

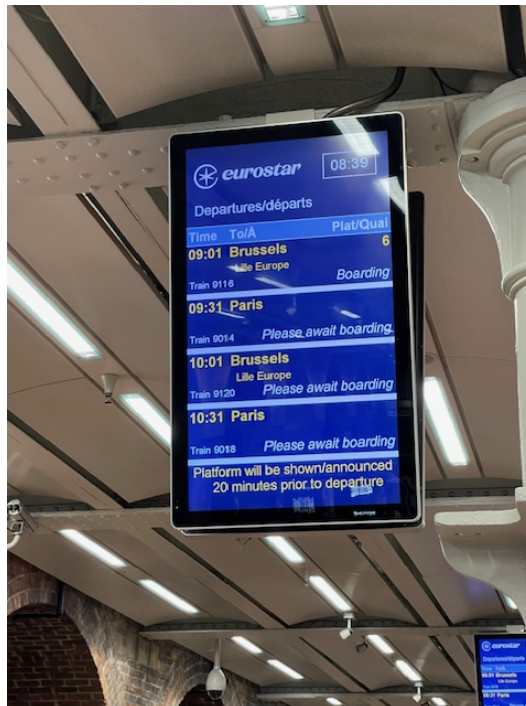
Okamura Tatsuya, a man who knows the world.

Okamura Tatsuya's Jewelry and Health Travels in France (2024)

The Eurostar is an international high-speed railway connecting the United Kingdom and continental Europe through the Channel Tunnel beneath the Strait of Dover. Operating between London, Lille, Paris, and Brussels at speeds of up to 300 km/h, it represents one of Europe's most sophisticated transportation networks. Since April 4, 2018, limited direct services from London to Amsterdam via Brussels have also been introduced.

Following Brexit, departure procedures now require border control formalities at London St Pancras International Station, located adjacent to the world-famous King's Cross Station, immortalized in the Harry Potter series. After a refined journey of approximately two hours and fifteen minutes, I arrived in France ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For Tatsuya Okamura, visiting Olympic host cities before the Games has become something of a personal tradition. The atmosphere prior to the world's arrival carries a unique energy — an indescribable stimulation of the senses that continually fuel creativity, inspiration, and strategic imagination



The French Republic, a nation founded upon the ideals of “**Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity**,” possesses an area of approximately 551,500 square kilometers and a population of nearly **68 million** people. France remains one of the world’s foremost democratic powers, exerting tremendous global influence across international politics, security, economics, culture, gastronomy, luxury, and the arts.

Upon arrival at **Gare du Nord**, the Paris terminal for Eurostar services, the elegance and grandeur unique to France immediately began to unfold.



The currency is, of course, the euro. At the time of my visit, **€10 equated to approximately ¥1,750**. A decade earlier, the same amount had been worth closer to ¥1,350 — a subtle but unmistakable reminder of the weakened Japanese yen and the shifting balance of global economic strength.



Avenue des Champs-Élysées

Stretching approximately 1,910 meters from the Arc de Triomphe to Place de la Concorde, the Champs-Élysées is widely regarded as “the most beautiful avenue in the world.” Magnificent rows of chestnut and plane trees line its broad sidewalks, while luxury boutiques, refined cafés, and elegant terraces create a uniquely Parisian atmosphere of timeless sophistication.

The avenue is internationally celebrated as the stage for the Bastille Day military parade, the final finish of the Tour de France, and the dazzling Christmas illuminations that transform the boulevard into a river of light. Throughout the year, tourists and Parisians alike gather here, making it one of the most iconic thoroughfares in Europe.

Since 2016, the first Sunday of each month has transformed the avenue into a pedestrian-only promenade, allowing visitors the rare pleasure of strolling peacefully through the very center of a boulevard usually dominated by luxury automobiles and constant movement.



Arc de Triomphe

Standing proudly at the western end of the Champs-Élysées, the Arc de Triomphe is among the very first places one should visit upon arriving in Paris. Situated majestically at the center of Place Charles de Gaulle, where twelve grand avenues converge, the monument remains an enduring symbol of French glory and national pride.



Commissioned by Emperor *Napoleon Bonaparte* to commemorate the victory at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805, the Arc represents one of history's great military triumphs. Despite facing a combined Austro-Russian force significantly larger in number, Napoleon's army secured a dramatic and decisive victory after fierce combat.

