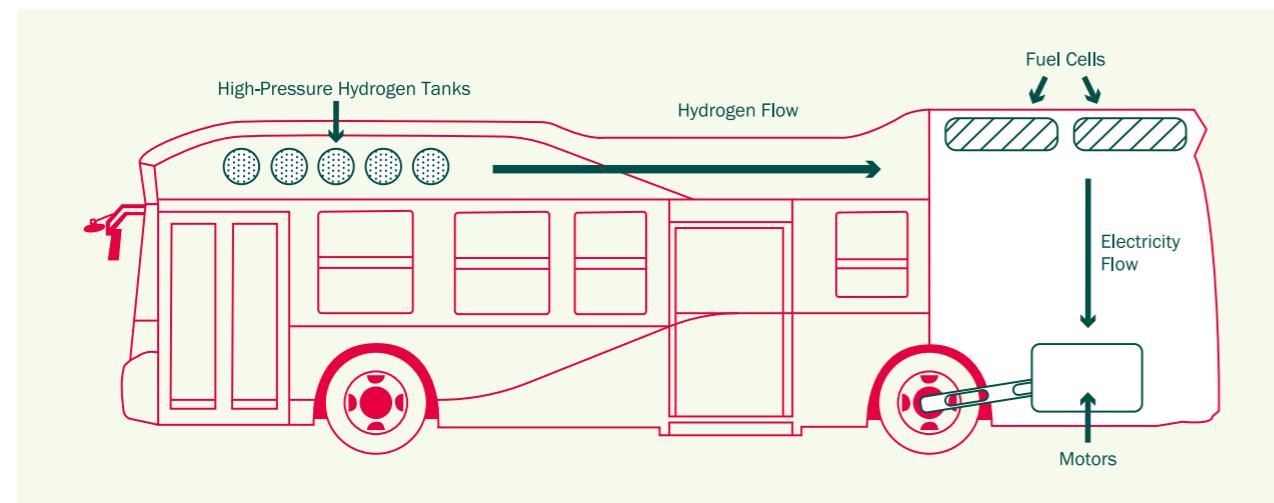
Although the production cost of these hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses is still very expensive, the cost is expected to come down as they go into mass-production.

Hydrogen offers the benefit of being able to be produced from various sources, including oil, water, by-product gases and woody biomass, which helps to ensure that the city and the country will have access to a constant and secure energy supply. As the Japanese hydrogen processing industry continues to evolve as one of the best in the world, there is great growth potential in exporting this technology, as demand for green energy is expected to grow globally.

In addition to the buses, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government plans to increase the number of hydrogen-fueling stations, which are critical to support the



One of the city's eco-friendly FC buses runs smoothly past Tokyo's Kabukiza Theatre.



spread of FCVs among the general public. Tokyo expects to have 35 stations ready in 2020, and 150 installed by 2030.

The city is also promoting the wider use of renewable energy, encouraging people and organizations to increase usage. As of 2015, renewables accounted for about 11 percent of the energy consumed in Tokyo, but the government hopes to have 15 percent of all energy used in the city come from renewable sources by 2020, and 30 percent in 2030.

Tokyo hopes to achieve these targets by taking advantage of the many corporate and residential rooftops in the city as locations for solar panels, and

having consumers buy energy from companies producing renewable energy outside the city. Such initiatives also help create momentum for green energy activities throughout Japan.

Tokyo's future will very likely be a green one. Given all the projects under way, the city is certainly on the path to creating a greener future and becoming a model of a smart energy city. For now, a few buses in central Tokyo are doing their part in drawing attention to the benefits of a world in which hydrogen FCVs eliminate noxious emissions while transporting people in quiet comfort.

# A Toast to Tradition

Tokyo's western district of Tama is home to a number of sake breweries that are keeping their rich tradition alive.



Barrels of the Tamura Shuzojo sake brewery's signature brand "Kasen."

In contrast to the capital's urban center of futuristic skyscrapers, the Tama area of western Tokyo is blessed with nature and some of the country's purest and richest underground water sources. This water, which comes from the nearby mountains and the Tama River system, has enabled traditional sake brewing in the area since the Edo Period (1603–1868).

Two of Tokyo's nine traditional breweries, Tamura Shuzojo and Ishikawa Shuzo, are located in the Tama area city of Fussa. The families of both breweries have been living there for 400 years, acting as village leaders during the Edo Period. With the demand for sake increasing as Edo culture flourished, the ruling Tokugawa shogunate encouraged local sake brewing, rather than having the market rely on sake from the Kansai region of western Japan.

In 1822, the ninth family head of the Tamura family,

Kanjiro Tamura, established the Tamura Shuzojo sake brewery and, after digging many wells on his property, finally discovered a pure water source near a huge zelkova tree. The underground water came from the neighboring Chichibu/Okutama mountain area, and was ideal for sake brewing. The brewery's major brand was named "Kasen" (good spring) after this water source, which is still being used nearly 200 years later.

The family has long taken care to preserve its good fortune. From the first days of the brewery, the Tamuras' principle has been "to brew carefully and sell carefully." To avoid overextending its capabilities and harming the quality of its sake, the brewery rarely exceeds production of 270,000 liters a year. "Maboroshi no Sake Kasen" (visionary sake Kasen) has become the brewery's signature brand for its high quality and reasonable price, and in 2017, its new *daiginjo* brand (super-premium category sake made



A young *toji*, or chief brewer, oversees the process at the Ishikawa Shuzo brewery.

from highly-polished rice) took the gold prize at the national sake competition.

Sales Director Koji Hashimoto explained the brewing process while showing visitors around the stately brewery building. Warehouses with white walls and black *kawara* tiles from the Edo Period, an octagon-shaped brick chimney from the Meiji Era (1868–1912) and a water mill that was once used for rice polishing are all designated as tangible cultural properties. And near the old well, defying time, the huge zelkova tree, said to be around 1,000 years old, still stands.

Sake is made by fermentation just like wine and beer, but it involves a more complex brewing process. Sake is not fermented by adding yeast to rice, but uses *koji* (a kind of mold), which converts the starch in the rice into sugar. The rice begins fermenting once yeast is added to this sugar. These two steps occur in parallel

in the same container, a process called multiple-parallel fermentation, which is unique to Japanese sake. The complex process requires proper timing and temperature control, which requires excellent teamwork among the brewery workers under the expert leadership of the experienced *toji*, the sake brewing master.

Ishikawa Shuzo, another traditional brewery, was established in 1863. According to an old diary entry, the 13<sup>th</sup> head of the family, Yahachiro Ishikawa, began brewing as a side to the family's main agriculture business to help the family survive the uncertainties that gripped Japan at the end of the Edo Period.

Consecutive generations of the family have taken on new challenges and adapted to change. Ishikawa Shuzo constructed its new brewery at the current location in the 1880s, and released their current main brand "Tamajiman" (Tama pride) in 1933, using an abundant pure water source from 150 meters underground. It overcame the devastation of World War II and the declining domestic sake consumption of later years. In 1888, there was a brief attempt to brew beer—an enterprise that was revived more than a century later in 1998.

Under the leadership of the current president Yahachiro Ishikawa, the 18<sup>th</sup> generation family head, the brewery opens its doors to the public, aiming to become "a theme park for sake lovers." Visitors can get a glimpse of the interior of the main sake warehouse, indulge in some tasting in the sake cellar and enjoy a meal at the restaurant on the property. "Foreign residents in the neighborhood often dine here," said Yasuo Hashimoto, chief secretary of the president.

Today, though Tokyo's breweries have no local rice suitable for sake brewing, they use high-quality rice from around Japan thanks to partnerships with sake rice-producing areas. They also have young, motivated employees, hoping to become professional sake brewers, as seen at these two Tama area breweries.

Like the enduring 1,000 years old zelkova tree and the inexhaustible pure water that has bubbled to the surface for over 200 years, the present holders of the Tama area's legacy of fine brewing intend to maintain their traditional roots while continuing to adapt in order to satisfy new generations of sake lovers.



The Tokyo government's business support was instrumental in Austrian entrepreneur Mariel Lohninger's successful startup.

