

# Adventure Capital

Photos and text by Naoki Mukoda



Japanese history has been a history of change and more change for the past 43 years. These changes have reached far and cut deep, affecting culture, business, education, and virtually every other facet of Japanese life. It is an ongoing upheaval thrusting Japanese into startlingly new situations and unexpected encounters every day.

Part of the change is illustrated by the striking mechanization, automation and computerization in Japanese life, while other parts have been less physical in their manifestations. Yet whatever the causes, life is a never-ending adventure for today's urban Japanese.

For one, the environment—the material context in which we live—is radically different today from what it was yesterday. Among the most obvious changes in our physical surroundings are those in Japanese architecture. Whether it is homes, offices, factories or roads and other public spaces and structures, Japanese architecture is changing.



When I was young, most of the houses were made of wood, and the highest buildings were no more than seven or eight stories. High-rise buildings 20, 30 and even 40 stories tall were an unimaginable fantasy—a pipe dream for the idle. Today, there are people eating, living, sleeping and working 20 and 30 stories up.

Going to Tokyo's Shinjuku district at the start of the workday, you see people rushing into these high-rise office buildings. It is an eerie scene—everybody going in and almost nobody coming out. It is as though they were all boarding a modern ark just before the rains. Or perhaps it is a scene from some 21st-century space odyssey.

They are embarking on the day's adventure. Every day a new adventure. This is the modern reality of Japanese life.

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