

HIGHLIGHTING
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ICONS OF TOKYO

CONTENTS

Features

6

Diversity: The Source of Tokyo's Vitality

An interview with editor and critic Yamada Goro



12

Vinyl Forever: Record Shopping in Tokyo

Tokyo is home to a large number of record stores catering to a growing number of vinyl enthusiasts.



8

Tokyo Tower: Beloved Symbol of the Capital

Tokyo Tower is, for many people, the defining image of Tokyo, even after more than sixty years.



14

Kimono Without Borders

A talented young designer is challenging the conventional wisdom about how or where kimono should be worn.



10

Entertainment City Shibuya

The Shibuya district of Tokyo, long a hub for youthful fashion, art and culture, is undergoing a transformation.

4

PRIME MINISTER'S DIARY

22

POLICY-RELATED NEWS

Preventing Heat Illness

24

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Electronic Pipette Aiding Accurate and High-Precision Tests

Also

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16

Sharing a Love of Tokyo's Food

American David Conklin is passing on his deep knowledge of Tokyo's food culture as a writer and local tour guide.



20

An Apartment Complex Reborn

At Tamadaira-no-Mori in Hino City, Tokyo, reconstruction of a popular apartment complex has provided an opportunity for new community development.



18

The Enduring Charm of Goldfish Hill

A slope in the Hongo area of Tokyo is named for the long-established and still thriving local goldfish trade.



THEME FOR **JULY:**
ICONS OF TOKYO

What makes Tokyo what it is? Architecture, entertainment, fashion, food... In this month's issue, we take a look at some of the diverse and yet long-standing features that contribute to the atmosphere and unique charm of Japan's capital city.

26

MY WAY

Shikiri: Dividing Space with Colors

28

ENJOY DRINKING

Sake Created from the Abundant Nature of Ome in Tokyo

30

ARCHITECTURAL TREASURES

Jizodo at Shofuku-ji Temple

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Icons of Tokyo
Photo: Aizawa Tadashi

EDITORS' NOTE
Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

JAPAN-AUSTRALIA LEADERS VIDEO TELECONFERENCE MEETING

ON July 9, 2020, Prime Minister of Japan ABE Shinzo held a Japan-Australia leaders video teleconference meeting with the Hon. Scott Morrison, MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia. At the beginning, PM Morrison expressed his deepest sympathies towards the victims and those affected by the recent torrential rain disaster.

The leaders exchanged opinions on cooperation in response to COVID-19 including measures for economic recovery and other related issues such as economic security, which has become ever more important since the outbreak of COVID-19, and confirmed the strong partnership between Japan and Australia.

PM Abe indicated that the promotion of trade and investment is all the more essential when an early economic recovery is required, and that he looked forward to progress of concrete economic cooperation between Japan and Australia. PM Abe said he would like to continue cooperating in getting the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) signed by the end of the year and realizing India return to the Partnership, in order to expand regional trade and investment which contributes to economic



Japan-Australia Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting

revitalization. Furthermore, the leaders concurred to continue to coordinate in order to start a trial cross-border travel arrangement for a small number of mainly business people as exceptional case between the two countries.

Towards realizing a free and open Indo-Pacific, the leaders reaffirmed their close coordination in various fields and their commitment in particular for supporting their Pacific and South-east Asian neighbours.

Regarding regional affairs, PM Abe expressed his grave concern about the enactment of a national security law in Hong Kong, as it erodes Hong Kong's autonomy under the "One Country Two Systems" framework. PM Abe also expressed his serious concern about the situation in the East and South China Seas. The leaders confirmed to closely coordinate in these issues. Furthermore, they exchanged opinions on the situation in North Korea and confirmed

to work together to fully implement the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. PM Abe requested Australia's continued understanding and cooperation in early resolution of the Japanese abductions issue, and PM Morrison expressed his support.

The leaders concurred on the importance of economic security including cyber security and confirmed to continue strengthening bilateral coordination. Also, the leaders acknowledged the strategic importance of the Reciprocal Access Agreement (provisional title) and concurred to continue the negotiation.

While giving consideration to the situation of the COVID-19, PM Abe said that he looks forward to PM Morrison's visit to Japan in the nearest possible future to hold a more in-depth discussion. PM Morrison showed his enthusiasm for his visit to Japan and they concurred to arrange it at an earliest possible time.



ICONS OF TOKYO

The political and economic center of Japan for more than 400 years is today home to some 14 million people, but despite many changes, some things remain constant. What makes Tokyo what it is? We asked editor and critic Yamada Goro for his thoughts (Interview pp. 6-7) and picked out a few iconic examples of permanence and change for ourselves.

Photo: Courtesy of KISABURO/FOGHORN



Yamada Goro, editor and critic

THE political and economic center of Japan for more than 400 years is today home to some 14 million people, but despite many changes, some things remain constant. What makes Tokyo what it is? We asked editor and critic Yamada Goro.

Since the founding of Edo (present-day Tokyo) by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, Tokyo has developed continuously as the political and economic center of Japan. What are the main geographical characteristics of this city today?

Tokyo's greatest characteristic is that it is a city of hills. The organization of a city divided into a downtown commercial district located near the sea or rivers and a hillside residential area on the hills is seen in many cities around the world. Tokyo likewise tends to be divided into two areas,

Diversity

The Source of Tokyo's Vitality

with the Yamanote (hilltop) area to the west and the Shitamachi (lower town) area to the east (the physical lowlands along the Sumida River and its eastern side). But it isn't actually that simple. The area within the Yamanote Line (the city's central circular train line), or in other words, the downtown area since the Edo period (1603-1867), has a terrain that incorporates multiple high and low lands, and there are multiple layers of Yamanote and Shitamachi areas. There are still many hills today, and the mood of the area suddenly changes when going up or down these hills. This kind of a city, with such a complex and diverse geographic structure, is quite rare globally.

Speaking of rare, you can also say that a characteristic of Tokyo is that many wholesale districts and districts of specialty shops remain today in the central areas. Both in Japan and abroad, many cities have experienced a rise in rent and an increase in traffic congestion in central areas since the 1960s, and so the sprawl of wholesale districts to the suburbs has progressed. The same thing happened in Tokyo, but some of these districts still remain in the center: the textile districts of Nihombashi Bakurocho and Yokoyamacho, the tableware and cookware district of Kappabashi Street near Asakusa, and so on. In Kanda's Jimbocho, the world's largest used bookstore district is alive and well even today. Thanks to this, in Tokyo you can get your hands on practically whatever it is that you want. There is no other city that is this

convenient and easy to live in.

What do you recommend to enjoy Tokyo as a city of hills?

What about taking a stroll through the Yanaka, Nezu and Sendagi areas, popularly called “Yanesen”? In that hilly area between the high lands of Ueno and Hongo, you can experience the mood of both the Yamanote and Shitamachi areas that have continued since the Edo period at once. And Ueno Park is an area with so many cultural facilities that there isn’t any other place on earth like it. Packed in this area are the Tokyo National Museum, the National Museum of Western Art, the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, the National Museum of Nature and Science, the Ueno Zoological Gardens, the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan (Tokyo Metropolitan Festival Hall), and more. Given that Tokyo is an area bursting with this kind of attractiveness that you can’t find anywhere else, many young people and visitors from abroad come to visit, and among them, some come to reside in Yanesen, as well. With these new residents opening new shops, galleries and so on, a diversity is created, not just between the tops and bottoms of hills, but also between new and old generations and with people from all over the world.

What do you think has allowed this vitality to remain since the Edo period?