# Building a Support System for New Business

*The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is pulling out all the stops in welcoming new ventures and ensuring their entry is a painless process.*

**S**tarting a business can be a daunting task anywhere, but starting a business in a foreign country can require a herculean effort. Myriad rules, regulations and bureaucratic red tape, all in a foreign language, can bog down even the most dedicated entrepreneur. Fortunately, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the Japanese government have established several entities to help ease the difficulty facing those from overseas looking to set up ventures in Tokyo.

The Tokyo One-Stop Business Establishment Center (TOSBEC) was launched in April 2015 to help people move quickly through the processes required of business startups. Conveniently located in the

Akasaka area, home to many foreign corporations, it offers one-stop support for preparing all the paperwork necessary for meeting regulations and application procedures, from completing articles of incorporation to company registration, tax, insurance and immigration matters. Everything, including the consultation and advice of the professionals on hand, is free of charge.

Successful film and TV sound service company entrepreneur Austrian Mariel Lohninger is one of many who have made use of the center's expertise. He turned to TOSBEC after struggling to find sources of useful information for his startup. "I was pretty overwhelmed at the beginning, as there are not really any

specific English guides, forums or places where people can learn about doing business in Japan," he said.

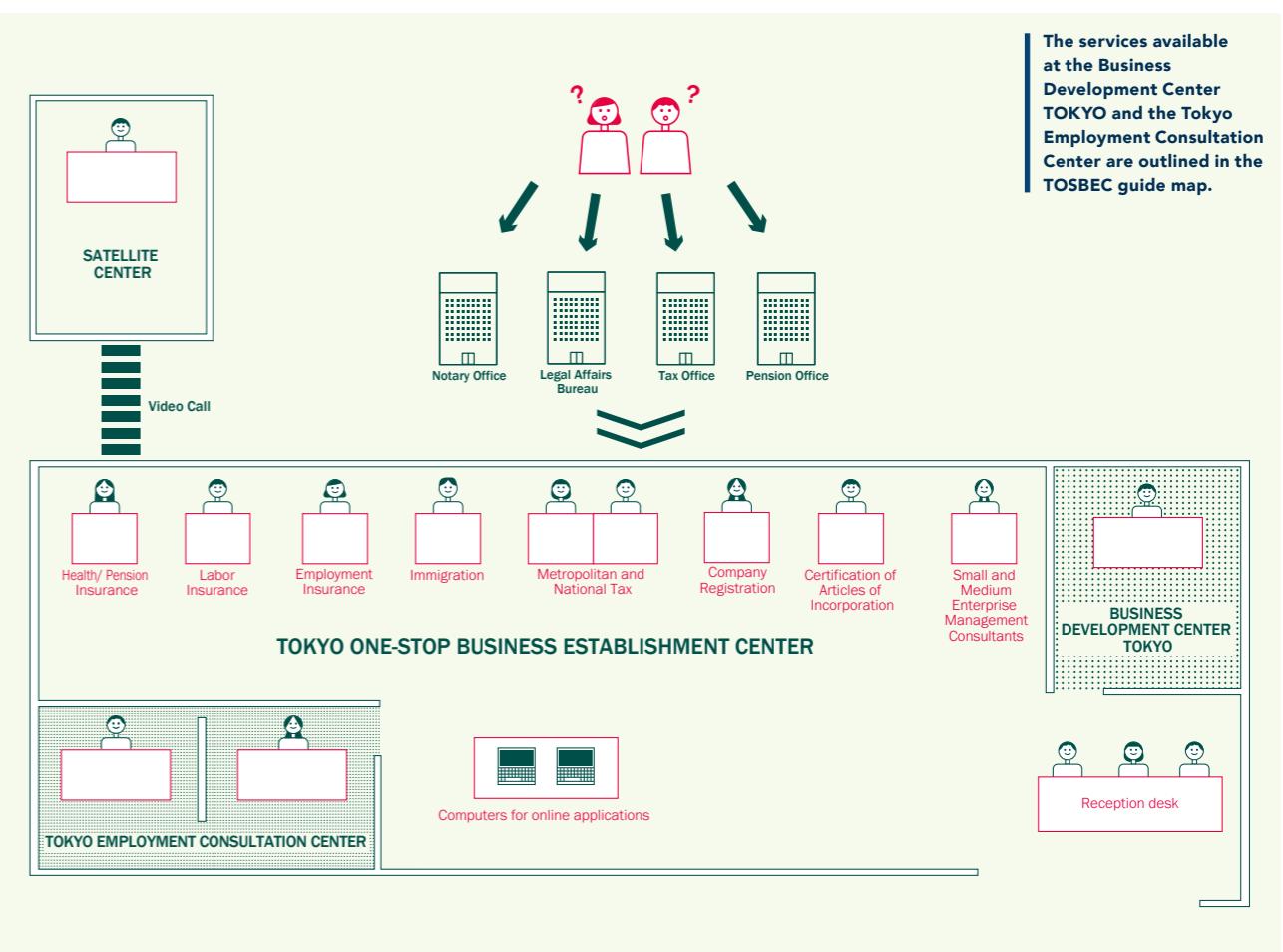
Lohninger had specific problems which he needed help with. "My visa is a business manager visa, which requires a number of supporting documents," he said. "TOSBEC not only made sure everything was in order, they supervised the paperwork and gave me clear instructions on what to do when I went to the immigration office to hand in my documents."

Next to TOSBEC is the Business Development Center TOKYO (BDCT), which offers non-Japanese more comprehensive support with startups. At BDCT, experienced business professionals provide help in formulating business plans, assisting in developing startup projects from pre-launch to post-launch and helping companies with everything they need to gain a solid foothold in the Tokyo business scene. They can help with sourcing the professionals—including lawyers, accountants, labor consultants, real estate agents and employment agencies—that new companies need for a smooth launch. They also offer personal support, such as sourcing schools or hospitals with foreign language services. Said Lohninger, who also used the BDCT services, "They even put me in touch with a helpful real estate agent who understood my specific situation and requirements."

The Tokyo government has undertaken several other initiatives that demonstrate a clear and firm commitment to bringing dynamic businesses to the city, including setting up special economic zones with the goal of attracting more than 400 new companies to the city by 2020. In order to further facilitate foreign startups, it has also established an "Access to Tokyo" program, with offices in London, Paris and San Francisco that can quickly respond to inquiries from organizations that are supporting local companies with their overseas business development. Functions include holding seminars for those interested in doing business in Tokyo, participating in local trade shows and identifying promising companies.

The Tokyo government has also launched accelerator programs which invite fintech and other IT startups to Tokyo for three months to develop their business plans and connect with Japanese financial institutions.

As the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 approach, more businesses across a wide range of sectors—such as the emerging fintech field, health care and services, and IT—are expected to look at Tokyo as a potential market. As the above initiatives show, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government continues to take steps that make it easier and smoother for companies to establish themselves in the city.



# A Celebration of Diversity

*Tokyo's international food festivals add a new dimension to the city's reputation as a center of superb cuisine.*

In its annual “quality of life” survey in 2017, UK lifestyle magazine Monocle named Tokyo as the world’s most livable city for the third consecutive year. It cited the closely-knit neighborhoods, superlative food, punctual trains, countless cultural offers, greenery and safety. They could also have mentioned the increasing number of public food festivals organized by its diverse population.

Yes, the city hosts more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other city in the world. But on weekends, thousands of visitors also find great culinary appeal at these open-air festivals of international cuisine, including the Samba Churrasco Festival in Shinjuku and the Bangladesh Boishakhi Mela (New Year) & Curry Festival in Ikebukuro.

These festivals add much to Tokyo’s cultural milieu, showcasing not only ethnic food but also traditional music and dance performances by native artists dressed in indigenous costumes. Yoyogi Park in Shibuya, a leafy expanse in the heart of Tokyo, is one of the most popular venues for these kinds of events sponsored by countries such as Thailand, India, Ireland, Laos, Spain, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

The Laos Festival, for example, is co-organized by the Embassy of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in Japan and Sakura Kokusai High School in Tokyo, whose students have been involved in a project to build elementary schools in Laos since 1996. Their mutual exchanges paved the way for the first Laos Festival in Tokyo in 2007, which has developed into an annual event. In 2015, when Laos and Japan celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations, some 200,000 people visited the two-day event.

