



Tokyo

With an introduction by Juval Portugali and photographs by Wolf-Dieter Gericke. 60 pp. with 50 illus., 280 x 300 mm, hard-cover, English
ISBN 978-3-936681-27-7
Euro 36.00, sfr 58.00, £ 24.90, US \$ 49.00, \$A 69.00

Cities are often seen as symbols of order: the existence of city walls, fortified gates, palaces, temples, roads, pavements, highways, public institutions, city centres and residential areas is interpreted as indicating the existence of a central authority that plans and controls the city. On the other hand, the very same cities are also seen as symbols of spontaneous growth. The little winding streets and alleys, the mixture of physical structures, styles and human activities have often given the impression that cities, like forests, and other natural entities are organic structures – strange »natural artifacts«.

Tokyo is a good example for this dual nature of cities. When you first encounter it, you get the impression of chaos: old buildings with one or two storeys next to 30-, 40- or 50-storey skyscrapers; pedestrians, cars, trains moving in all directions, each with its own trajectory. But then you realize that this seemingly chaotic structure provides a context for perfectly ordered human activities: trains leave and arrive as timetabled, their doors open at the exact points that are marked with yellow lines on the platforms; early in the morning fishermen bring their catch to Tokyo's big fish market, auctions are held, and by six o'clock this huge amount of sea food has already been distributed among thousands of restaurants all over the city. And if you look deeper you learn that the chaotic face of Tokyo is the precondition for its ordered and organized life.

Complexity theory or self-organization theory are umbrella terms for a set of theories that study the interplay between chaos and order. Originating in the sciences, these theories have been applied to the study of cities in the last three decades. They show that as in natural systems, in the artificial systems that we call cities, chaos and order do not stand in opposition to each other. Rather, they coexist in an ongoing interplay of circular causality: chaos is the precondition for new urban orders to emerge and then to reproduce themselves, whereas order and organization set the boundaries within which chaotic structures and behaviors can take place.

Juval Portugali is professor of human geography in the Department of Geography and the Human Environment at Tel Aviv University. His research is devoted to the city as a self-organizing system. In addition to his teaching in Israel, he has taught at many universities outside his home country as a guest professor, including Tokyo University. Wolf-Dieter Gericke studied architecture at Stuttgart University. He works as a free-lance photographer and designer in Waiblingen near Stuttgart. He has been visiting Tokyo almost every year for some time now.

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036.00 Euro
058.00 sfr
024.90 £
049.00 US\$
069.00 SA

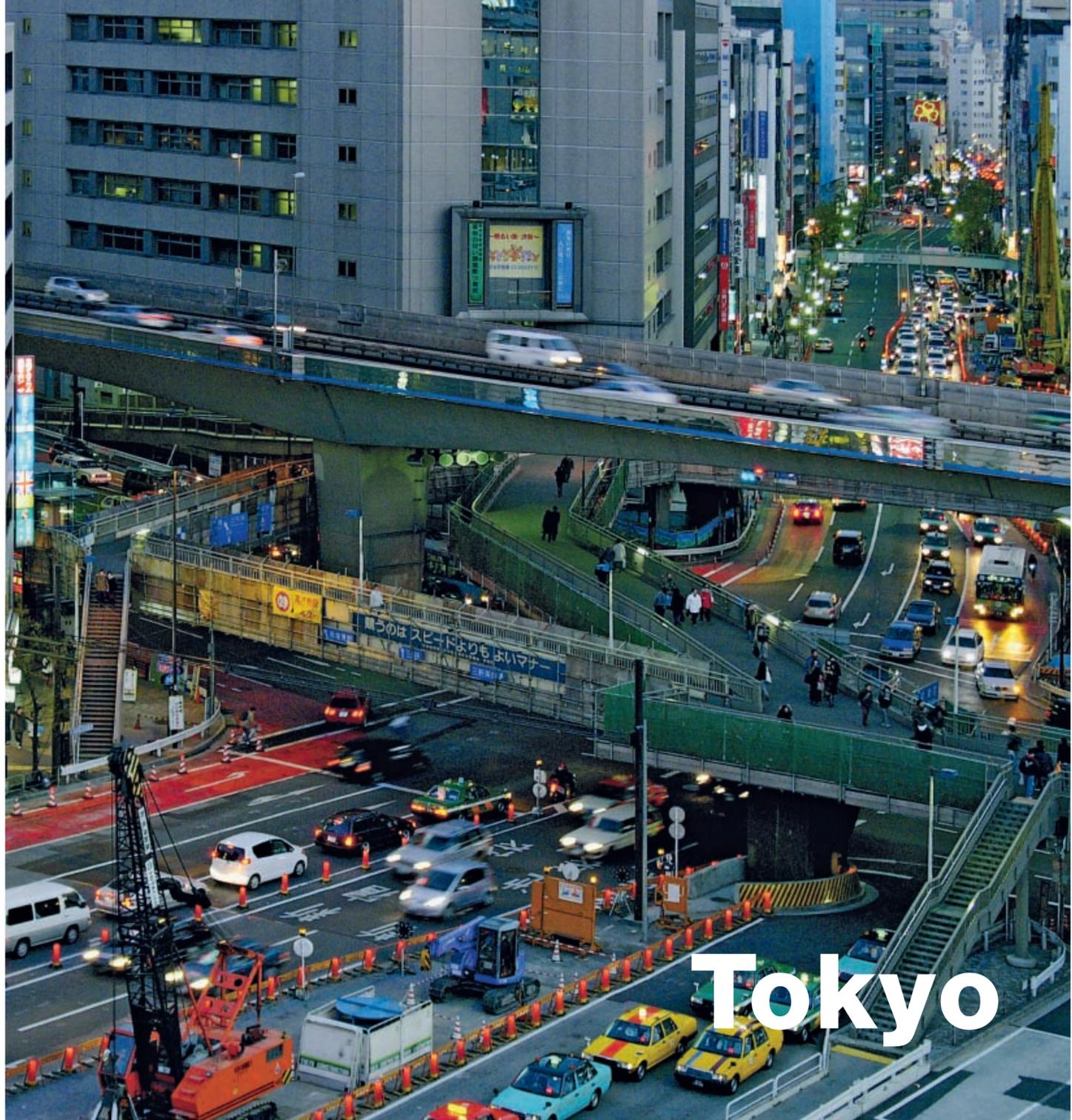
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9 783936 681277