The diversity born out of the interactions between a variety of people is the source of Tokyo’s vitality, the same today as it was in the past. Tokyo is also blessed with geological conditions that have the Yamanote and Shitamachi areas mixed together like a patchwork quilt, and a unique culture was developed through interactions in the Edo period through hobbies such as poetry and art that went beyond social status or work for the samurai who lived on top of the hills, the monks who built temples on the slopes, and the townsfolk who lived at the bottom of the hills.

The street culture which started in Harajuku in the 1980s had an impact on the world, and this was also born out of interactions between people of different industries. Harajuku at the time had properties with cheaper rent than Shinjuku or Shibuya, so young designers, photographers, copywriters and the like naturally gathered here, and from their interactions, a new culture was born.

Cities and cultures are created not by buildings but by people. The reason why Tokyo’s vitality was not lost despite the loss of buildings in the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923) and the bombing of Tokyo in the Second World War is because a variety of people continued to live here and have continued to interact with one another.

How do you think Tokyo will evolve in the future?

In central Tokyo, unprecedented large-scale redevelopment is underway. You may think that increasing high-rise buildings contradicts the fact that the population is shrinking due to a low birthrate and an aging population, but this can be understood if you consider this the creation of a compact city. Having continued to expand towards the suburbs since the start of the Edo shogunate government, I think that Tokyo has now begun to contract towards the central areas.

Another change is the unprecedented increase in tourists and residents from overseas. Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, the spirit of *omotenashi* (Japanese hospitality) which had picked up steam in anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has stagnated, but interactions with different cultures will be essential as a new source of vitality for Tokyo moving forward. Maintaining diversity by creating an environment that is easy to live in for everyone regardless of nationality, gender, or work will become increasingly important in the post-COVID era. 📖

Interview by SAWAJI OSAMU

TOKYO TOWER

Beloved Symbol of the Capital

IN December of 2020, the Japan Radio Tower, known as Tokyo Tower and located in Minato City, will celebrate its 62nd anniversary since opening. When it was completed in 1958, at 333 meters it was the tallest free-standing steel tower in the world. In 1953, once television broadcasting began in Japan, each broadcasting company built their own broadcasting towers, but with further new entrants projected, it became necessary to have a combined tower from which all television signals could be transmitted. The person who pioneered the project to build an enormous broadcasting tower that would also include an observatory to earn revenue from tourism was Maeda Hisakichi (1893-1986), who was the president of a newspaper company in Osaka at the time and later went on to establish the Nippon Television

The freestanding orange-and-white lattice tower is for many people the defining image of Tokyo. Even after more than sixty years since its completion, Tokyo Tower remains a beloved symbol of the capital for those who live and work beneath its ever-changing skyline.

SASAKI TAKASHI

City Corp. (now Tokyo Tower Co., Ltd.). He believed that it was essential to build the world's tallest tower, surpassing even the Eiffel Tower in Paris, not only to allow the signal to be broadcast across the entire expansive Kanto Plains, but also to bring in many tourists.

Since immediately after the completion of Tokyo Tower, around 10,000 people have visited it every day and in some years the annual number of visitors reaches nearly four million. Japan was right in the middle of a period of high economic growth at the time of its construction, and Tokyo Tower became a symbol of Japanese growth along with the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the Shinkansen bullet train. At the time, there were no high-rise buildings like there are now, so it was possible to see the sight of Tokyo Tower from all across the city, as if it were piercing the sky.

Tokyo Tower



Before long, Tokyo Tower came to be a symbol of Tokyo and a part of Tokyoites' mental image of the city. The tower is illuminated at night and its beauty has captured the hearts of many. It appears in many movies and TV shows, and Tokyo Tower itself even shows up in some of their titles. Tokyo Tower was registered as a national registered tangible cultural property in 2013, and in Minato City, the local government protects scenic locations where the tower can be viewed in its entirety.

Mori Yuki, Deputy Manager in the Public Relations Division and Historical Archives Division of the Sales Department at Tokyo Tower Co., Ltd., states, "Tokyo Tower used to be a place that tourists to Tokyo wanted to ascend at least once, but we are aiming to make it a place that people want to visit multiple times."

Efforts are progressing towards a new era for Tokyo Tower, as its role as a TV broadcasting tower

came to an end with the completion of Tokyo Skytree, which transmits terrestrial digital signals. The tower is illuminated with thematic colors using the Diamond Veil illumination device, which was introduced in 2008 to commemorate the 50th anniversary since opening, and it continues to send out messages, for example, to raise awareness for breast cancer and to offer thanks to health care workers responding to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. And in 2018, for the tower's 60th anniversary, the 250-meter-high Special Observatory was renovated and Top Deck Tours were started, allowing a small number of guests to casually enjoy the extraordinary space. The Main Deck, the abandoned broadcasting facilities located 150 meters above ground (formerly the Main Observatory), was also renovated, and it has been reborn as a space where a variety of events including corporate presentations are held.



Tokyo Tower, illuminated

Mori says, "Apart from these kinds of new facilities and plans, we must carry out honest maintenance that will protect the tower from rust and deterioration so that people will continue to love the Tower after 100 or 200 years."

The painting of the tower's steel frame, carried out every five years since its completion, is one such important maintenance task. Tokyo Tower continues to transmit radio signals even today, so painters erect scaffolding using logs so as not to interfere with the broadcasts and they paint the entire steel structure orange and white separately by hand, using brushes.

The hearts of Tokyo natives continue to go out to Tokyo Tower, a timelessly beautiful, unchanging form amidst the capital city's great development and transformations. **U**

View from the Main Deck



Entertainment City Shibuya

SHIBUYA SCRAMBLE SQUARE SHIBUYA
SKY rooftop observation space “SKY
STAGE” and Shibuya scramble crossing

Shibuya, symbolized by its scramble crossing, features many popular shopping and entertainment spots and is often used as a setting for movies, TV shows and music videos. This lively area of Tokyo, which has long been a hub for youthful fashion, art and culture, is currently undergoing another transformation.

SATO KUMIKO

THROUGHOUT the year, Tokyo’s Shibuya is an area bustling with people. When busy, around 3,000 pedestrians cross Shibuya’s scramble crossing, right in front of Shibuya Station, during a single green light. The statue of an Akita dog called Hachiko, a popular spot to meet up with others near the crossing, is now known internationally through the movie, *Hachi*.

Development around the train station in Shibuya began at the beginning of the twentieth century. Despite a majority of the area being destroyed by fire in the Second World War, the National Stadium, one of the main venues for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics (see

All photos: Courtesy of SHIBUYA SCRAMBLE SQUARE

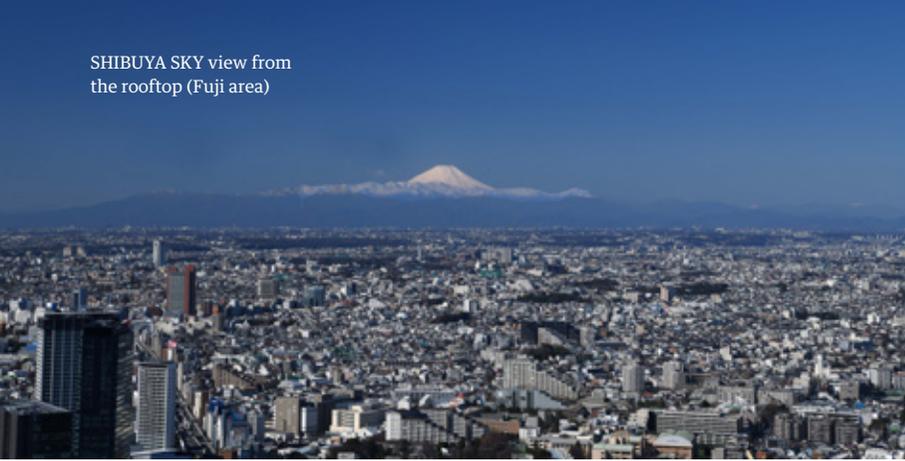
Highlighting JAPAN November 2017), was built here, as well as theaters, cinemas, department stores, and more. In the 1970s and 80s, commercial facilities for fashion were opened one by one, and shops to attract young people appeared, featuring unique fashion from up and coming designers, interior design, music, and more. This trend wasn’t limited to just the area around Shibuya Station, but has expanded to the Harajuku, Omotesando and Daikanyama areas, too, which are located one station away from Shibuya on various train lines. And so, young people looking for something new gather in Shibuya, and from them, new trends emerge. The area has developed as a hub for trends, bursting with energy where the culture, society, and economy move around young people.