Earlier this year, on May 27 and 28, the seventh edition of the festival took place in the park under blue skies. Sprawled across the park were rows of booths and stalls showcasing Lao specialty dishes, such as *larb* (minced meat salad) and *ping gai* (Lao yakitori), and Laotian beer, as well as colorful clothes, silk scarves, bags and other handicrafts. There were exhibitions

of NPO activities and a charity bazaar organized by the high school students. On the main stage, artists from Laos and Japan performed before an appreciative audience.

Organizers were pleased by the turnout. “This festival is one of the most important ways to promote Lao culture and traditions, which in turn deepens mutual understanding, and brings Lao and Japanese people closer,” said Viroth Sundara, Lao Ambassador to Japan.

The festival also was an opportunity for members of the small Lao community in Japan to congregate. “I come to the Laos Festival every year,” said Sunantha Phommahasay, who came to Japan in 1983 as a refugee with her husband and daughter after the Laotian Civil War. Now she has three children and three grandchildren. “I’m very happy to see friends without having to arrange it,” she said. She was clearly enjoying talking with her family members, neighbors and friends over the dishes of home country cooking.

The Lao Student Association in Japan spent two months preparing their booth and stage at meetings or via SNS. “Through this festival, we make friends with other Lao students in Japan, as well as with Japanese people,” said Soukvisan Khinsamone, a university student of economics who serves as a representative of the association.

In mid-May, the Italia Amore Mio! Italian festival was held at Roppongi Hills in central Tokyo. The event was inaugurated in 2016 to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between Italy and Japan, and attracted some 50,000 people. “I feel as though I am home in Italy,” said Simone Berardelli, who was attending the festival with a group of Italian friends. He also spoke of his feelings about his present home. “Life in Tokyo is good,” he said. “It’s a very safe city.”

The home countries of the events span the globe, from Asia to Europe to the African continent. The beginning of June saw the first Ethiopia Festival held

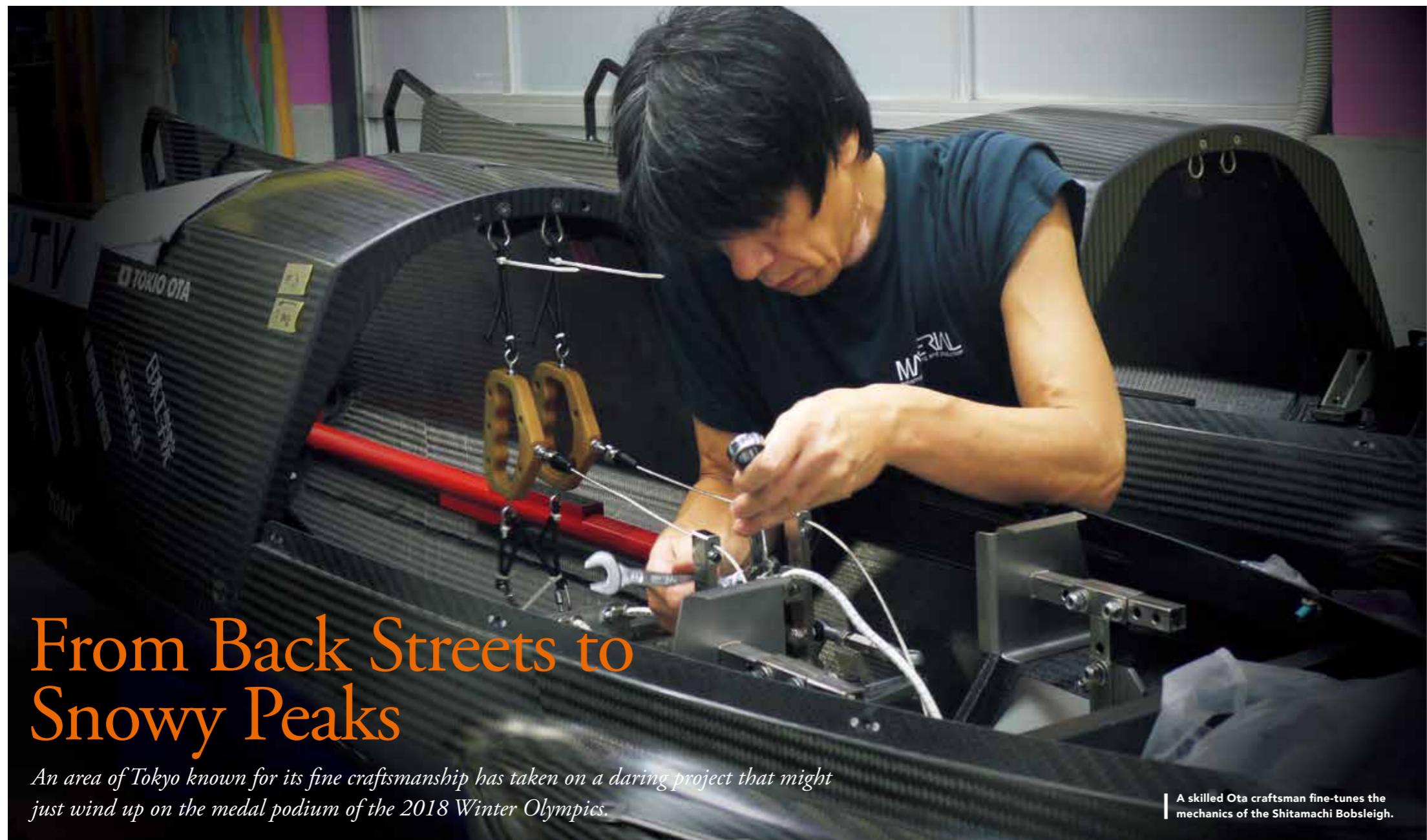


**Top to bottom:** Musicians were a hit at the Ethiopia Festival; Lao dish (left) and Ethiopian dishes (right) at their respective festivals; Yoyogi Park, host to the Lao Festival; and a visitor digs into a Laotian dish.

in the plaza in front of the Tokyo Big Sight exhibition hall in the Odaiba waterfront area. During the opening ceremony, the crowd practiced the Ethiopian national anthem several times before its official performance so that Ethiopians and non-Ethiopians alike could join in the song; and that set the friendly mood for the following events.

Supported by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and other partners, the Ethiopian Embassy was proud to make its long-dreamed-of project a reality. “I think we made a good start,” said Ethiopian Ambassador to Japan Cham Ugala Uriat. “And I expect that even larger crowds will come to experience our culture at next year’s event.”

Nearly every weekend, Tokyo international food festivals act as bridges between people, making the metropolis an even more livable place for residents—Japanese and non-Japanese alike—who appreciate tolerance and diversity.



## From Back Streets to Snowy Peaks

*An area of Tokyo known for its fine craftsmanship has taken on a daring project that might just wind up on the medal podium of the 2018 Winter Olympics.*

When the Jamaican bobsleigh team bursts from the starting line at Pyeong Chang 2018, they'll be pushing a sleigh made by a group of small factories with big dreams in Ota, Tokyo.

The largest of Tokyo's 23 wards in total land area, Ota has a population of over 700,000. It offers historic monuments, colorful markets and seaside parks, and is the site of the Tokyo International Airport at Haneda, the fifth busiest in the world.

Above all, Ota is renowned as the manufacturing "heart" of Tokyo, with a century old tradition of *monozukuri* craftsmanship. It has long been home to highly skilled artisans, working and living together in the *shitamachi* (literally, low city)—a term that has become synonymous with lively, tight-knit

communities. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, small family-run *machi koba* factories proliferated in Ota, operating out of buildings with garage-like rooms at street level and living quarters above. These workshops typically specialized in one type of product, like hand-crafted chisels or knives. But whatever they made, they made to very exacting standards, often using proprietary techniques.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Ota produced innumerable parts for cars, cameras and other exports—earning worldwide recognition for superior workmanship and fast turnaround. There are still around 3,500 small factories in the area—80 percent with fewer than nine employees. But with manufacturing know-how and skills honed over generations, and close teamwork, they continue to out-perform even highly automated

competitors, with some firms boasting the world's overwhelming share of high-precision parts for certain industries. Local residents quip, "Fold your blueprint into a paper plane and send it to Ota. You'll have a finished product the next day."

