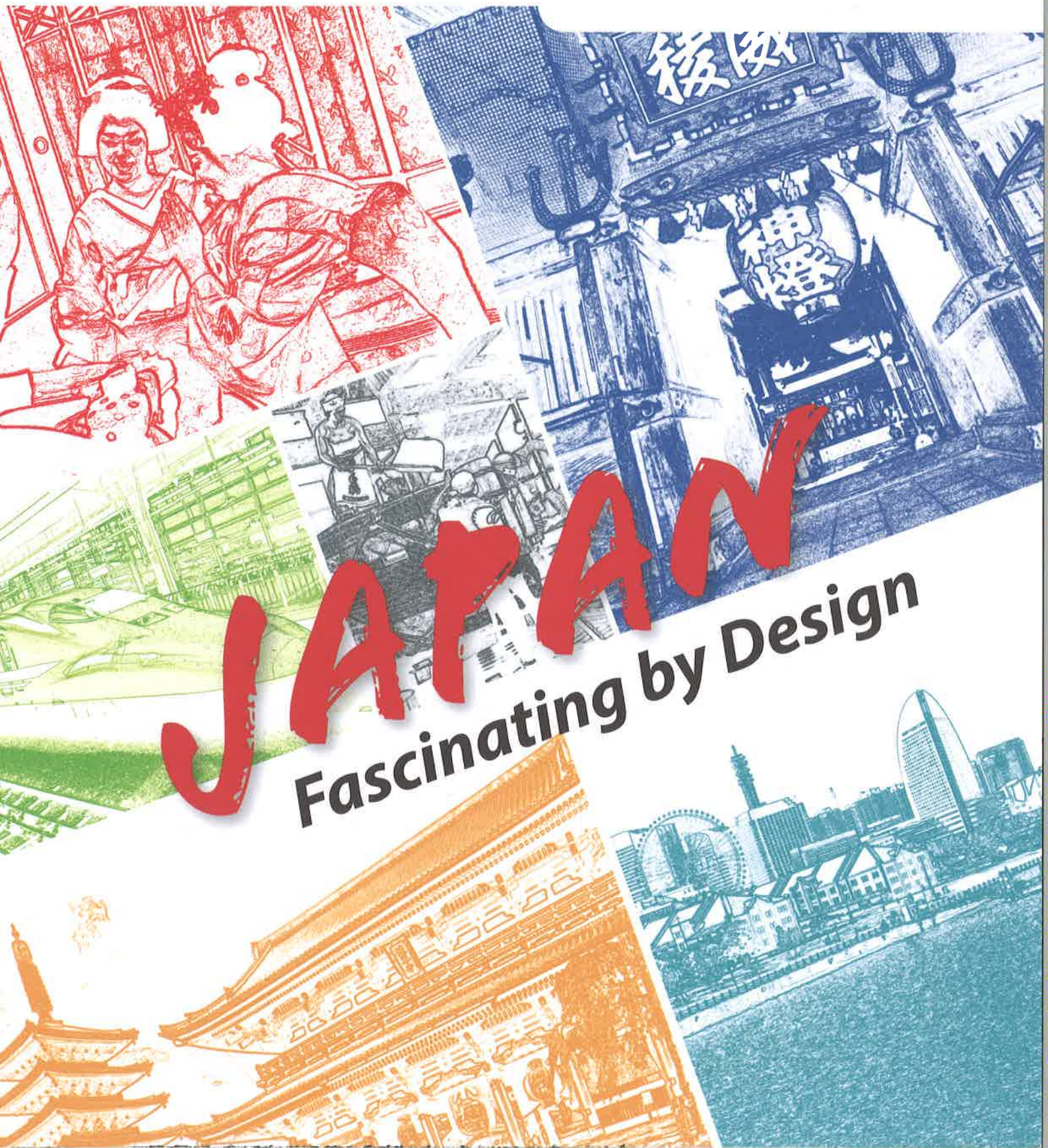


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JAPAN

Fascinating by Design



JAPAN

More than ever ready to host the world

My first-ever trip to Japan was full of surprises. To be honest, I didn't know much about the country, except for the clichés you see in pictures or in the movies. I had actually expected more of a cultural shock. Japan is different, of course, but it's also international, and even if some people don't speak English, most of them do. With Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) and Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) actively promoting five Global MICE Cities, the time is right to take your next event to Japan.