Shibuya is now in the midst of a once-in-a-century large-scale redevelopment.

Hamamoto Rie from Tokyu Corporation’s Development Planning Group of Shibuya Development Headquarters, states, “Our future vision for Shibuya at the Tokyu Group is ‘Entertainment City Shibuya’.

Utilizing the characteristics of Shibuya, an area which has continued to create new trends, we are

SHIBUYA SKY view from the rooftop (Fuji area)



SHIBUYA SKY rooftop observation space “SKY STAGE” overlooking fireworks in the city center

moving forward with our efforts to make it a place full of a variety of content where anyone can enjoy themselves.”

Shibuya Station features nine train lines from four companies, and sees around 3.3 million passengers on average each day. As the station has been extended and renovated multiple times, the flow of pedestrians within the station is complicated and it is difficult to navigate, and this has been identified as a problem. The area has also dealt with the problems of aging station facilities built around the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and a shortage of space for hotels and offices.

To solve these problems, multifaceted studies on convenience, the environment, disaster prevention, and more have been carried out since the beginning of this century for large-scale redevelopment centered around Shibuya Station. Local residents also participated in these studies, in addition to the Shibuya City local government and other governmental organizations, related businesses, and experts and scientists in fields such as architecture and urban planning.

Tokyu Group’s “Entertainment City Shibuya” is one of the visions born out of these studies. Through the nine redevelopment projects around the station,

this vision aims to gather a variety of entertainment facilities, including domestic and foreign companies, event halls, theaters, and more, centered around the creative content industry. It also aims to create a way to continue to showcase Shibuya’s unique culture to the world and to generate a new flow of people into Shibuya and the surrounding areas. Starting with Shibuya Hikarie, which opened in 2012, six projects have so far been completed, and commercial facilities, hotels, event halls, offices, and other facilities have been further enhanced. Pedestrian decks connecting the station with buildings as well as elevators and escalators connecting underground areas to above ground areas have been newly built, making the flow of traffic simpler and smoother.

“The station area redevelopment is expected to be completed by 2027,” says Hamamoto. “But thereafter, the development of Shibuya will surely continue, as it is a central area adjacent to such charming areas as Harajuku, Omotesando and Daikanyama.”

The bold redevelopment of the Shibuya area feels like a living organism that is continuing to evolve. Have a look for yourself from SHIBUYA SKY, the approximately 230-meter-high rooftop observation deck at the top of Shibuya Scramble Square, completed in 2019. 



From left, SHIBUYA SKY CLOUD HAMMOCK, SHIBUYA SKY CROSSING LIGHT, SHIBUYA QWS “PROJECT BASE”



Vinyl Forever

Record Shopping in Tokyo

A branch of Disk Union in
Shinjuku, Tokyo

The city of Tokyo is home to a large number of record stores catering to a growing number of new and second-hand vinyl enthusiasts from Japan and abroad.

SATO KUMIKO

THE global vinyl record revival shows no sign of abating and record stores all over Tokyo are gaining attention. Not only does Tokyo still have long-established record stores from the 1960s and earlier but especially in areas like Shimokitazawa and Kichijoji, hotspots for subcultures in theater, music and the like, new stores have also been opening up recently. The music lover can never get bored as each record store has its own distinctive charm. There are those specializing in particular genres, others where you can listen to vintage records through high-end audio equipment, and hybrid stores where you can relax in an adjoining café.

Fujimura Kazuki of Diskunion Company Limited, which operates the long-standing retailer of recorded music Disk Union, says of the vinyl revival, “I think the allure lies in the warm sound quality distinctive

of records as well as the impressive sleeves. Ninety percent of the records in our stores are second-hand. There are enthusiasts with different tastes who enjoy expanding their collections in particular genres, such as 1960s British and American rock or jazz.”

The company sells vinyl records in 49 of its stores in the Kanto region (seven prefectures including Tokyo) and Osaka, and currently also has two stores specializing solely in records in the Shinjuku and Shibuya districts of Tokyo.

Japanese records are recognized all over the world for their high quality, this applying to everything from the audio mastering and pressing processes to the super-quiet virgin vinyl used in the records themselves. Such was the quality of records made in Japan that in the 1980s Japanese companies were often contracted to press audiophile versions of records for major labels overseas. These Japanese pressings of English-language music titles are often highly collectible.

Moreover, a culture of “taking good care of things” has taken root in Japan, which is why so many second-hand records can be found in excellent condition in terms both of sound quality and jacket appearance. Japanese record sleeves are peculiar in

All photos: Courtesy of Diskunion Company Limited

Records pressed in Japan are famous for their high sound quality



that they are wrapped in *obi* paper belts carrying the track listing and other such information. Second-hand records with their obi still intact are highly prized by collectors.

It is a fact too that many Japanese record stores started buying from abroad at an early stage, which is another reason why the assortment of original records mainly from the UK and the USA is so abundant. If you go around record stores in Tokyo, you are sure to notice how nearly all music genres are covered, from classical, jazz and rock to movie soundtracks.

All of this has come to be known not just in Japan but also abroad, leading to the spread of a reputation among overseas record fans that “records are

best bought in Tokyo.” Fujimura says, “We’ve seen a global vinyl record boom especially in the last ten years, and there’s been an increase in foreign customers. I hear that there are many artists, movie directors and others who look forward to going around the record stores every time they visit Tokyo.”

Incidentally, it seems that Japanese music from the 1970s and 1980s, in particular city pop, is a popular genre among foreign visitors at the moment.

Nowadays, music is mainly distributed digitally, but there has also been a recent increase in the number of artists releasing their new music both digitally and as vinyl records. Being able to pick up such new packages is another part of the appeal of Tokyo record stores. 7



Second-hand records still wearing their *obi* information belts



The cast in costume for a *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* anime special event
 Photo: Courtesy of *Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba* official twitter © Gotouge Koyoharu, SHUEISHA, Aniplex, ufotable

Kimono Without Borders

Tokyo is a city that continues to attract the attention of the global fashion industry, in particular for its innovative and sometimes extreme street fashion. Recently, a young designer of kimono has been catching the eye in this ever-changing contemporary fashion world.

KATO KYOKO

KIMONO, the traditional clothing of Japan, has a global reputation for being elegant and sophisticated. KISABURO, a 4th-generation kimono designer at Iwamoto Kimono Making, a kimono tailor in Tokyo with 98 years of history, is garnering attention for reinterpreting the kimono aesthetic.

Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba, a manga and anime set

in the Taisho period (1912-1926) in which the protagonist fights against the demons who killed his family, is currently popular among young people in Japan. KISABURO is in charge of costume design for events. Through communicating the appeal of kimono, KISABURO has come to attract lots of attention even among those who are not fans of the manga series. “I aimed to faithfully reproduce the kimono from the series as much as

possible. I felt I could make beautiful kimono by hand-sewing the artwork into gentle silhouettes,” KISABURO states.

The theme of KISABURO’s brand, launched in 2015, is “Going Beyond Borders”. The brand name suggests enjoying kimono freely, going beyond the borders of Western and Japanese styles or standard styles for men and women, for example. These kimono can be enjoyed in a stylish way, subverting conventional ideas about how or where kimono should be worn.