The monument itself was designed by architect *Jean-François-Thérèse Chalgrin*, inspired by the Arch of Titus in ancient Rome. Rising approximately **50 meters in height**, visitors who ascend its **234 steps** are rewarded with one of the most spectacular panoramic views in all of Paris.

Although construction began in 1806, progress was slow, and the Arc was not completed until 1836 — thirty years later.



During the reign of *Napoleon III* in the mid-19th century, Baron Haussmann's grand urban redesign transformed Paris into the modern imperial capital we recognize today. Seven additional boulevards extended outward from the Etoile, while harmoniously designed architecture unified the surrounding landscape into a masterpiece of urban elegance.

Conversations with French friends often reveal something fascinating: many continue to view Napoleon not merely as a dictator, but as a symbol of ambition, national pride, and transformational leadership. History, after all, evolves alongside the perceptions of those who inherit it.

At moments like these, I am reminded of **my mother's words**:

“Do not become someone who merely criticizes others. Become someone worthy of being criticized.”

Cartier



Mr. T's place of work

The Paris flagship boutique of Cartier remains one of the defining landmarks of global luxury culture. Cartier has long been celebrated as **“The Jeweller of Kings and the King of Jewellers,”** a phrase famously attributed to King Edward VII. Beyond jewelry, the maison has successfully expanded into leather goods, writing instruments, watches, and lifestyle

products, creating extraordinary synergy across luxury business categories.

Today, Cartier operates under the umbrella of the Richemont Group.



What!?



Interestingly, during my visit, the construction covering surrounding the building itself had become a form of luxury advertising — a uniquely Parisian reminder that even renovation can be transformed into art and branding.



Louis Vuitton

The flagship store of Louis Vuitton represents one of the world's ultimate destinations for luxury shopping. Inside, every imaginable variety of bags, accessories, and leather good is displayed with extraordinary sophistication. The Paris flagship boasts one of the largest retail floor spaces in the world, offering a selection vast enough to overwhelm even seasoned luxury consumers.

Unlike most boutiques in Paris, the flagship also remains open on Sundays.



Louis Vuitton's global prestige accelerated significantly after the death of its founder, Louis Vuitton himself. The company originally began as a trunk manufacturer, introducing the lightweight "Gris Trianon Canvas" trunk design. In 1854, Vuitton opened what became the world's first specialty travel luggage boutique on Rue Neuve des Capucines in Paris.

Recognition followed rapidly. At the 1867 Paris Exposition Universally, the company received a bronze medal, while royalty and aristocrats from across Europe soon became loyal clientele. Orders arrived from Egyptian ruler Isma'il Pasha, Russian Crown Prince Nicholas, and even King Alfonso XII of Spain.



The maison became synonymous with elite travel culture.



Inspired by the artistic motif covering the construction facade outside the flagship, I eventually purchased a commemorative bag embodying the spirit of Paris in 2024 — a fleeting moment in time captured through luxury design.

French Gastronomy



French cuisine is often ranked alongside Turkish and Chinese cuisine as one of **the three great culinary traditions of the world**.

While many associate French cuisine exclusively with fine dining and aristocratic refinement, it is more accurately understood as a broad spectrum of culinary culture developed throughout France's long history.

In the 14th century, meals were often consumed by hand from shared tables. By the 16th century, however, Italian influence profoundly transformed French culinary practices, eventually giving rise to the foundations of what the modern world now recognizes as haute cuisine.

As one of Europe's great agricultural nations, France offers both rustic regional dishes and highly sophisticated gastronomic experiences. The restaurant I visited — once favored by former French President Nicolas Sarkozy — belonged unmistakably to the latter category.

Fortunately, I understand enough French to navigate menus comfortably.



I can understand French on the menu...



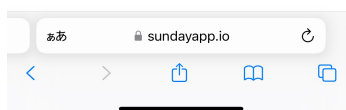
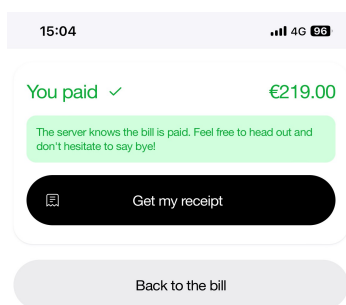
A personal aside: for me, champagne is more than a beverage — it is a philosophy of refinement.

