

# MODERN MARVELS

by Elisa Parhad



1. The look for the **Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower** in Shinjuku was decided by a design competition with only one rule: the building could not be rectangular shape. Currently, three schools are housed inside the building, and the distinctive cocoon formation symbolizes the nurturing of the students inside.

The Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower is one of the most recognizable skyscrapers in the world.

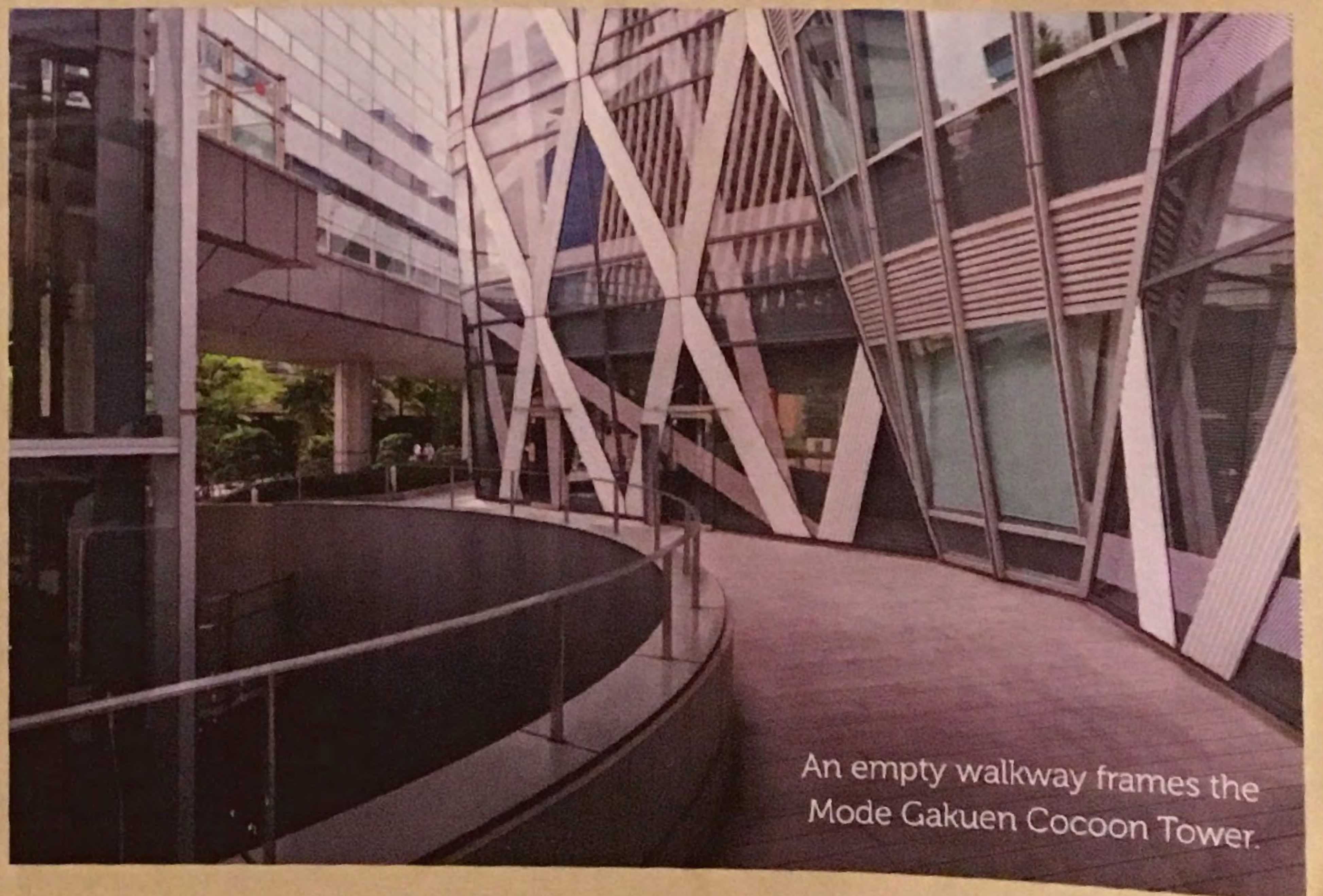
A woman walks through SunnyHills, also called the "Pineapple House."



SunnyHills is constructed of wooden frames.



2. It's not a gigantic basket, nest, or pile of sticks, just a popular Taiwanese pineapple cake shop called **SunnyHills**. The eye-catching 3D formation is inspired by a traditional form of Japanese wood framing called *jigoku gumi*, which required a team of highly skilled craftsmen to assemble.



An empty walkway frames the Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower.