“It’s really cool to wear kimono correctly,” says KISABURO. “But, I also think it’s cool to wear kimono

Models wearing kimono designed and styled by KISABURO
 Photos: Courtesy of KISABURO/FOGHORN



in a rough kind of way, such as over everyday Western clothing, and feel free to stroll around areas of Tokyo with high-rise buildings, for example.”

The name KISABURO was passed down from the designer’s late great-grandfather, an innovative kimono maker in the Meiji period (1868-1912). KISABURO says, “Looking back on my childhood, though I was born as a girl, from a young age, I hated being made to wear floral patterns and other kimono for girls. Because of this, I didn’t really feel attached to my family business. I didn’t really understand the attachment to kimono that my family’s business had.”

That all changed when KISABURO borrowed and wore a family-designed (grandfather) kimono for the Tama Art University graduation ceremony. KISABURO’s father, who hadn’t previously sought to pass on the family business to KISABURO, talked in detail

about kimono for the first time, and KISABURO recognized the appeal of kimono.

“Kimono are cut in a straight line and finished without leaving any remaining cloth, and they are a sustainable type of clothing that can be remade by simply loosening the stitches. My grandfather lived in very different times from me and his body shape was quite different, but I can wear the same kimono, overcoming those differences. Learning of this rational beauty, I came to like kimono.”

As a new and recent experiment, KISABURO hosted RUSU NISURU, a contactless online communication project in July of this year. For this project, participants write and send in what they are afraid of—for example, “infectious disease”—along with their own actual clothing, and a talisman pattern will be designed for the clothing by KISABURO’s own hand and sent back to the participant. The production process was streamed online at the “KOKO NISURU” (“I am here”) event held on August 7.

“During epidemics in the past, people turned to talismans for inspiration, and from that I came up with this idea. Actually, talismans have long been a design motif in kimono, expressed in the pattern on the kimono itself and on the *obi* [the sash worn around the waist over the kimono]. For example, parts of the *se-mon* (crest on the back) of a kimono serve as ‘eyes’ to ward off evil spirits,” KISABURO says.



Kimono designer KISABURO
Photo: Courtesy of Shima photography and design

There are many Japanese people today who don’t know the meanings of the talismans incorporated into kimono. KISABURO hopes that the number of people interested in kimono will increase by sharing this kind of unknown information from Tokyo, a center for fashion.

Kimono are a treasury of unique Japanese designs, which can be enjoyed in abundance on Coming-of-Age Day in January as young people come and go from the ceremony, and increasing numbers of young people can be seen on the streets wearing kimono at other times as well. When you come across someone in a stylish kimono in Tokyo, look out for the embroidery and patterns, and see if you can work out what the talismanic designs might mean. **1**



MAYOKE PROJECT by KISABURO
Photo: Courtesy of Uemura Kazuha

SHARING A LOVE OF TOKYO'S FOOD

Holding a Master's degree in Japanese history, David Conklin from the United States shares his love and extensive knowledge of Tokyo's traditional food culture as a writer and tour guide with people in Japan and abroad.

SAWAJI OSAMU



Posing in front of a portable shrine carried in the Kanda Matsuri, a famous Shitamachi festival
Photo: Courtesy of Aki Shobo



David Conklin, eating *taiyaki* from a long-established shop in Ningyocho
Photo: Sawaji Osamu

NIHONBASHI Ningyocho is a district in the Shitamachi (lower town) area of Tokyo, initially constructed by filling in marshland and later developed as a commercial area in the Edo period (1603-1867). The name Ningyocho is said to stem from the fact that many people related to the traditional Japanese puppet show, *Ningyo-joruri* (“ningyo” means doll or puppet), once lived here, including puppet makers and puppeteers. Even today, it is a lively area where many historical eateries, Japanese sweet shops, craft shops, and more line the streets. There are also many seasonal festivals and markets in the neighborhood.

“I love Shitamachi, where you can enjoy traditional foods and culture. The people are easy to connect with and it’s easy to make friends.”

So says David Conklin, a native of Portland, Oregon, on the west coast of the United States, who now lives in Ningyocho. Conklin introduces the appeal of Japanese food, especially the food of Tokyo around the Shitamachi area, through his work as a writer and tour guide.

As a student of modern Japanese history in



Portland, Conklin developed an interest in Japanese food, and in graduate school, he began to research Japanese food culture. During his research, he met a Japanese woman while visiting Tokyo to study Japanese, and they married in 2007. Since then, he has made his home in Ningyocho.

The district is home to a remarkably large number of restaurants for such traditional Japanese fare as *soba* (buckwheat) noodles, sushi and *yakitori* (grilled chicken), as well as many retail shops specializing in tofu, rice, vegetables, and other foods. Conklin once counted the number of restaurants, *izakaya* pubs and coffee shops within a 7-minute or so walking distance of his house and found there were close to 750. Visiting these shops by bicycle or on foot to eat or shop is something he says he still loves very much. Before the world-famous Tsukiji fish market moved to Toyosu in 2018, he says he would regularly cycle the 10 minutes from home to shop in Tsukiji for ingredients for dinner.

“Japanese food is very different from that of other countries. There are a great variety of foods, including all kinds of fermented foods, raw fish *sashimi*, fried foods that have uniquely evolved from Western food, and more. Japan is a paradise to me,” smiles Conklin.

Of all these foods, Conklin's favorite is soba noodles. At lunch time, he often gets on his bicycle to visit one of the local soba restaurants, saying he has

been to more than 100 every year for several years.

In Japan, it isn't considered rude to slurp one's noodles, since doing so enhances the aroma of the noodles and soup. Conklin confesses to being a vigorous slurper of noodles, and says he is even sometimes

complimented on it by the proprietors of the noodle restaurants. In fact, he is now so used to eating noodles in this way that he sometimes forgets his manners in restaurants in the United States and upsets some other customers by slurping pasta.

Conklin also likes to make soba noodles and eats them together with his family.

“Soba noodles are delicious, cheap, and very healthy. Buckwheat - the main ingredient - is cultivated across the globe, and noodle dishes are familiar in many cultures. After sushi, I think that soba noodles are the Japanese food that will next catch on around the world. I am now working on a book in English on soba noodles,” says Conklin.

Conklin has been giving food tours targeting tourists from overseas and people in the food industry for a number of years. The tours take in places like Tsukiji fish market, long-established restaurants, and the Kappabashi district, which is famous for cookware, while Conklin introduces the food culture of Tokyo, from both the Edo and modern eras. He also offers tours customized to participants' requests, such as for tours of sweet shops or sushi restaurants. The tours have been taken up by Japanese media outlets, and Conklin is widening his appeal, appearing in newspapers, magazines and on TV.

“I will start the food tours back up once the COVID-19 pandemic calms down. I'm also now planning tours to experience the local cuisine, craft beers, whiskey and so on of various other parts of Japan, not just Tokyo,” says Conklin.

The appeal of Japanese food will no doubt continue to spread worldwide thanks to the enthusiasm and insatiable curiosity of non-native foodies like Conklin. 



Making soba noodles
Photo: Courtesy of David Conklin

THE ENDURING CHARM OF GOLDFISH HILL



A swimming goldfish
Photo: Courtesy of Kingyozaka

Tokyo has a lot of hills. There are more than 800 places whose names include the word *saka*, meaning slope, within Tokyo's twenty-three wards. One such place is Kingyozaka in Hongo, Bunkyo City, which derives its name from a goldfish (*kingyo*) wholesaler that began operations about 350 years ago. Goldfish, which are one of the charms of summer in Tokyo, swing their tails elegantly in this corner of the quiet residential district even today.