Authentic Champagne may only be produced within France's Champagne region. Its production is defined by secondary fermentation within the bottle, the blending artistry known as assemblage, and the delicate processes of tirage and dosage.

Historically, earlier sparkling wines were cloudy and unrefined. The development of methods capable of removing sediment while preserving clarity transformed Champagne

into a transparent sparkling wine worthy of aristocratic society, eventually elevating it into one of the world's most celebrated luxury beverages.

Interestingly, the Comité Champagne in France recommends using the pronunciation “Champagne” closer to the French phonetic style. Those who study French naturally adopt this pronunciation in daily conversation, whereas English-speaking cultures tend toward the anglicized “Champagne.”

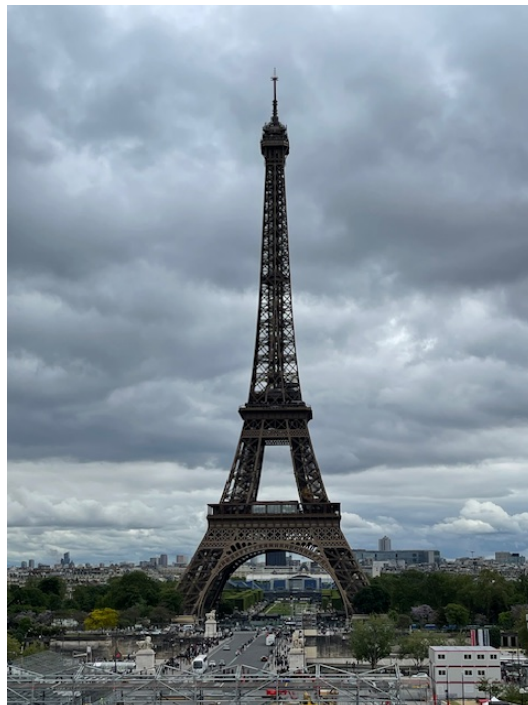




Eiffel Tower

Standing gracefully along the Seine River, the Eiffel Tower remains the ultimate symbol of Paris. Constructed as the centerpiece of the 1889 Paris Exposition Universally, the tower was designed by engineer *Gustave Eiffel* using advanced wrought iron technology revolutionary for its era. Composed of approximately 18,000 individual components and rising to a height of 312.3 meters, it was once the tallest structure in the world.

In 1991, it was officially recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The time difference between **Japan** and **France** during daylight saving time is **minus seven hours**. Thus, when it is 7:00 PM in Japan, it is noon in France.

France enjoys a remarkably temperate climate throughout much of the year, generally ranging between 10° C and 25° C. Northern and western France tend to be cooler and more humid, while the Mediterranean region offers warmer, drier summers reaching approximately 25° C to 30° C.

From spring through early autumn, rainfall remains relatively limited, creating ideal conditions for elegant travel experiences.



Bateaux Mouches

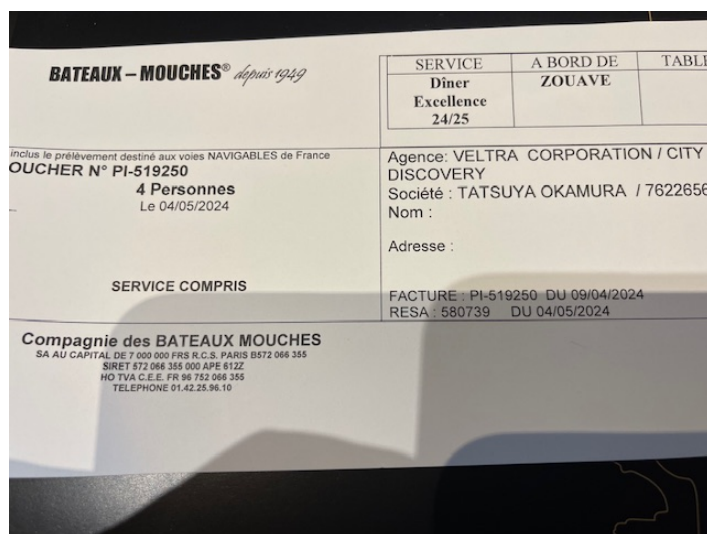


The iconic symbol of Seine River cruises, **Bateaux Mouches**.