No one is more passionate about the *shitamachi* work culture than Junichi Hosogai, President of Material Inc., a mid-sized industrial manufacturer in Ota. "I started my business in a room the size of ten tatami straw mats—about 16 square meters," he says. "Things were hard, but I could always count on the community. Whatever I needed, I got from folks nearby: jobs, information, expertise and even soy sauce for my lunch," he explains. "This *nakama mawashi* (sharing business with colleagues) is the essence of the *shitamachi* spirit."

Hosogai is now spearheading the ambitious "Shitamachi Bobsleigh" project that could vault Ota into the limelight at PyeongChang 2018. The project was launched in 2011 by the Ota City Industrial Promotion Organization to publicize local manufacturing at a time when factories were reeling from overseas competition, a lack of successors and low demand following major natural catastrophes. But when the call for participation came, 30 firms signed up to build an Olympic-worthy bobsleigh—from scratch, and for free.

The choice of a bobsleigh might seem ill-advised, considering that local manufacturers had never built one before and would be competing against champions like Ferrari and BMW. But Hosogai feels the project was perfect for the group. "First, engineers are always excited when they have a problem to solve," he says. "Having zero experience actually motivated us to transcend short-term business objectives and reach for a higher goal." Second, the project was a chance to work with carbon fiber reinforced plastic (CFRP), which complements the traditional metalworking skills and opens up new opportunities in aerospace, defense and other industries. And finally, of course, bobsleigh is one of the most thrilling events of any Winter Olympics. "It's the ultimate venue for promoting Ota," Hosogai says. "The whole world will be watching."

The road has been daunting, to say the least. At the outset, the project team received design specs calling for nearly 200 parts. In true *shitamachi* fashion, each participant selected the parts it felt most qualified to handle—and together, the team completed Japan's first-ever bobsleigh prototype in just ten days. "That's Ota collaboration," Hosogai says with pride.

The synergy has paid off. In December 2012, the sleigh carried a two-woman team to victory in the All Japan Bobsleigh Championships. Then, in July 2016, the Jamaica Bobsleigh Federation selected the Shitamachi Bobsleigh to compete at PyeongChang 2018—30 years after Jamaica's legendary debut at Calgary in 1988. The sleigh will be piloted by four-time World Cup medalist Jazmine Fenlator in the women's division. Says Fenlator, "The craftsmanship from all who participated with the Shitamachi Bobsleigh project is the best in the world."

With just months to go, Hosogai reflects on the huge outpouring of support his team has received: the mom-and-pop factories that made parts without pay; the international experts who tested the prototypes; the sponsors and individuals who donated funds; and the gifted athletes of Jamaica who will, hopefully, ride the sleigh all the way to the victory podium. "Shitamachi Bobsleigh is the sum of efforts by an entire community that we call 'Ota, Inc.,'" says Hosogai. "Individually, our expertise is limited. But together, we can do anything."

# Standing by the Community

*For more than a century, local koban police boxes have kept watch over every neighborhood in Tokyo, ensuring safety and security for all.*

In 1874, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department (TMPD) was established as the first modern police organization in Japan. Although it incorporated elements of European institutions, there is some debate as to what extent Western concepts shaped the TMPD. What is certain, however, is that the department was guided from the beginning by a strong sense of community spirit. It wasted no time in dispatching officers to stand watch at busy intersections and high-profile locations, and then set up guardhouse-like shelters or “boxes” at these spots. This initiative paved the way for the system of community *koban* police boxes—one of the most distinctive features of the TMPD.

At 23 years of age, Saya Goto is already a pro in community relations. Goto is one of a small but growing number of female “community police officers” in TMPD’s 43,000-strong workforce. Her first deployment, as with all new recruits, was to a *koban*. Being fluent in English, Goto was posted in October 2016 to, of all places, the famously busy *koban* in Kabukicho—a nightlife district teeming with bars, pachinko parlors and seedy clubs, and a major tourist destination.

Brimming with enthusiasm, Goto reports for duty at 8:00 a.m. sharp, when many all-night establishments are still closing up. Standing under the *koban*’s

signature red lamp and gold star emblem of the TMPD, Goto gives a quick rundown of what her four-day shift entails. “Mostly, I give people directions, handle lost-and-found items, answer ‘110’ emergency calls and patrol the area on foot,” she says.

This might not sound like the stuff of high-suspense TV dramas—but at Kabukicho Koban, even an “average” day can turn very hectic, very quickly. “How do I get to the Godzilla statue?” “Can you read this kanji character for me?” “I missed the last train. Where can I stay?” Given Kabukicho’s maze of narrow, nameless streets and its high turnover of retail outlets, it’s hardly surprising that navigation apps often fall short. So, for many people, the friendly corner *koban* is the most reliable and accessible source of local information. Kabukicho Koban handles more than 100 queries a day in Japanese, English and Chinese. Meanwhile, translators for other languages are always on standby at TMPD’s Translation Center, just a phone call away.

For community police officers, daily patrols are paramount to keep in touch with, and keep watch over, their fast-changing communities. This is tough work in a neighborhood that never sleeps, like Kabukicho. A fight might break out. A runaway might seek shelter. An inebriated customer might need medical attention. All TMPD patrol officers are well prepared

for the unexpected. Goto herself is highly trained in the martial art of aikido for self-defense, while her colleagues are expert in judo or kendo, or both. But it’s equally important to be approachable. As there are few female officers at Kabukicho Koban, Goto is often called to help break up domestic spats, or counsel women in distress over stalking or harassment. “Women open up more readily to a female officer,” she explains.

Inevitably, the erratic demands of the shift cut into officers’ downtime. This has not dampened Goto’s passion for her profession—far from it. “Every day is a challenge,” she concedes. “But in the end, it’s worth it all just to hear someone say ‘Thank you.’”

Today, Tokyo has 826 *koban*—one for every neighborhood. Each is staffed around the clock by officers on rotating shifts, so one is bound to encounter an officer on duty within a short walk in any direction, at any time of the day or night. According to the TMPD, just *being there* is key to maintaining peace and order. “Knowing there’s always a *koban* keeping watch gives people a sense of *anzen*, *anshin* (safety and security),” explains Shinya Nakanishi of the TMPD Regional Planning Department. “This is the *koban*’s most important function.”

Recognizing the value of community-integrated policing, other countries have developed their own

police-box networks, among them, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, El Salvador and Brazil. Mobile police “pods” have also been set up at various spots in the U.K. Somehow, it seems fitting that the TMPD’s original, home-grown feature, which became a hallmark of the police system Japan “imported” 145 years ago, is now finding its way overseas to help communities everywhere feel safer and more secure—one police box at a time.



Community police officer Saya Goto at her post in front of Kabukicho Koban.



Kabukicho Koban, one of over 800 police boxes in Tokyo.



The Tokyo Metropolitan Hiroo Hospital features a multilingual communication system.

# Patient-Centered Care for All

*Tokyo takes on the challenge of creating a language-friendly environment for non-Japanese speakers in need of medical assistance.*