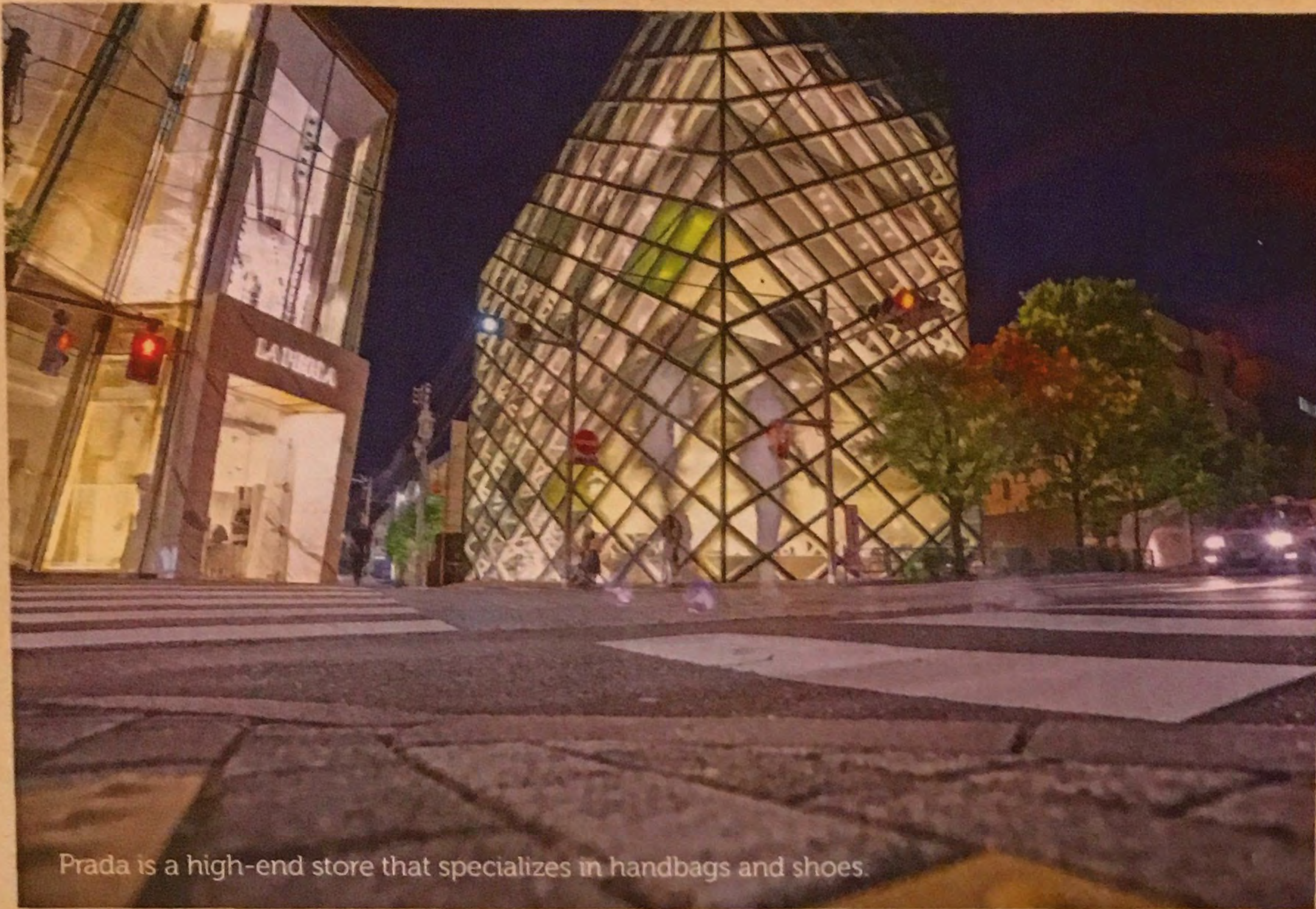
Window shopping. Check out the main entrance to the Prada Store in the Aoyama district in Tokyo

3. Just down the street, visitors flock to the futuristic **Prada** store in Aoyama, especially at night, when it looks as though you can see right through the “skin” of the structure. The building—shaped like a crystal—won the Pritzker Prize in 2001, which is akin to winning an Oscar for architecture.

4. The **Tokyo Skytree Observatory** is the tallest free-standing tower in the world built to broadcast television and radio. It stands a whopping 634 meters tall, partially because the numbers in Japanese—6 (*mu*), 3 (*sa*) and 4 (*shi*)—make up the name of the district, Musashi, where the Skytree Observatory is located. The structure was built using the same central column design as a traditional Japanese pagoda.



The Tokyo Skytree tower is Japan's tallest structure



Prada is a high-end store that specializes in handbags and shoes.

**5. Dear Ginza** is a building on a small street off a major shopping avenue in Tokyo's Ginza district. To attract customers, the building was created to look like a crumpled candy wrapper, made of aluminum and perforated with dots and flowers. Lights behind the facade change color according to the season, creating beautiful displays of patterned light.



View from the top. Visitors gaze out at Tokyo from the Skytree observation deck.

**The buildings, architects, and year completed are:**

1. Mode Gakuen Cocoon Tower, Paul Noritaka Tange, 2008;
2. SunnyHills, Kengo Kuma and Associates, 2013;
3. Prada Store (Aoyama), Herzog and de Meuron, 2003;
4. Tokyo Skytree Observatory, Nikken Sekkei, 2012;
5. Dear Ginza, Amano Design Office, 2013.