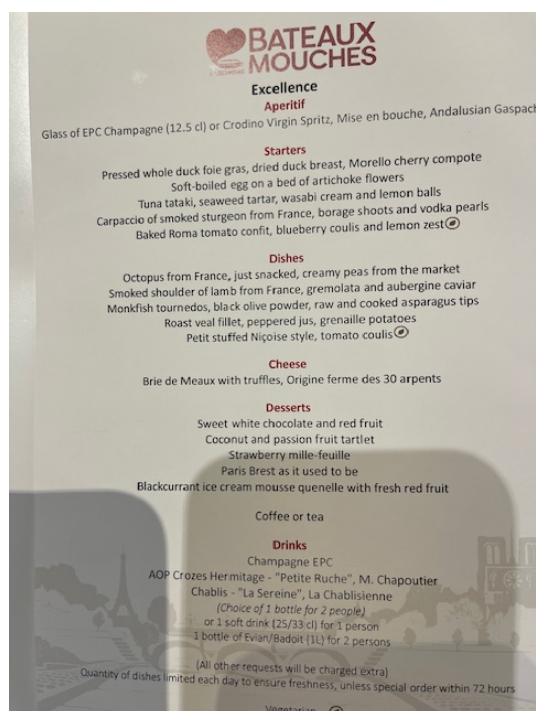
It has become my routine to enjoy the scenery of the Seine — the very stage of the Opening Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games — accompanied by an authentic luxury French dinner.

From inside the glass-enclosed vessel, one can fully admire the illuminated cityscape of Paris. The “Champagne Flash” of the Eiffel Tower, **sparkling every hour on the hour**, is breathtaking no matter how many times one witnesses it.

The dinner cruise cost approximately €900 ≙ ¥157,500.



That evening, I indulged in the world’s three great delicacies through authentic French cuisine: **Foie Gras**, **Caviar**, and **Truffle**.



The Scenery at Departure (Around 19:00)



Cheers!!



Let's enjoy this elegant dinner cruise together.



Time flows gently upon the Seine...



Although Gustave Eiffel is renowned as the designer of the **Eiffel Tower**, it is less widely known that he also engineered the internal structure of the Statue of Liberty in New York. While *Frédéric Bartholdi* designed the exterior appearance, it was Eiffel who was responsible for the statue's structural engineering.

The Statue of Liberty was conceived to commemorate **the 100th anniversary of American independence** and was completed in **1886** as a gift from France to the United States. The Eiffel Tower would rise only three years later, in 1889.



Relaxing while drinking *Tokowaka no Megumi*[®]

(*Tokowaka no Megumi*[®] Official Website)

brings a profound sense of happiness.

As my managerial mind had become slightly fatigued, I entered a state of meditation.

In business, what matters most is understanding *for whom* one ultimately works.

As a philosophy-driven executive, Okamura always clarifies his priorities:

1. Customers
2. Business Partners
3. Staff Members
4. Families of Staff Members
5. Local Communities and Municipalities
6. Nation and International Society
7. Shareholders

There must never be any deviation from this order.

As long as one does not mistake these priorities, failure can largely be avoided.

Thereafter, success — whether modest or great — is built through *bold yet meticulous execution*, carrying out ordinary things in the proper order with unwavering consistency.

It is remarkably simple, yet surprisingly difficult.

Now, onward to [Mont-Saint-Michel](#).



Roadside Stop Along the Way



The journey from Paris to Mont-Saint-Michel takes approximately **four and a half hours** including breaks.



At last, it comes into view...



Mont-Saint-Michel

Mont-Saint-Michel is a small tidal island floating in the Bay of Saint-Malo on the western coast of France, crowned by its magnificent abbey.

It belongs to the commune of Le Mont-Saint-Michel in the Manche department of Normandy.

A major Catholic pilgrimage destination, it has been described as the “Wonder of the Western World.”

In **1979**, it was inscribed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** under the title *Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay*, and in **October 1994** it was designated under **the Ramsar Convention**.





Incidentally, it is also famous for having inspired the kingdom castle in Disney's *Tangled*.

The principal structures are Gothic in style, though the interior incorporates a rich blend of medieval architectural forms.

The church reflects Carolingian influences, while the nave is Norman Romanesque (11th–12th century).

The Romanesque choir, destroyed after the Hundred Years' War in 1421, was rebuilt in the Flamboyant Gothic style between the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

Surrounding these are layered 13th-century monastic buildings and military fortifications dating from the 13th to 15th centuries.