UMEZAWA AKIRA

ACROSS many years, many Japanese people have loved colorful swimming goldfish. Tokyo was a major goldfish producer beginning in the Edo period (1603-1867). But, as the city developed during the period of rapid economic growth in the latter part of the twentieth century, fish farmers closed their businesses one after another, or moved to Saitama or Ibaraki Prefectures on the periphery of Tokyo, leaving only a few wholesalers behind. One of those remaining is Kingyozaka (meaning Goldfish Hill), also known as Yoshida Seisuke Store, a goldfish wholesaler with 350 years of history, which still exists in Hongo in Tokyo's Bunkyo City.

Kingyozaka is located partway down a narrow slope off the main road close to the Hongo Campus of the University of Tokyo. The rivers have been moved underground today, but they used to run in the old

days around here and there was also a big, approximately 2,600 m² pond. They used that pond as a goldfish farm and got started as a goldfish wholesaler.

"The property of the University of Tokyo was the main Edo (now Tokyo) residence of the *daimyo* (lord) of the Kaga Domain (now Ishikawa Prefecture) at that time. Our first president supplied the *daimyo* with goldfish. We hear that those goldfish were used as testers for poison in food for the lords as well as for ornamental purposes," says Yoshida Tomoko, the seventh president of the company. Goldfish were introduced to Japan from China in the Muromachi period (1336-1573). At that time goldfish were cultivated by only the privileged classes as a very rare, precious ornamental fish. During the Bunka Bunsei years (1804-1829) of the Edo period, it became possible to mass-produce goldfish due to improvements in farming techniques, which led to lower

prices. Hawkers sold goldfish by carrying a water tub around with goldfish in it. Then goldfish became popular pets and “goldfish hawker” came into use as a summer *kigo* (seasonal word) in traditional forms of Japanese poetry. The ukiyo-e woodblock prints of that time show that many people enjoyed goldfish.

Currently, Kingyozaka purchases goldfish from farms and markets at home and abroad and wholesales them nationwide, with its fish ranging from those used in goldfish-catching games at festivals to ornamental ones. Yoshida, who took over the business when her husband passed away in 2000, opened Café Kingyozaka at the same time, starting to retail to ordinary people as well as wholesaling to further promote goldfish culture.

Yoshida says, “As a goldfish wholesaler, we make water noise, so we used to enclose the pond with a tall fence. That is why no one came in. But considering that we have this place in the center of Tokyo and hoping that it can be a place that people love and where they can enjoy seeing goldfish, we renovated the old pond into a café.”

The interior of the café furnished with wood gives off a warm atmosphere. Goldfish swimming in tanks and miscellaneous items featuring goldfish can be found everywhere you look.

More than forty types of goldfish are cultivated in the outdoor aquariums, and people are welcome to come see them—and even catch them. The café is



Fishing for goldfish
Photo: Aizawa Tadashi



More than forty types of goldfish are cultivated in the outdoor aquariums

Photo: Aizawa Tadashi

alive with families and couples on holidays.

Yoshida says, “We have many customers from abroad. I always say to customers who come to our café, ‘Please enjoy viewing goldfish.’ We have many types of goldfish and we never get tired of seeing them swim. I hope that as many people as possible come to know the charms of these goldfish.”

Yoshida says, “Probably because the district has been loved by intellectuals for many years, I see many quiet and polite people. They do not behave arrogantly because they are regular customers. There are many people who have the spirit of working together to foster a shop that they love. That’s the appeal of Hongo.”

Through her shop and café, Yoshida hopes to pass down traditional goldfish culture, which has lasted since the Edo period, to future generations. Goldfish enthusiasts, those who empathize with Yoshida’s wishes, and people who simply want to relax gather on Goldfish Hill today just as they did in the days of Edo. 



Tamadaira Apartment Complex before reconstruction

An Apartment Complex Reborn

At the Tamadaira Apartment Complex in the bed town of Hino City, Tokyo, reconstruction has provided an opportunity for new community development. We are seeing the birth of a lively neighborhood where everyone from university students to young parents and elderly people interact.

UMEZAWA AKIRA

Tamadaira-no-Mori



DURING the period of rapid economic growth from the 1950s to the mid-1960s, there was a serious labor shortage in Japanese cities and the solution was gathering many young people from the countryside. In order to provide them with housing, the Japan Housing Corporation (now the Urban Renaissance Agency [UR]) built a large number of apartment complexes side by side on one plot or block. Although compact, the apartments in these complexes were equipped with what was the latest in flush toilets, bathtubs, eat-in kitchens and verandas, and so became popular as they offered a new way of life.

One of them was the Tamadaira Apartment Complex that was completed in 1958. It is said that the applicant-to-tenant ratio was several hundreds to 1, because the complex was conveniently located for commuters being little more than 30 minutes by train from Shinjuku Station and within walking distance

of the nearest station (Toyoda), as well as being rich in green areas. However, as the times changed, the residential living area and facilities stopped meeting the needs of the times, and in 1996, a plan was launched for large-scale reconstruction and new community development.

Yet the road to ensure consensus for the reconstruction plan among tenants was not a smooth one. Hamaguchi Takahiro at the UR explains it as follows.

“Most tenants were very attached to the apartment complex and considered it their ‘lifetime home.’ Because of this, we started a study group for Hino City, the apartment complex residents’ association and the UR to discuss all themes relevant to the reconstruction project. At these study meetings, we listened to the opinions of all residents and advanced the project while also working toward building a consensus.”

As a result, the 247 buildings on a site of 290,000 m²

All photos: Courtesy of Urban Renaissance Agency



Tamadaira-no-Mori fosters interactions between local residents



Shared housing with vegetable gardens, AURA 243

were consolidated into high-rises as 30 buildings on a site of 110,000 m². A plan was launched to attract libraries, nursery schools, and other public facilities as well as large commercial facilities and private housing companies to the land that was opened up through the vertical expansion. In 2008, twelve years after the plan was started, Tamadaira Apartment Complex was reborn as Tamadaira-no-Mori (Tamadaira Forest), thereby concluding the reconstruction to new housing.

At the same time, a renaissance plan was also implemented to make effective use of the existing buildings, not just as an approach to reconstruction but also from a perspective of sustainable community building.

A major feature of this plan is three facilities spread out across a total of five buildings, collectively called Tama Musubi Terrace, which embodies the concept of diverse human interactions.

One facility is two buildings that function as a share house complex. The first floor is a common area with kitchen, lounge, shower rooms, and other facilities as well as a wooden terrace that can be used for events and parties. One building is used as a student dormitory for nearby universities while applications for the other building were open to everyone, although the majority of residents appear to be university students and young people.

The second facility is shared housing with vegetable gardens. The gardens are adjacent to the residential building and have work huts and resting areas, allowing residents to enjoy vegetable gardening

in their daily lives. Many people living nearby also come to use the gardens.

The third is rental housing exclusively for elderly people, with lunch and dinner provided at reasonable prices in the adjoining restaurant, which is open not just to residents but to everyone. Moreover, events like handbell and chorus practice are held to gather people from all generations and provide the elderly residents with opportunities to meet each other.

In addition, there is a newly built block called Te to Te Terrace on the premises, which houses a social education center run by Hino City, a nursery school, a special nursing home for elderly people, a hospital with rehabilitation facilities, a sports club, and other facilities. It has created an attractive community where people from all generations interact. Children at the nursery school visit the hospital while the sports club works with the neighboring hospital to provide exercise guidance.

Hamaguchi explains, “During the period of rapid economic growth, the goal of apartment complexes was just ‘to provide housing in large quantity.’ As time went by, our aspiration became ‘housing and community development where all generations can continue to live active lives.’ Our hope is to continue to provide new community building through the revival of apartment complexes.”