Report Rémi Dévé

Japan's graceful hospitality is no secret. I experienced it first-hand and it might well be what will stay with me for a long time. The Japanese are really considerate to others, especially visitors. The country has also been leading the way in research and development in many industries from engineering and pharmaceuticals to robotics. Its academic community is very strong as well, headlined by 19 Nobel Prize winners in fields as diverse as physics, chemistry, medicine and literature. In short, Japan's sense of hospitality and the knowledge that can be found there make all the difference.

In June 2013, in order to put the country on the international meeting scene even

more, JTA launched a Global MICE Strategic Cities Project, identifying Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto, Kobe and Fukuoka as global MICE cities. This new strategy developed by the government aims to increase the number of meetings altogether throughout the whole country. The idea is that each city excavates new meetings related to their clusters of competitiveness, and thus develop their industry. The above-mentioned five cities are the main focus of this supplement: for an international association wanting to come to Japan, you will have plenty to choose from.

Last December, an ambitious Ambassador Program was also launched. The idea is

to strengthen Japan's position as the top country for international conferences. The Ambassador Program is one of the important steps to achieve the goal and aims to build collaboration between conference organisers and professionals in the MICE industry, making sure the importance of business events are communicated upon - and bid on and hosted! - throughout the country.

I'm confident Japan is ready to go to the next level. Because the expertise, the knowledge and the will are there. With those, mountains can be moved and conferences can be held, undoubtedly.



TOKYO

Raising its meeting profile

Tokyo does not need any introduction. As the capital of Japan, it is the epitome of what the country can offer: while being the centre of economics, culture and politics, it is distinctively, traditionally Japanese as well, with its 400-year-old Edo characteristics. Its quality of service and expertise in meeting organisation also make it a destination of choice for event planners.

When I met Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau on the last day of my trip, I was eager to ask: what does Tokyo have up its meeting sleeves? Kazuko Toda, Director, immediately answered: *'Within the five-year Tourism Plan, MICE has been recognised as one of the pillars by the Tokyo Metropolitan government to advance the region's economy, as well as its profile. Now we have the ability to support large association conferences in many different ways.'*

The recent hosting of the IMF and the World Bank Group annual meetings was actually a turning point, as, for the first time, an event was offered non-financial support by the Tokyo Metropolitan government. More than 10,000 participants converged to Tokyo in early October 2012, meeting at the International Forum, which was fully chartered for the occasion. Security being of paramount importance, Tokyo private and public sectors united to successfully

showcase the city's capacity to host events of this prestige and magnitude.

But Tokyo is definitely not resting on its laurels. As it's often the case with large cities, there is some notable infrastructure development in the pipeline. First, the Toranomon Hills Forum, a big conference centre, is due to open in 2014, with three multi-functional hall of 2,180 m² together. Then, up until 2017, there will be about 2,500 new hotel rooms in Central Tokyo, adding to the already existing 96,000. All the more reasons to come and benefit from the city's expertise, don't you think?

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Case Study

THE 22ND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NUTRITION

In 2013, the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) selected Tokyo as the host city for its 22nd congress, the International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) in 2021. About 4,500 nutrition scientists, researchers and students from 120 countries are expected to participate.

The Japanese Bid Committee was organised by the IUNS subcommittee of the Science Council of Japan (SCJ), the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food (JSNFS), and the Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics (JSND). Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau was also closely involved in the bidding activity, right up to the final announcement.

Dr. Miyazawa, Conference Ambassador and President of the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science, explains: *'The academic significance of choosing Tokyo as the destination for the congress resides in the competency of Japanese scientists and experts in nutrition. Strong support of the city, its rich attraction, and the safe and clean environment it provides make it a perfect place for any scientific gathering. Tokyo Metropolitan Government also promised to secure financial and non-financial support for the event, which helped us make the right decision.'*