The Gothic Revival bell tower and spire were completed in 1897, crowned by a gilded statue of the Archangel Michael holding a sword and scales, sculpted by *Emmanuel Frémiet*

(1824–1910).

Deep within the structure remain architectural remnants built successively upon the rocky mount over many centuries.



Main Street Resembling a Narrow Alleyway

The shops cater largely to tourists and are generally reasonably priced.

One characteristic of France is the absence of aggressive solicitation or excessive sales negotiation.



It has now been 166 years since diplomatic relations between Japan and France began. On **May 16, 2009**, **Hatsukaichi City in Hiroshima Prefecture** — home to Itsukushima Shrine — entered into a *Tourism Friendship Agreement* with the city of **Mont-Saint-Michel**.

Their shared characteristics include:

1. Both are World Heritage Sites floating upon the sea
2. Both possess over 1,000 years of history as sacred religious sites
3. Both are nationally representative tourist destinations

It is therefore a place with which I feel a profound connection.

The Famous Omelet

The enormous fluffy omelet traces its origins back to a nourishing pilgrim's meal designed long ago to satisfy travelers who journeyed from distant lands on pilgrimage.



The journey continues...

Admission Ticket



The church feels wonderfully serene beneath its soaring ceilings.



In response to the positive reception of the *Okamura Corporate Revitalization Theory*, I shall touch upon the initial phase of hands-on, accompaniment-style corporate support.

The very first steps to engagement should be:

1. Organizing and updating rules, regulations, and even personnel systems

2. Clarifying the structure of the organization itself
3. Conducting one-on-one meetings at every organizational level

The rights and obligations of workers must be clearly codified, while the responsibilities of management must also be explicitly defined.

Labor laws, compliance regulations, and employee work rules should all be updated and announced decisively.

At the same time, one must understand the company's operational model — for example, whether it is vertically integrated or horizontally specialized — and reorganize the structure accordingly.

The combination of these three actions forms the foundation of **Okamura Tatsuya's initial approach**, from which comprehensive organizational improvement and reform may begin.

Naturally, beyond this point, the details become corporate confidential information...



Bridging the gap between present reality and the ideal future state is, in essence, the purpose of a corporate revitalization plan.

Three-year and five-year forecasts should be advanced through clearly established milestones, always based upon *back casting*.

One common pitfall is the absence of a proper permeation strategy.

This refers to the process by which staff members and stakeholders genuinely internalize and accept the vision.

Success or failure of sustainable growth often hinges upon this very process.

There are methodologies for this as well, though they cannot be fully disclosed here.

Incidentally, I often **distinguish between *improvement* and *reform* in organizational management.**

“Improvement” may be compared to repairing old trains and railway lines while enhancing profitability through branding, price revisions, and timetable efficiency.

“Reform,” however, means selling the old trains, replacing the tracks entirely, and introducing high-speed bullet trains instead.

Such is the magnitude of the difference between improvement and reform.

Which path should be chosen ultimately depends upon the judgment of the decision-maker.



Regarding **PL (Profit & Loss)** improvement, there are generally two approaches:

1. **Increasing the top line**
2. **Workout restructuring**



Executives of financially distressed companies almost invariably advocate the first approach.

Managers lacking true aptitude — and there are eleven measurable indicators of managerial quality — often attempt to increase revenue by incurring additional initial costs, effectively gambling on a single risky opportunity.

Business is not gambling.

Even when taking risks, one must bet only when probability and rationale support the decision.

Success stories and anecdotal experiences alone are meaningless; all assertions must ultimately be reduced to numbers.

Even when seeking top-line growth, the Okamura methodology begins *without adding new initial costs or increasing running costs*.

What is required is not a *One-way Ticket*, but rather the mindset of a *Return Ticket (Round-trip Ticket)*.

This process must always be guided by the principles of the “3Es”:

- Economic Efficiency
- Operational Efficiency
- Effectiveness

As supplementary work, business due diligence (primarily qualitative analysis), followed by financial due diligence (primarily quantitative analysis), and finally hypothesis validation through insight-based analysis, serve as guiding indicators.

As for workout methodologies, perhaps another time...



Another point worth mentioning is that Japanese society must free itself from stereotypes — not only in business, but in life itself.

Fortunately, **Okamura Tatsuya was born free from such limitations.**

Working in Japan continually reveals just how deeply stereotypes permeate society. Westerners, raised within frameworks of economic rationality, tend to possess fewer stereotypes, making business collaborations both smoother and far more exciting.