Half a century onward, the apartment complex that once was the starting point of a new way of living is on its way to become a new starting point once again. 

PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS

The Japanese summer is characterized by not only high temperatures but also high humidity, and visitors to Japan from foreign countries can suffer in such unfamiliar conditions. When the human body cannot cope well with a hot environment, various symptoms of “heat illness” can develop. A large number of people in Japan suffer from heat illness every year, but by taking appropriate measures, such as those outlined below, heat illness can be prevented.

SAWAJI OSAMU

HEAT ILLNESS

The human body is able to maintain the core temperature within normal range by regulating heat production and diffusion. When the body temperature rises, capillaries under the skin expand to increase subcutaneous blood flow, thereby dissipating heat into the air. Sweating and the evaporation of sweat also assist the thermoregulation of the body. However, in conditions where the humidity is high, sweat is unable to evaporate, leading to heat illness. Additionally, if the increased blood flow beneath the skin significantly reduces blood flow to the brain and other vital organs, or if the sweating causes significant loss of water and salt, it may lead to heat illness. If the body is not able to regulate the rise in temperature and measures are not taken to mitigate it, heat illness will follow, symptoms of which include dizziness, light-headedness, muscle cramps, numbness in the hands and feet, headache, nausea, exhaustion, fatigue, impaired con-

sciousness and convulsions. Therefore, individuals who feel sick in a hot environment or while exercising should suspect heat illness and take the following measures.

FIRST-AID MEASURES

If nothing is done to treat heat illness, the condition can be fatal. When symptoms of heat illness are suspected, it is necessary to quickly administer first aid. The patient should be helped to (1) take shelter in well-ventilated shade, an indoor space with an air conditioner, or some other cool environment. (2) Outer garments should be removed as well as belts and neckties loosened. If the patient is conscious, have them drink cold water or an isotonic drink. It is also effective to put a wet towel on the skin as well as a cool plastic bottle or ice on both sides of the base of the neck, under the armpits, and on the front of the base of the thighs. (3) If symptoms are severe such as impaired consciousness or an inability to drink

water unassisted, the patient should immediately be taken to a medical institution by ambulance or such, and every effort should be made to cool down the patient’s body prior to arrival.

FACTORS THAT CAUSE HEAT ILLNESS

There are three primary factors that cause heat illness. (1) Environmental factors such as high temperature and humidity, no breeze, strong sunshine, days that suddenly become hot, and rooms with no air conditioning. (2) Physiological factors such as being elderly, an infant or obese, having a chronic disease like diabetes or a heart disease, or being dehydrated due to diarrhea or influenza. (3) Behavior-related factors such as strenuous exercise or working hard outdoors for many hours.

It is especially important to remember that about half of the people given emergency transportation for heat illness are people aged 65 or over (Fire and Disaster Management Agency statistics). Reasons for this include that elderly persons experience a decline in total body water (TBW) as well as in their ability to sense heat and feel thirst. In other words, the body’s capacity to regulate heat goes down with age.

HEAT ILLNESS COUNTERMEASURES (FOUR COUNTERMEASURES)

Heat illness can be prevented if appropriate measures are taken. The best thing to do is “avoid heat” in the first place. To do this, (1) walk in the shade, wear light clothing, and use a parasol or hat when outside; and (2) adjust room temperature with air conditioning

when indoors. It is also important to (3) rehydrate by drinking water frequently even when not thirsty—approximately 1.2 liters a day is a good guideline. It should also be noted that heat illness often happens on days when it suddenly becomes hot, particularly when the body is not accustomed to high heat. It is therefore helpful to (4) acclimatize the body to the heat by walking or doing some other form of exercise about 30 minutes a day in a slightly hot environment. Acclimatization could start around the season when it begins to get hot and might take two weeks or so to complete.

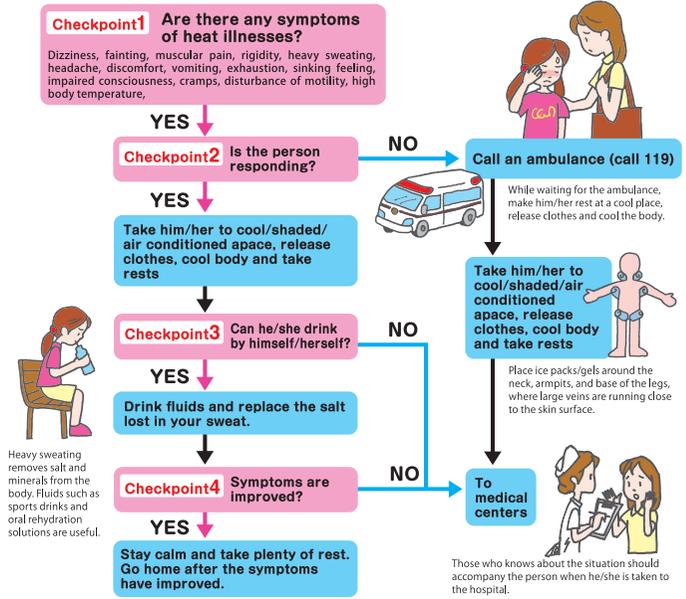
INITIATIVES OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT: THE HEAT STRESS INDEX (WBGT)

The Japanese government is implementing a variety of countermeasures against heat illness. One such initiative is the Ministry of the Environment of the Japanese government’s Heat Stress Index (Wet Bulb Globe Temperature: WBGT), a list of live and forecast heat intensity recorded at 840 locations across Japan which is published along with other information on the “Heat Illness Prevention Information” website (<https://www.wbgt.env.go.jp/en/>). WBGT is an index that shows the intensity of heat (the unit is the same as for temperature, °C) by combining figures for temperature, humidity and radiant heat, all of which have major effects on the human body. Since the index shows what measures should be taken for each stage, it is an easy reference for heat illness prevention. In particular, it is important to note that the risk of heat illness surges when the WBGT exceeds 28°C.

The heat illness prevention information website is published in English, Chinese (simplified, traditional), and Korean, and will be helpful to all foreign residents and visitors to Japan. 

First aid for Heat illness.

If someone around you has heatstroke... Stay calm, assess the situation and respond as appropriate. First response is critical.



Source: “Heat Illness: Have You Heard of It? Prevention and Coping Methods,” leaflet from the Ministry of the Environment of the Japanese government

Precautions in line with WBGT risk ranks

WBGT	Risk of Heat illness	Activity guide in daily life	Guide to how much exercise can be safely performed
≥ 31 °C		Risk of occurrence is high in elderly people even at rest. Avoid staying outdoors as much as possible, and move to a cool place.	Danger (exercise should be avoided). The environmental temperature is higher than the skin temperature, so the body heat cannot escape. Except in special cases, all exercises should be avoided.
28 - 31 °C	May occur during any daily activities	Avoid staying under the sun. Keep an eye on the rise of indoor temperature.	Severe warning (heavy exercise should be avoided) Activities that require heavy exercise should be avoided. When exercising, frequent breaks and plenty of fluids should be provided. People who are at high risk should avoid exercise.
25 - 28 °C	May occur during moderate activities	Take breaks regularly during exercise or strenuous activity	Warning (rests should be provided often) Frequent breaks and plenty of fluids should be provided. Breaks should be provided every 30 min for activities requiring heavy exercise.
21 - 25 °C	May occur during heavy activities	Risk of occurrence is low in general. Caution is advised during heavy exercise or strenuous work.	Caution is advised since there is still a risk of heat illness. Drinking plenty of water during exercise is advised.

Source: “Heat Illness Measures Guideline Cards,” leaflet from the Ministry of the Environment https://www.wbgt.env.go.jp/en/heatillness_pr.pdf

Electronic Pipette

Aiding Accurate and High-Precision Tests

□ A lab worker using a conventional pipette

All images courtesy of ICOMES LAB Co., Ltd.