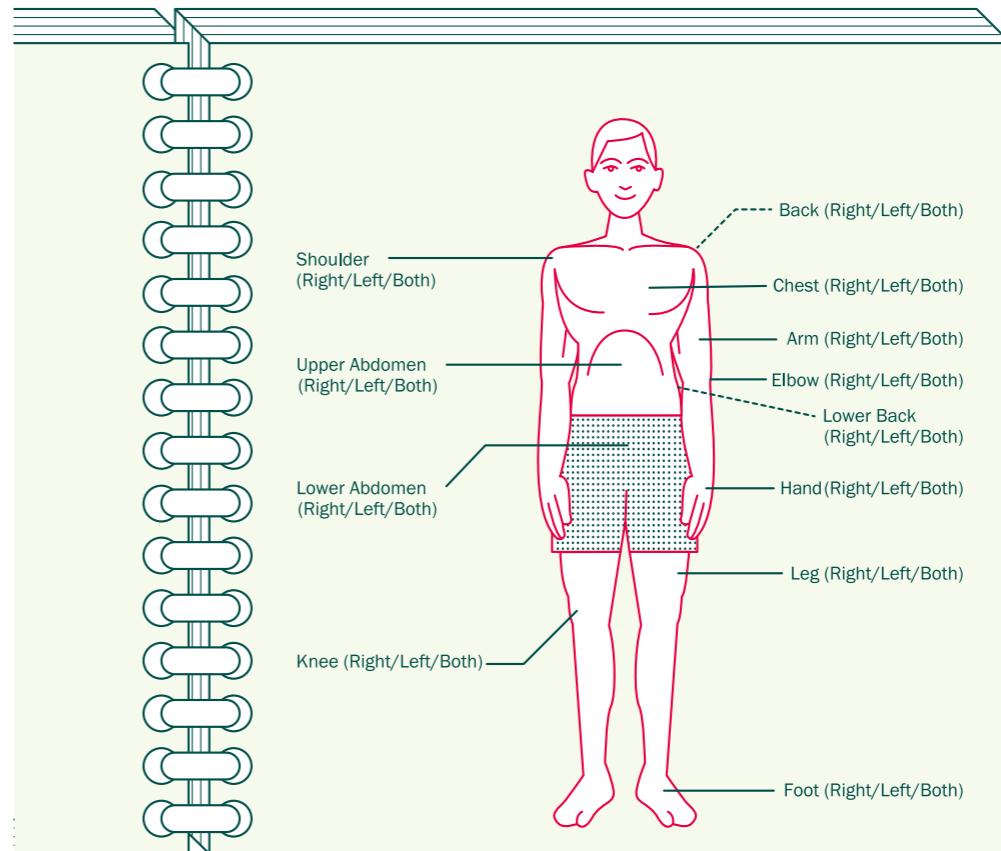
In line with its image as a city that has been named the most livable in the world, Tokyo is at pains to ensure that non-Japanese speakers do not experience communication barriers when accessing medical care. The numbers of foreign visitors and residents are certainly growing. Long before the Japanese government in 2016 finally achieved its long-held goal of attracting 20 million overseas visitors in a single year, foreigners had ceased to be anything of a rarity on the city streets. At times, of course, some of those non-Japanese find themselves suffering from injury or illness. And having to cope with the medical needs of the burgeoning numbers of patients who do not speak Japanese has led to the services provided by Mayumi Okauchi.

A registered nurse, Okauchi works as International Patient Coordinator in the Patient Support Center at Tokyo Metropolitan Hiroo Hospital, an expansive medical institution located near the center of the capital. One of the functions of the support center is

coordinating efforts when dealing with non-Japanese patients, and Okauchi is responsible for assigning interpreting work to the hospital's linguistic specialists in addition to coordinating documentation and support services.

Most members of the team have extensive medical knowledge. Okauchi and two colleagues tackle Japanese-English interpreting, while two other interpreters handle Japanese-Chinese translation. They are most frequently called upon to assist non-Japanese speakers appearing at the reception desk, managing a language barrier at a difficult time. The second-most frequent call on interpreter services is to provide interpreting assistance during medical examinations.

In addition to those dedicated linguistic specialists, the hospital is able to draw upon other considerable human resources so that non-Japanese patients and their families can visit the hospital with complete peace of mind. The hospital has many staff it can call on as needs arise for English, Spanish, Chinese



Non-Japanese speakers can point out the location of their symptoms using English-language illustrations (similar to this one) in multilingual guidebooks.

or other languages. In a survey the hospital conducted last year, it found that around 170 of its 700 staff members were able to speak a language other than Japanese.

Hiroo Hospital has long been at the forefront of efforts to reach out to international patients in Tokyo. As a reflection of those efforts, the hospital in March 2017 received the Japan Medical Service Accreditation for International Patients (JMIP). Since 2011, this certification has been managed by the Japan Medical Education Foundation, with the backing of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, to encourage medical institutions to create systems to support foreign patients. To qualify for JMIP recognition, an institution has to demonstrate that it has appropriate systems in place for supporting non-Japanese residents and overseas visitors.

At Hiroo and other medical facilities around Japan, there is another tool for facilitating medical communication between patients and health professionals when interpreters are unavailable. It is a medical guidebook produced in 12 different languages, including English, Chinese and Korean, that follows a standard format for each language, making use of illustrations to allow symptoms and complaints to be clearly identified next to appropriate terms in the target language.

A decidedly more sophisticated option comes in the shape of video remote interpreting (VRI). This involves an interpreter—sitting at some remote

location—offering real-time translation on-screen between the patient and health professional. Okauchi and her team are able to utilize a VRI system covering eight languages, including Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Portuguese.

There are considerable merits to VRI since it offers real person-to-person communication. "In Japan, we're not yet as advanced in this area as Australia," comments Okauchi. "That country has an excellent system for remote medical interpreting in over 100 languages. That's the kind of direction where I'd like us to be heading."

Okauchi is able to empathize with foreign patients as she helps to develop the system for communication with non-Japanese speakers at Hiroo Hospital. She studied English in the U.S. and honed her skills working in a medical coordinating position at a clinic there. Having experienced many of the same difficulties herself, Okauchi says that she knows what it is like to be a foreigner.

With the number of foreign patients at Hiroo Hospital expected to grow, it is necessary for the staff to become better adept at accommodating them. The hospital is working to ensure that both patients and staff have positive experiences during their interactions there. At Hiroo Hospital, Okauchi makes it very clear that the focus is on patient-centered care, and that is evident in her positive approach in dealing with all patients and staff: "I enjoy communicating with people," she says.

# City of Fleet Feet

*With its clean air, safe roads, extensive greenery and numerous routes, it is no wonder Tokyoites are taking to the streets.*

The sounds of running feet can be heard on city streets and country roads all over Japan today. The battle between the Kanto area university teams in the Hakone Ekiden relay marathon race has become a seasonal tradition of the New Year's holidays. The Tokyo Marathon takes place every February, one of many marathons that are run at various locations throughout the year. These are just a few examples that testify to the special position the sport of running holds in Japan.

The seeds of the present-day running boom in Japan were first observed in the 1970s after the national government worked out policies to promote health and fitness. And the number of runners sharply increased after the first Tokyo Marathon was held in 2007.

That year, the Tokyo Marathon started with 30,870 participants, mostly citizen runners, chosen from some 95,000 applicants. The number of applicants jumped to 156,000 in 2008. The most recent event in 2017 saw 35,824 runners chosen from over 320,000 applicants.

The Tokyo Marathon was planned as a large-scale running event in the city center—open to amateurs and professional runners—similar to the Boston or New York City marathons. Since 2013, it has become one of the six World Marathon Majors. Starting from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government buildings in Shinjuku, runners are able to enjoy running through the capital's most interesting locations, such as the Asakusa and Ginza districts, before finishing at Tokyo Station. The marathon attracts two million spectators along the course, making it one of Japan's most popular sporting events.

While there are many running routes around the metropolis, the circuit around the Imperial Palace in central Tokyo has become a mecca for the fleet of



Runners take a lap on the popular course known as the "Imperial Palace Run."

foot. Popularly known as the "Kokyo (Imperial Palace) Run," lapping the palace has been a part of physical training for students for many years. Recently, it is attracting more office workers from the nearby business districts.

The course is beautiful, featuring greenery that changes with the seasons. Runners can enjoy the contrasting landscapes of the moats and stone walls of former Edo Castle and the skyscrapers of the Japanese business center. There are no traffic lights to interrupt the whole loop, which at around five kilometers is a reasonable distance for a good workout. And last but not least, it's safe, as the palace is guarded 24/7 and the route is well lit after dark.

With the increasing number of runners in the area, changing and shower facilities have been mushrooming. A number of "running stations" have opened around the palace in the last decade. "The idea was to make running a more fashionable activity for working women," said Hiroshi Kotani, who works for one of the pioneering facilities. The running station opened in 2007, offering clean locker rooms and showers

at its location inside a stylish sporting goods store in the Ginza district, a popular upscale shopping area of Tokyo.

The regular fee to use such facilities ranges from 300 yen to 700 yen (about \$3-\$6). And in an increasingly competitive market, stations are offering extra services to attract customers. Some provide rental gear (shoes, shorts, shirts, towels, etc.) for 550 yen (about \$5) for those who don't want to lug running gear to work; one offers a foot measuring and shoe consultation service to help customers choose the best running shoe.

One of the benefits of these stations for runners is the experienced advisors on hand, ready to assist all levels of athletes. For veterans who are preparing for their next marathon, there's a station that offers a "running lab" to analyze the runner's physical condition and form; and for beginners preparing to take their first step, there's motivational and training guidance.