Stereotypes are nothing but obstacles to creative enterprise.

Incidentally, financial support for companies requiring assistance generally begins with restructuring repayment schedules for principal and interest.

Where multiple financial institutions hold claims, bank meetings are conducted to ensure coordinated action.

If corporate improvement and reform measures succeed during this restructuring period and produce a V-shaped recovery, it becomes the ideal revitalization scenario.

Since restructuring periods generally last between six and twelve months, companies must confront the process with tremendous resolve while enduring significant hardship.

It is precisely during this phase that the true character, aptitude, and social contribution of corporate leadership are revealed.

Even if full normalization cannot be achieved within the restructuring period, management demonstrating genuine commitment may still receive subsequent financial support measures such as **DES** (Debt Equity Swap) or **DDS** (Debt Debt Swap).

While DDS is commonly utilized in small and medium-sized enterprise revitalization, the Okamura approach actively employs DES even for SMEs.

The reason is not merely to maintain influence as both shareholder and creditor — while carefully avoiding abuse of dominant position — but also because ownership percentages grant substantial legal rights.

For example:

- Ownership exceeding 3% grants the right to submit shareholder proposals and inspect accounting books
- Ownership exceeding one-third enables veto power over special resolutions
- Ownership exceeding one-half grants authority to independently pass ordinary shareholder resolutions

- Ownership exceeding two-thirds grants unilateral power over special resolutions such as mergers, acquisitions, business transfers, and organizational restructuring



Thus, the greater the shareholding ratio, the greater the influence one may legally exercise.

From the corporate perspective, absolute stable ownership exceeding two-thirds should never be relinquished.

If DES or DDS still fail to restore a company to healthy status — typically benchmarked by an EBITDA multiple targets within roughly ten years — financial institutions may proceed toward second-company schemes, sponsor-led restructuring, fund or service transfers, or ultimately liquidation and bankruptcy.

Finally, EBITDA multiples serve as benchmark valuation indicators measuring corporate earning power.

Enterprise Value (EV) divided by EBITDA produces the EBITDA multiple, with EV generally calculated as:

Market Capitalization + Net Interest-Bearing Debt

An approximate benchmark multiple of eight times is often referenced.



Paris, Capital of the French Republic

Paris (Area: 105.4 km² / Population: 2.1 million; Metropolitan Area: approximately 12.5 million) is the largest city in France and the nation's political, economic, and cultural center.

Together with London, it stands as one of Europe's great global cities.

The city is divided into twenty arrondissements spiraling clockwise outward from the 1st arrondissement, home to the Louvre Museum, creating the famous "escargot" layout.

The Louvre Museum



The Louvre Museum is France's national museum located in Paris.

Not only is it one of the largest museums in the world, but it is also one of the world's greatest historic monuments, situated on the Right Bank of the Seine in the 1st arrondissement of central Paris.

The museum houses more than 380,000 works, with nearly 35,000 artworks from prehistoric times through the 19th century displayed across an exhibition space spanning approximately 60,600 square meters.



Part of its collection is frequently loaned overseas, including to Japan.





The Louvre is the most visited museum in the world, attracting over eight million visitors annually, surpassing ten million visitors for the first time in 2018.

It is also included within the UNESCO World Heritage designation of the Banks of the Seine in Paris.

The Louvre Museum is housed within the former Louvre Castle (later the Louvre Palace), originally constructed as a fortress in the 12th century by *King Philip II* of France (1165–1223), known as “Philip Augustus.”

Although traces of its original military function remain visible today, the structure has undergone countless expansions and renovations over the centuries, evolving into the magnificent Louvre Palace seen today.



Desired... yet not for sale.



Spoils of victory.