The pipette is a device widely used in laboratory settings to measure out or transfer small volumes of liquid. By leveraging technology used in its manufacturing of precision parts for cameras, a venture company from Iwate Prefecture in Japan successfully developed the smallest and lightest pipette in the world – an electronic pipette that reduces the strain on lab workers while also improving measurement accuracy.

SASAKI TAKASHI

The pipette is a laboratory tool used to draw up and dispense just the right small amount of liquid needed for a particular task. It is widely used in the fields of chemistry, biology and medicine, including most recently in PCR testing for novel coronavirus infection.

Pipettes can be divided into two broad categories: manual and electronic. Katano Keiji, the CEO of Icomes Lab Co., Ltd., has succeeded in developing the world's smallest and lightest pen-shaped electronic pipette, the "pipetty."

Working with Iwate University, Katano's company developed an

ultrafine drive assembly known as a "micro actuator," actuators being high-precision parts typically used

in SLR cameras and surveying tools.

"Our actuator, created by a process we developed ourselves,



□ The pipetty, a pen-shaped electronic pipette

has been highly praised due to its high functionality and low cost,” says Katano. “But a few years after the company was founded in 2003, I came to really want to sell an original product and offer more than just parts to manufacturers. That’s when our attention was drawn to pipettes.”

Currently, 95% of the pipettes used around the world are the manual type, which require the lab worker to repeatedly draw up and dispense the liquid by hand. To master this technique takes time. Moreover, pipetting can lead to repetitive-strain injuries such as tendonitis in the forearm and elbow.

The pipetty is roughly half the size of conventional pipettes, being 135 mm long and weighing 75 grams. It draws up and dispenses liquids electronically. The pipetty is held the same way as conventional pipettes, but while holding the device like a pen the lab worker can dispense the liquid at the press of a button. The device costs around one half to one third the cost of

conventional electronic pipettes.

“The actuator at the heart of the device has a diameter of 8 mm and a length of 10 mm, and it incorporates a 1-mm plastic gear among other parts. We are the only company that can mass produce such a small actuator. Without this technology, it would not have been possible to build the world’s smallest electronic pipette.”

In addition to improving task repeatability, the pipetty also overcomes the problem of hand-warming when pipetting, further increasing the accuracy of measurements. Heat from a research-

er’s hand can raise the temperature inside a pipette, fractionally reducing the volume of liquid that is drawn up and thereby lowering the precision of the dispensation. The pipetty features the world’s first function to detect internal pipette temperature and regulate the dispensed volume automatically.

The device debuted in 2013 and has received high praise from medical and research institutions in Japan and around the world. Katano was most pleased to hear from a researcher who was finally relieved of her tendonitis by switching from manual pipettes to the pipetty.

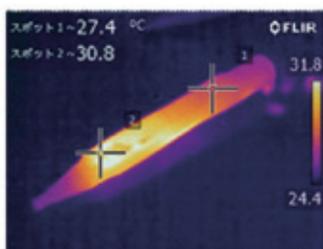
In April of this year, Katano’s company commenced sales of the Bluetooth-enabled pipetty Smart, which enables management of dispensation work processes including precise dispensation volumes for different tasks to be configured on a smartphone.

Katano’s creation not only reduces the workload for researchers, but also contributes to an improvement in the reliability of test and research results by aiding accurate work. Katano and his development team have found joy in this fact, and are focused on further development of medical and scientific devices. 

 At the heart of the pipetty technology are tiny micro actuators incorporating plastic gear technology co-developed with Iwate University

What Is Hand-warming?

Conventional pipettes are affected by “hand-warming” in which the heat of the hand is transmitted to the inside of the pipette, reducing dispensing accuracy.



Pipette heat measured by infrared thermometer

Emmanuelle Moureaux in front of her exhibit *Slices of Time* in London

Photo: Courtesy of Charles Emerson

Shikiri: Dividing Space with Colors

Emmanuelle Moureaux moved to Japan from her native France in 1996 after being amazed by the complex layers of color filling the streets of Tokyo. As an architect, artist and designer, she seeks to communicate through her creations the same such feelings of joy and wonder that colors can inspire.

SATO KUMIKO

Colors give people energy. They put smiles on people's faces."

These are the words of Emmanuelle Moureaux, who creates installations with "color" as their main theme for locations in Japan and around the world. Installations in whatever their medium must interact with the location or exhibit space itself. Moureaux typically achieves this by composing space using color as her medium. Her representative works include

an installation series called *100 colors* in which she defines space by the use of multiple layers and combinations of brightly colored materials such as cloth or paper. The materials are typically cut into large geometric shapes or may take the form of numbers (*Forest of Numbers*), hiragana characters (*Universe of Words*) and other three-dimensional designs. The works are often suspended from the ceiling and hang and sway like *noren* dividing curtains. Each



1 2



1&2 Moureaux's representative works include the architectural design for branches of Sugamo Shinkin Bank
Photos: Courtesy of Shima Daisuke

installation takes “100 colors” as its motif but is created in response to the time and place.

Moureaux says that her inspiration for creating such works comes from the Tokyo townscape.

“I studied architecture at a French university and came to Japan since the theme of my thesis was ‘Tokyo.’ What I first saw of the streets of Tokyo was endless layers of countless colors in three dimensions. It was completely different from the orderly French townscapes that have perspectives focusing the gaze on one point. I still can’t forget the emotion. It was as if I saw color for the first time.”

Not even an hour into her stay in Tokyo, Moureaux had decided that she would live in Japan, and so she moved to Tokyo in the following year of 1996, became a registered architect with a first-class license in Japan in 2003, and opened her office, emmanuelle moureaux architecture + design.

Since the beginning of her activities in Japan, Moureaux’s concept has been *shikiri*, her own neolo-

gism combining *shiki* (color) and *shikiri* (partition), which literally means “dividing space with color.”

“Once I moved to Tokyo, I noticed that color is almost never used in Japanese modern architecture and design,” Moureaux explains. “Japanese traditional architecture, which partitions spaces with sliding screens and sliding paper doors and which I thought was an excellent culture, is disappearing. *Shikiri* was my solution for incorporating these two essences and recommunicating them to the modern world.”

Moureaux demonstrated this concept in one of her representative works at six branches of the Sugamo Shinkin Bank. In all of them, “color” was not simply a finishing accent but an important component of the building. The stores have a colorful façade design and an indoor open space that also doubles as an urban rest area, making them designs that upturn the conventional wisdom of Japanese bank architecture as well as new landmarks that are both pleasant for the people working inside and easy to like for the people

living in the town.

“I use a lot of colors in my works, but when I make something to last in a town, I pay special attention not only to the surrounding environment but also to the meaning and message of the work,” Moureaux says.

One example is the public artwork *mirai*, which she made for the new block Green Springs in Tachikawa City, Tokyo in 2020. It is an ambitious piece that uses 100 colors to visualize a 100-year future, taking one color for each year from 2020 to 2119. It blends in with its surroundings and immediately moves people’s hearts.

“We spend our lives surrounded by so many colors, but I think we almost never pay special attention to ‘color,’” says Moureaux. “I am creating my works with the desire that many people will feel the same emotion I felt when I came to Tokyo for the first time.”

Moureaux’s many works of impressive urban coloring are sure to keep demonstrating how “color” inspires rich emotion in us. [U](#)



Forest of Numbers, The National Art Center, Tokyo
Photo: Courtesy of Shima Daisuke

Sake Created from the Abundant Nature of Ome in Tokyo

■ The Tama River, flowing through the Mitake Valley where Ozawa Shuzo is located

Located in Ome City, a nature-rich area on the outskirts of Tokyo, one long-established sake brewery continues in its production of sake using natural pure water and in its efforts to protect the forests that produce this water.

