

Tokyo Favorite

Photos and text by Naoki Mukoda



A Japanese camera manufacturer recently conducted a survey asking 300 young Tokyo businessmen what scene they would photograph to represent "Tokyo" as they see it. The results are very interesting.

The people who were positive about Tokyo favored symbols of modern Tokyo such as the Ark Hills complex in Roppongi, the Tokyo Bay waterfront development and the Tokyo Dome; and those who were negative about Tokyo favored such traditional symbols as the Imperial Palace, the State Guesthouse and the Meiji Shrine Outer Garden area (Jingu-gaien). Ark Hills, which ranks first on the pro-Tokyo list, ranks only ninth on the anti-Tokyo list of buildings, and the traditionalists' Imperial Palace comes in eighth with the modernists.

Although all of the people surveyed were in their 20s, opinion was sharply divided on the frantic urban renewal that is taking place—53.6% of them applauding it and saying that it is one of Tokyo's attractions and 25.7% saying that it has gone too far and detracts from Tokyo's appeal.

In releasing these results, the camera manufacturer commented that the difference lies in whether the person pre-

fers modern angles or longs for a kinder and gentler Tokyo.

The modernists all agreed that what they like about Tokyo is its unbridled energy. I have written before that the new urban space offers new venues for urban adventurers, and it would seem that the modernists are urban adventurers. An adventure in the city is sometimes a very visual experience.

In answer to a question as to where they would like to photograph their girlfriend, the modernists listed Ark Hills as their first choice. Ark Hills—the most popular visual adventure site for adventuresome young Tokyoites. I guess I'll take my camera and head off to Ark Hills.

Naoki Mukoda is a photographer and adventurer.