These facilities also organize events and communities for their city runner customers. "Rather than running alone as an ascetic practice, we want people

to enjoy running as part of their everyday lives," said Yukie Nagata, an advisor at one of the largest running stations near the palace route. "We get groups of colleagues or friends who come together after work. It's fun for people to run together and perhaps have a few beers afterward."

While news coverage may focus on overworked employees in Japan, both public and private sectors are promoting various measures for people to achieve harmony between private life and work. For many of those who want to get off the work-only treadmill, running may be a good option.

The Imperial Palace loop does have its attractions, but there are many other running spots around the metropolis with appeal, including the green expanses of Yoyogi Park and Meiji Jingu Gaien, as well as the futuristic environs of the Odaiba waterfront. Those interested in making strides on the city's roads should expect no letup in the development of new facilities and services, as people look ahead to next year's Tokyo Marathon, and the 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games.



## A Night in Old Edo

*For those willing to try something different, staying at a ryokan inn offers a chance to experience a new dimension in Japanese omotenashi hospitality.*

The entranceway of the Sadachiyo inn features traditional lanterns and a jinrikisha carriage.

Traditional Japanese inns, or *ryokan*, trace their roots to the rest houses of the Edo Period (1603–1868). During this time, the number of travelers surged throughout Japan, thanks in part to the ruling Tokugawa shogunate, which demanded provincial daimyo (feudal lords) to show allegiance by periodically relocating from their local domains to the Edo capital (modern-day Tokyo). Their comings and goings sent business soaring for rest houses along the major thoroughfares, as famously depicted in Hiroshige's series of woodblock prints, "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido Road."

Today, travelers have access to a staggering range of accommodations all over Japan, from luxury and business hotels to capsule hotels and backpacker hostels. And yet, out of so many tantalizing choices, thousands of visitors every year continue to prefer *ryokan*, with their time-honored traditions, even

in the heart of 21<sup>st</sup> century Tokyo. To learn more about their appeal, I booked a room at Sadachiyo in Asakusa, one of the city's most historic sites and a top-ranked tourist destination.

**4:32 p.m. Check-in:** Established 70 years ago, Sadachiyo has been run by the same family for three generations. At first glance, it could easily pass as an Edo Period inn, with its picture-perfect roof tiles, hanging lanterns and willow trees. As I approach, I can imagine the huge relief that travelers of the past must have felt when they finally reached such an inn after a long journey.

"Irasshaimase!" A lady welcomes me at the door in an elegant kimono. Stepping inside, I am instantly transported back in time. The entire interior is a showcase of Edo Period culture: ukiyo-e woodblock prints, Imari porcelains and wooden shingles, among other artifacts. Throughout, there are prominent displays of original firefighting paraphernalia, including



The cypress bath: study the instructions before taking the plunge.



Tasty dishes: a serving of plump, juicy clams in a leek-infused broth.

uniforms and *matoi* staffs that identified firemen's units—prized relics from a time when large fires were commonplace due to the city's dense population and tightly clustered dwellings.

Reaching my room, I remove my shoes at the entrance and slide the door open. The interior is a seamless blend of old and new, tastefully appointed with a low table, an antique chest and, in the *tokonoma* alcove, a large print of a Kabuki character. It also has all the standard modern amenities: TV, mini-fridge, safe, en-suite bathroom and high-tech Western-style toilet. After the hustle and bustle of Asakusa, I am more than ready to change into my *yukata* cotton robe and stretch out on the tatami straw-mat floor for some serious downtime.

**6:10 p.m. Bath:** The inn has two communal baths, one of cypress and the other of stone. As bathing is central to the *ryokan* experience, I decide to take the plunge. Thankfully, the changing room to the cypress bath provides detailed English instructions. 1) Remove clothing. 2) Thoroughly scrub and rinse in the washing area. 3) Finally, sink into the deep, hot communal tub—which, as it turns out, I have all to myself. For a truly authentic Edo Period experience, perhaps there should be a few other ladies in the tub to chat with. But for now, I'm content to just soak and relax in luxurious privacy.

**7:00 p.m. Dinner:** *Ryokan* typically charge per person per room, including dinner and breakfast. The attendant explains that different social classes ate different foods in the Edo Period. Samurai had austere, disciplined diets; ordinary folk, on the other hand, were free to eat and drink as they pleased. Luckily for me, Sadachiyo specializes in the latter cuisine, which is refined and plentiful. Tonight's menu consists of ten dishes, including succulent sashimi, crisp tempura and a *nabe* pot of plump, juicy clams in a leek-infused broth. Everything has been painstakingly prepared with a focus on variety, seasonal specialties and artful presentation.



Authentic *ryokan* are increasingly rare in Tokyo. Homeikan is one of the city's most historic *ryokan*, dating from the Meiji Era (1868–1912). Its main building is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.

# Discover Japan (Without Leaving Tokyo)

*A tour of the “antenna shops” that promote local specialties from all over the country is the next best thing to travel itself.*

Let’s “pack our bags,” so to speak, and travel around Japan. We’ll start with a jaunt way down south for some healthy Okinawan Agu pork. Then we’ll zip back up to Hiroshima to pick up a box of lemon cake blessed with Setouchi sunshine before heading up north to Hokkaido for some fresh seafood or a new type of smoked salmon.

It may sound like a long journey, but it is possible to do in one day. Thanks to the many “antenna shops” in central Tokyo, “travelers” are able to savor some of the best specialties that local communities have to offer, without leaving the capital.

Antenna shops were first established in Tokyo in the early 1990s and their number has continued to grow, reaching a total of 54 in 2016. Often co-organized by local governments, these shops are meant to promote their products to the capital’s big consumer market. Despite the high costs of running a retail store in central Tokyo, local governments regard these shops as important public relations centers to provide the population with general information on the prefecture and its attractions as a tourist destination.

At times, quite unexpectedly, the shops have also become a focus for Tokyo residents to show their support for those affected in a distant prefecture in unfortunate times of natural disasters.

After a magnitude-7.3 earthquake struck Kumamoto Prefecture on April 14, 2016, more than 9,000 people flocked to the prefecture’s antenna shop Ginza Kumamoto-kan in the three days after the disaster. “There was a long line of shoppers in front of the store and the shelves were quickly emptied as everything we had sold out,” said Motohiro Kimura, a spokesperson for the shop. “For most people in Tokyo, Kumamoto was too far away to visit. So they came to us instead, hoping to support the disaster-hit area by purchasing our products.”

With Kumamon, the prefecture’s famous bear mascot, as the main attraction, the shop sells some 1,000 local products, including fruit, vegetables and traditional rice-based Kuma *shochu* distilled spirits. According to Kimura, sales for fiscal 2016 reached around 600 million yen (around \$5.3 million), nearly



Top: Kumamoto Prefecture’s famous mascot, Kumamon, welcomes visitors to the Ginza Kumamoto-kan. Above: Iwate Prefecture’s traditional Nambu ironware is a popular item at the Iwate Ginga Plaza.

double the previous year. Around 1,200 shoppers visit the store each day, still up 20 to 30 percent over the years prior to the disaster.

The antenna shops of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures from the Tohoku region of northern Japan received similar support following the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011.

dairy products from the renowned Koiwai Farm have always been favorites, traditional Nambu ironware is gaining popularity, especially among visitors from overseas.

Miyagi Furusato Plaza (CoCo Miyagi) sits on a busy street near Ikebukuro Station, one of the world’s busiest stations. “Commuters can drop by and pick up Miyagi products for everyday use,” said Kunitaka Okura, the shop’s deputy manager. Repeat customers are attracted by the wide range of *sasa kamaboko* (Miyagi’s popular steamed fish paste) and weekly special sales events held near the entrance. And the specialty *gyutan* (beef tongue) restaurant on the second floor is so popular that its signature *gyutan* lunch set is quickly sold out every day.

In 2014, Fukushima Prefecture opened a new antenna shop, Nihombashi Fukushima-kan (Midette), in the Nihombashi district to focus more on product sales. Unfortunately, even six years after the disasters, rumors about the impacts of the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident triggered by the tsunami continue to affect sales of products from the prefecture. “Of course, all of our agricultural products are strictly checked,” Midette Manager Takuya Nemoto said. “But there are still misunderstandings.” He believes the Fukushima antenna shop has a job to do in putting the record straight.