SAWAJI OSAMU

Ome City is in the northwestern part of Tokyo, about 1 hour by train from urban Shinjuku, and the area is blessed with abundant nature, with more than 60% of the land covered in forests. The Tama River flows from east to west through the city, and there are many places to enjoy sightseeing and recreation here. One of those places is the Chichibu-Tama-Kai National Park (see the April 2018 edition of *High-*

lighting JAPAN). The Mitake Valley, located in a corner of the Park, produces incredibly beautiful scenery throughout the year, from the clear flow of the river and the various large and small rocks eroded by the river to the deep green in summer and the many trees steeped in color by autumn leaves in fall.

Ozawa Shuzo Co., Ltd. produces sake here along the Mitake Valley. Ozawa Shuzo was established in 1702 and has a history of

more than 300 years as the westernmost of the nine sake breweries located within Tokyo. The brewery's "Sawanoi" is a famous brand, having won numerous awards in sake contests both in Japan and abroad.

Ozawa Mikio, who became the 23rd head of the brewery in 2019, says that, "There is an abundance of clear water in this area, and it is well suited for sake production. One of the biggest characteristics of our sake is that we use two types of water: moderately hard water and soft water."

The moderately hard water is drawn from a horizontal well located behind the brewery, created by digging out about 140 meters of bedrock by hand, and the soft water is taken from a well

All photos: Courtesy of Ozawa Shuzo Co., Ltd.



1



2



3



4

on the opposite side of the Tama River. While sake made using mineral-rich hard water has a strong flavor, sake made using mineral-poor soft water tends to have a light and gentle flavor. A variety of flavors of sake can be created by using these two types of water.

Ozawa Shuzo has set up a restaurant, a gift shop where you can do a sake tasting, and other facilities along the Tama River, offering sake and foods made using local ingredients. One of those foods is *wasabi zuke*, or pickled wasabi. This wasabi (Japanese horseradish), grown with clear water in the cool climate, has been a specialty product of the area since the Edo period (1603-1867). Pickled wasabi is created by pickling the wasabi with *sake kasu*, the lees

produced in the process of creating sake. The refreshing spiciness of the pickled wasabi enjoyed together with sake while also watching the movement of the clear river is something special.

Up until Mikio's grandfather became the head of the brewery, Ozawa Shuzo was also engaged in the forestry business, utilizing the abundant timber resources. Even today, the brewery manages the surrounding expansive forests that they own, but this is done for sake production. The rain that falls in the forest soaks into the ground and is purified, becoming groundwater and eventually becoming the spring water used in sake production. Destruction of the forests has a damaging effect on the water that is an ingredient

- 1 Water welling up from a horizontal well (moderately hard water)
- 2 The main entrance to Ozawa Shuzo
- 3 Enjoy a sake tasting at the gift shop
- 4 Bottles of sake lined up in a storehouse

in sake, so steady management of the forests is essential.

Mikio talks about how, "People from overseas come here and are amazed that a place with this much nature could be in Tokyo. I believe that it is also our role as a sake brewery to continue to protect this abundant nature."

Together with the production of sake, efforts to protect the expansive forests have been passed on for more than 300 years. 

□ Jizodo at Shofuku-ji Temple
Photo: massyu/PIXTA

Jizodo at Shofuku-ji Temple

The early fifteenth-century Jizodo (Jizo Hall) at Shofuku-ji Temple in Higashimurayama City, Tokyo, is a national treasure revered for its quintessential “Zen-style” architecture and for housing around 900 Jizo statues.

SAWAJI OSAMU

Hojo Tokimune (1251–1284), the eighth regent of the Kamakura shogunate (late twelfth century to 1333), is remembered as a great samurai warrior who led Japan’s defense against the Mongol invasions, but also as a deeply devout follower of Zen Buddhism. It is said that Tokimune fell ill while practicing falconry in Higashimurayama City, a suburb of present-day Tokyo, but in a dream he took medicine given to him

by the Jizo Bodhisattva, and when he awoke he was healed. Temple legend describes how Tokimune was so moved by his recovery from illness that he founded Shofuku-ji temple.

In one corner of Shofuku-ji’s

grounds is the Jizodo (Jizo Hall), where a large Jizo statue is enshrined as the principal object of worship. The Jizodo is an approximately 10-meter-tall, single-story wooden structure. The Zenshuyo



□ Yumiranma transoms and katomado windows
Photo: massyu/PIXTA



■ The main Jizo statue in the Jizodo
Photo: Courtesy of the Folk Museum of Higashimurayama

as approximately 900 ancient wooden Jizo statues remain and stand on either side of the main Jizo statue inside the hall. Many of them are between 15 and 30 centimeters tall, and among them, many were dedicated by farmers around the eighteenth century when large-scale agricultural development took place across modern-day Higashimurayama City. It is said that, at that time, when people had a wish, they would borrow one of the statues in the Jizodo and take it home, and when their wish came true, they would bring the statue back along with a new statue to dedicate. It is thought that this is how there came to be close to 1,000 statues, as the statues, dedicated by the people, slowly accumulated.

To this day, many people in Japan have a deep affection for the Jizo Bodhisattva, a deity believed to protect and rescue people from all manner of difficulties.

The Jizodo is only open to the public a few times each year, but the quaint exterior, which has withstood wind and rain for about 600 years, can be viewed at any time. Even today, many people visit the Jizodo and ponder on these traces of the deep faith of those from the past. 

(Zen-style) of its construction, as epitomized by the steep upward curves at the four corners of its roof, was introduced from China along with Zen Buddhism in the Kamakura period. The building's *yumiranma*, transoms with wave-shaped ornamentation to let in sunlight, and *katomado*, windows with a rounded design on the upper frame, are two more characteristics of traditional Zenshuyo architecture.

During the two years of dismantling and repair work which began in 1933, ink-drawn calligraphy was found on some of the building components, proving that the Jizodo

was built in 1407. The Jizodo was later designated as the first national treasure building in Tokyo in 1952. This is because the year of construction was clear and due to the fact that it is an extremely precious building in the traditional Zenshuyo architectural style which remains mostly as it was when built.

The Jizodo is also known as “Sentai Jizodo” (1,000 Jizo Hall),



■ Some of the 900 ancient wooden Jizo statues in the Jizodo

Photo: Courtesy of the Folk Museum of Higashimurayama

JAPAN
HERITAGE



Onomichi

- A Historic Port City Perfect for Wandering



Photo: Courtesy of Onomichi City Historical Culture City Development Promotion Council

Onomichi
City

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Onomichi City in Hiroshima Prefecture has been dubbed a “miniature garden city” for its setting surrounded by hills, with narrow streets and stone paths meandering between the houses, temples, and gardens that fill the confined space down to the coast. Onomichi has retained its historic charm, and the view from the hills out toward the islands of the Seto Inland Sea (Setonaikai) has inspired countless writers, artists, and film-makers to use the city as a setting for their work.

Onomichi has a rich history and is arguably best explored on foot. One popular walking route takes in two dozen Buddhist temples, including Jodoji Temple, which was built in the seventh century, and Saikokuji Temple, which dates back to the eighth century. Another course, lined with large stones engraved with songs and poems, celebrates Onomichi’s links to some Japanese literary giants. The hillside paths that offer panoramic views of the city also lead to unique cafés and shops tucked away among the residential areas.

Onomichi flourished from the 17th century as a major port of call for *kitamaebune* trading ships that sailed around Japan. Nowadays, Onomichi is a magnet for cyclists, as it is a starting point for the popular Shimanami Kaido cycling trail that connects Japan’s main island of Honshu with Shikoku via bridges and six islands in the Seto Inland Sea.

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