Wolf-Dieter Gericke / Juval Portugali Tokyo

Menges



Shinjuku station square (book market)

Shibuya Hachiko crossing



Shibuya Hachiko crossing

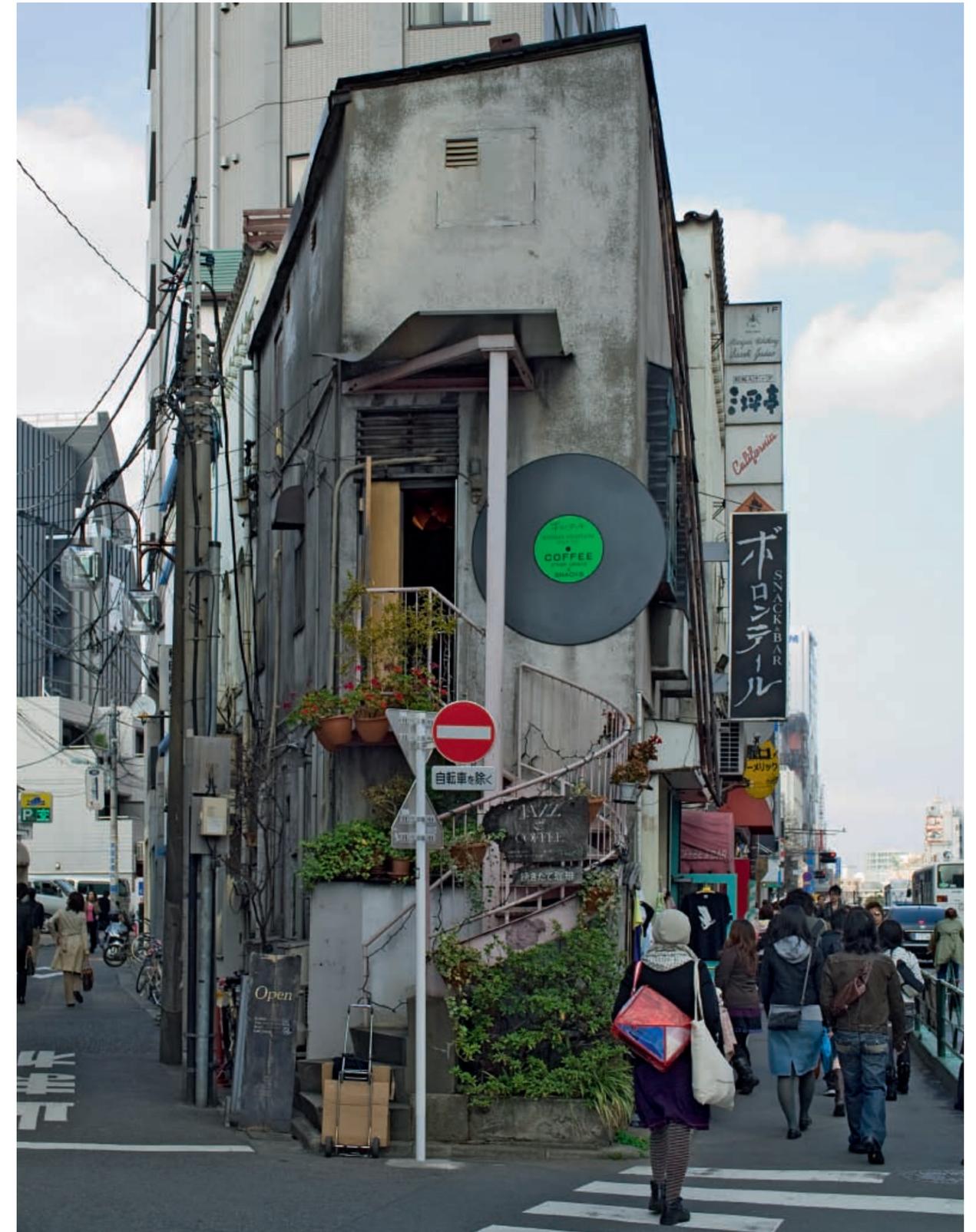
Yurakucho station



Shibuja station east, 2nd level

Shibuja station east, underground railway site







Yokohama center, 3-storey traffic
Yokohama center, waterway, railway, highway
Yokohama, from a 4-storey car park





Shibuya, Meiji-dori/Roppongi-dori and Expressway 412

Shinjuku station east

Shinjuku, amusement quarter





On top of Roppongi Mori tower during the day

On top of Roppongi Mori tower at nightfall

Roppongi Mori tower, view to the east