The shop acts as an important facility for public relations in Tokyo, providing accurate information on the prefectural efforts to secure food safety, especially for its high-quality rice and seasonal fruits. The shop also organizes events in collaboration with the prefecture’s municipalities and other organizations to promote the various communities. The shop’s nickname “Midette” comes from a word in the Fukushima dialect meaning “Come and see!”

Fukushima is also proud that its sake has won more national gold prizes than any other prefecture over the past five years, with 22 “gold” brands in 2016. The new shop is equipped with an impressive sake corner and tables where visitors can enjoy tasting a variety of local brands.

As host to all these antenna shops, Tokyo provides its enormous population with a glimpse into other locales. Enjoyable virtual trips featuring interaction with real products help connect shoppers with local producers and deepen understanding, helping to revitalize communities around Japan.

# A Career in the Ethical Jewelry Business

*A young woman with an eye for beauty and a head for business finds success in bringing new ideas to an established industry.*



Ethical jeweler Natsuko Shiraki talks about studying abroad, returning to Japan and starting her own business.

Often used as symbolic adornment on auspicious occasions, precious items of jewelry have added color to people's lifestyles since ancient times. However, most people are not aware of how its materials are obtained, something jewelry designer Natsuko Shiraki, who founded Hasuna Co., Ltd. in Tokyo in 2009, wants to address. "I have pursued a kind of jewelry where beauty can be found in every step of the process," she says.

In 2003, while a student of international development at King's College London, Shiraki visited

a village in southern India, where she was shocked at the terrible conditions the local mine workers had to endure. That experience opened her eyes to exploitation and inequality, and led her to intern at the United Nations Population Fund in Vietnam after graduating from college.

While she was impressed by the UN's capable and motivated staff members, she became aware of the limits of international support projects. "The existing framework tends to end up with organizations just giving money to people who are facing challenges," Shiraki points out. "Instead, I thought it would be



"*eclat*": jewelry designed by Natsuko Shiraki, featuring Canadian melee diamonds and certified fairmined 18K gold.

better to create a new business structure that encouraged self-reliance and growth, and that involved them as long-standing partners."

Her experience stirred a desire to learn about business, and she returned to Japan in 2006. She joined a real estate investment fund in Tokyo, the city she thought would be the most suitable place to gain business know-how. Raised in Aichi Prefecture, it was her first time living in the capital. "Tokyo was an extremely high concentration of people, money, information, culture—everything," she recounts.

While concentrating on her work, the experience in India kept crossing her mind. "Since childhood, I have always had the desire to create beautiful things," Shiraki says. "Perhaps I was inspired by my mother, a designer for a clothing company." Two years later, she left the fund to focus on her vision of establishing an ethical jewelry brand that would be friendly to society and the environment.

When she set up Hasuna, however, the term "ethical" was not yet recognized in Japan. People in the jewelry industry told her that it would be impossible to utilize fairtrade or fairmined gems and minerals because of the difficulties in tracing distribution channels via the many brokers and dealers beyond borders. "But I knew that ethical jewelry already existed in Europe and the U.S." Shiraki says. She continued gathering information about mine owners and jewelry artisans around the world through her networks of London college friends and former colleagues at the UN, as well as through SNS.

Her first product was a ring made with diamonds from Canada, where all such gems are certified by the government. That same year, she visited Belize to purchase specialty Wilkes seashells for use in her jewelry, increasing the income of local craftsmen who had previously been poorly paid. In 2011, she traveled all the way to a mine in Hunza Valley in the extreme northern part of Pakistan to look for colored gemstones.

Today, Hasuna jewelry uses materials imported from ten countries, including Belize, Botswana, Canada, Colombia, Micronesia, Pakistan, Peru and Rwanda. Meanwhile, the concept of ethical products has gradually become known to more Japanese people, especially in the fashion industry. Japan's first ethical jeweler, Hasuna's annual sales increased from 13.6 million yen in 2008 to 170 million yen in 2016.

Based in Tokyo's fashionable Omotesando district, Hasuna plans to expand sales outlets overseas to further promote its ethical jewelry business framework. Shiraki often travels to the U.K., the U.S., Germany and France for marketing research and new ideas for ethical products. "I go to the most popular shops there," she says. "On returning home, however, I realize that there is no other city like Tokyo, where you can find the most sophisticated and interestingly designed products."

In this sense, the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art is her favorite place in Tokyo. "Every time I visit, I feel like I am getting a glimpse of the near future," Shiraki says. "Much of the cutting-edge cultural aspects and contemporary Japanese design seems to find expression there in a condensed form." One of her future projects is to open a gallery to present works by budding jewelers and artists.

Shiraki believes that Tokyo is home to excellent craftspeople. "They assemble and finish our products with a great attention to detail, which results in fine, soulful jewelry," she says. "For example, their way of making our solitaire diamond ring is superb." While bringing together ethical materials from partners around the world, Hasuna's jewelry is also furthering Japanese craftsmanship.

Selected as a Global Shaper by the World Economic Forum in 2012, Shiraki means to continue pursuing her vision of a better world, believing in the power of jewelry to bring a smile to those who wear it, as well as those who contribute to its creation.

# City of Contrasts Has Something for Everyone

*Lawyer and American Chamber of Commerce in Japan Chairman Jay Ponazecki reflects on her life in the city and highlights the appeal of the bustling metropolis.*

Jay Ponazecki's first experience in Japan came as an exchange student from the New York area attending the Kitakamakura Girls' High School in Kanagawa prefecture. One of her first duties was to give a speech before about 500 fellow students and teachers, and she could be forgiven for feeling a bit apprehensive. "But when I walked onto the stage, I saw the sea of smiling faces and felt all the warm energy," she says, "I knew from that moment that the experience would be okay, and my nervousness was gone."

After studying law at the New York University School of Law, Ponazecki spent ten years as a business lawyer in New York, two of them seconded to a Japanese law firm. In 1997 she joined the Tokyo office of Morrison & Foerster LLP, where she spent nearly 20 years specializing in international business transactions. She was head of the firm's Life Sciences and Privacy Practice Groups in Asia.

She has served in a number of leadership roles with the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ), including as President, and was appointed to serve as Chairman in 2016 and 2017. "Many of our members have lived and worked in Japan for decades and are experts in their respective fields," she says. "We hold over 500 events each year, encouraging networking and information sharing as well as offering a robust advocacy program focusing on specific issues."

Ponazecki's appreciation of what Tokyo has to offer makes her an ideal advisor for others wanting to assimilate into the city's cultural, business and lifestyle environments. "Tokyo is very much a global city, so moving here was almost a seamless transition," she says. "And there are so many excellent opportunities here to grow professionally and personally."

For the business person, she elaborates on the wide array of attractive features that make Tokyo a good fit, with the people at the top. "Japan is a country of extremely hospitable, culturally sophisticated, highly educated, hard-working and industrious people with whom it is really our privilege to be able to work

day-in and day-out," she says. "It is also the third-largest economy in the world, with many opportunities in consumer and business-to-business markets. Then there is Tokyo's mature financial and investment market that, along with many well-established legal and regulatory frameworks, provides predictability and outlets to resolve most issues that arise."

She recommends an adventurous attitude for those living here. "Time goes by very fast, so learn as much as you can about what's available," Ponazecki says. "Then make time to do things, or you'll just end up living the same way you lived at home." Social media, while making communications with friends and family back home easier, can—she believes—offer a different kind of challenge. "Don't let these connections with your previous life hold you too tightly, and prevent you from enjoying all that is around you," she says.

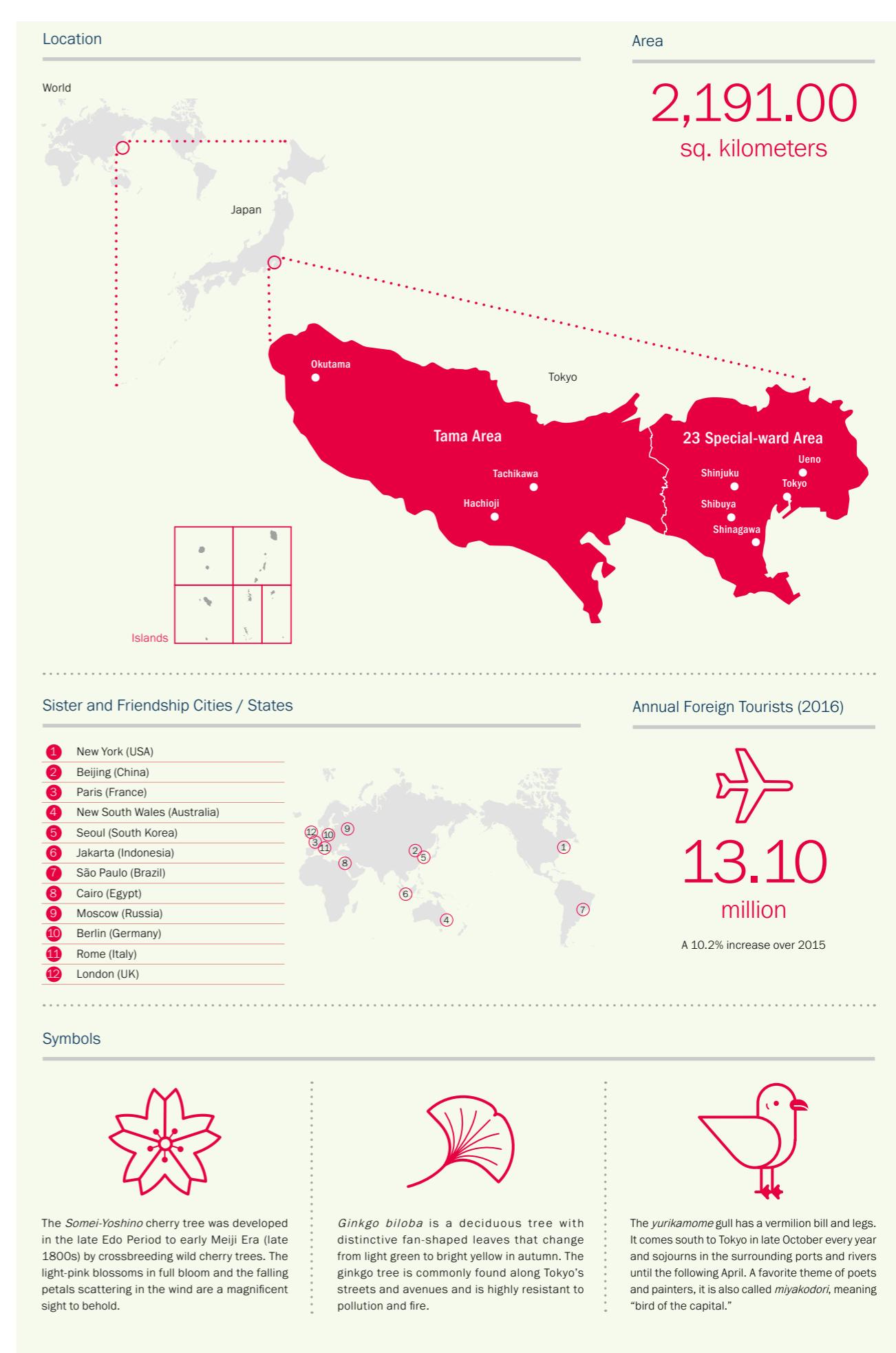
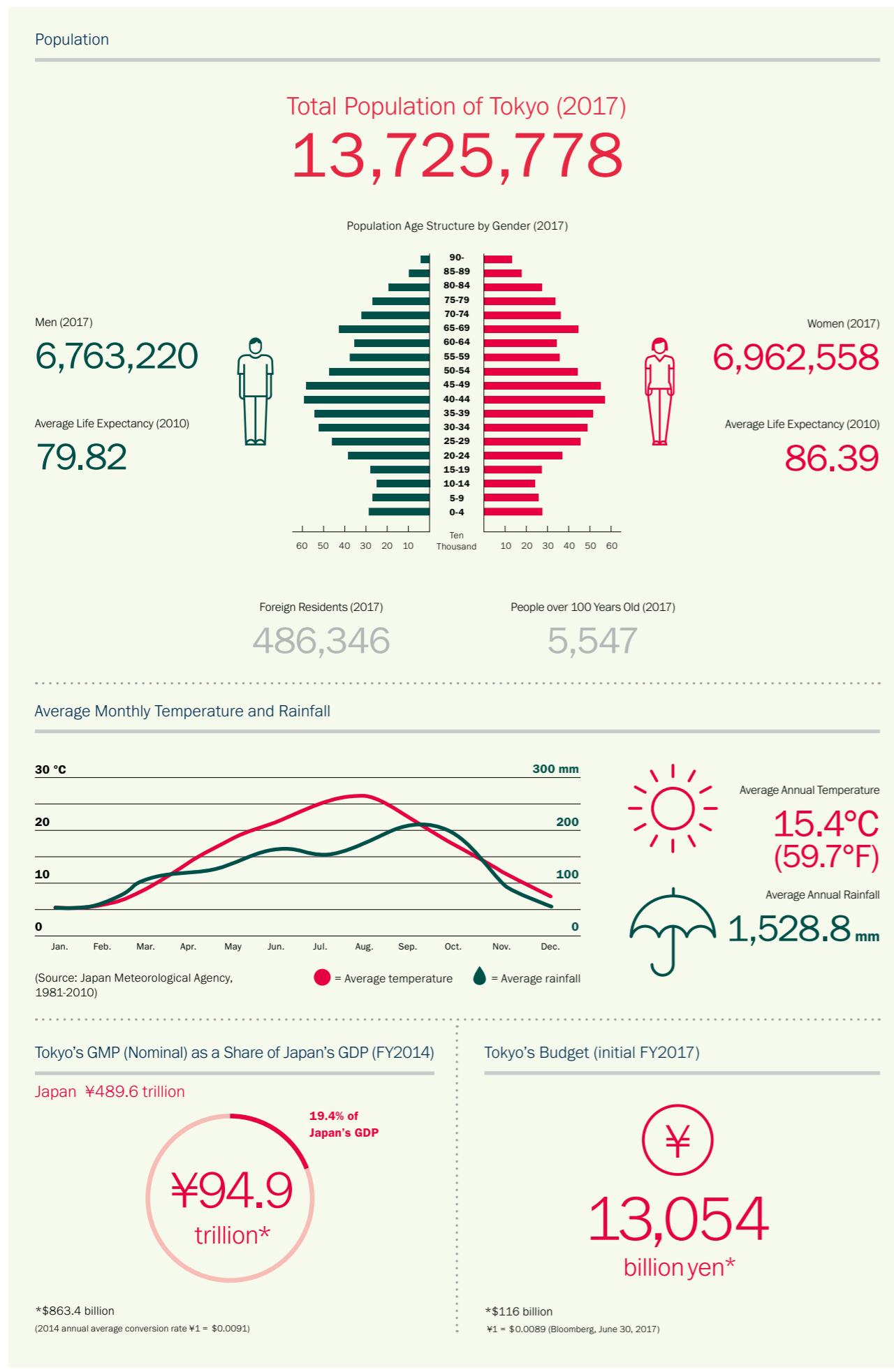
She counts Tokyo's contrasts as a big part of its charm. "I really like how there are very modern areas with a global vibe such as Omotesando, while other areas like Asakusa and Nezu have retained the feel of old Tokyo," Ponazecki says. "You can find everything from all over the world," she continues. "There are musicians, businesses, culinary, art and architectural styles from all over the world. There is an exciting and creative energy in the city."

Ponazecki has a great fondness for the outdoors, and has a number of favorite spots: "A lawyer is, in some way, an artist with words," she says. "So I try when I'm not working to enjoy things without words. One thing I'd recommend is to walk across the Rainbow Bridge in the summertime at dusk, when you can really appreciate the scale, beauty and diversity of Tokyo."

She has a story to tell about Tokyo that illustrates just how special the city is. She was riding in a taxi during a heavy rainstorm, and when the taxi arrived at her destination, the driver asked her if she had an umbrella. "When I said no," she says, "he gave me an umbrella and asked me to give an umbrella to the driver the next time I rode in a taxi from the same fleet. Things like this happen all the time in Tokyo."



A Tokyoite from New York:  
ACCJ Chairman Jay Ponazecki





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