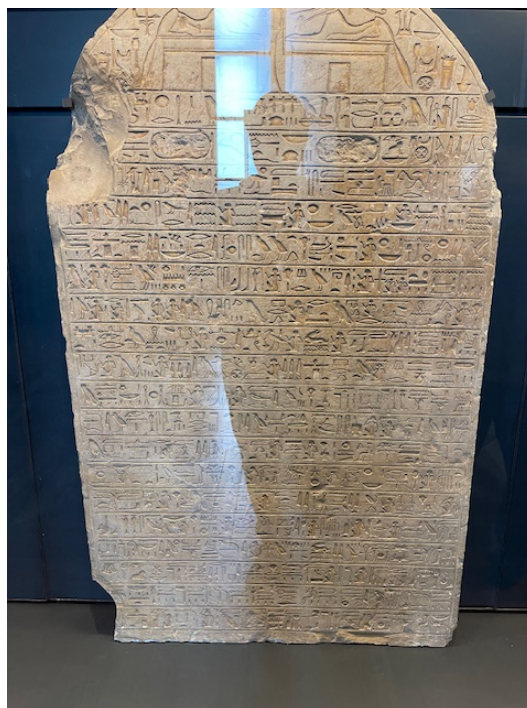
Given the times...



Although entry to the Louvre is possible without advance reservations, priority is given to ticket holders, meaning visitors without reservations may face extremely long waiting times before admission.

As the museum itself is vast and requires extensive walking and viewing time, prolonged waiting beforehand can become physically exhausting.

For a smoother experience, purchasing tickets in advance is strongly recommended.

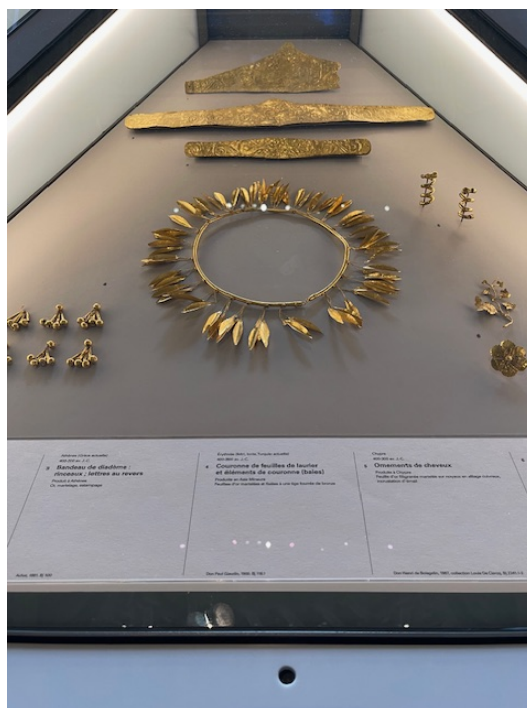


The works are displayed according to country and region, including:

- 17th-century Flemish paintings
- 16th-century Dutch paintings
- 15th–16th-century German paintings

- 17th-century French paintings

Among them, French paintings are particularly exceptional in both quality and quantity.



Together with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States and the Hermitage Museum in Russia, the Louvre is counted among the three great museums of the world.

Ideally, one should spend three to four days exploring it thoroughly.



Its dazzling brilliance feels strangely comforting.



France is often called “The Country of Love.”
Its philosophy of remaining romantically active throughout life is truly admirable.

A stir in the crowd...



As expected.



Leonardo da Vinci's Masterpiece — *Mona Lisa*

Created around 1503–1513 by Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci (1452–1519) of the Republic of Florence (modern-day Italy), this masterpiece, painted in oil on a poplar panel, is known as the *Mona Lisa*.

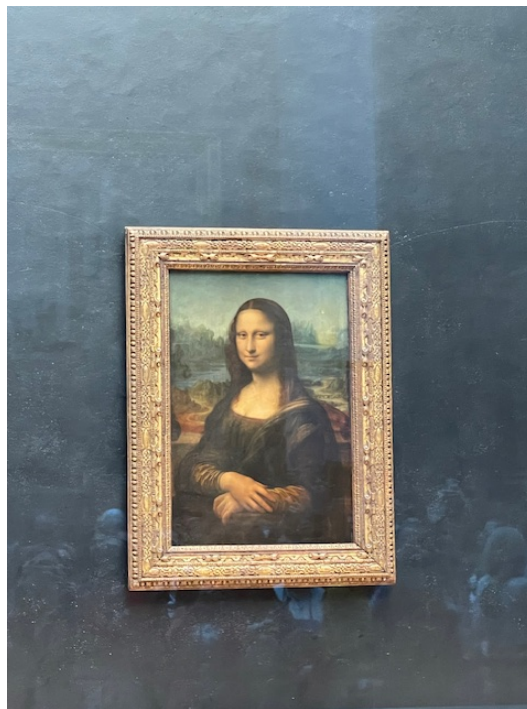
Its mysterious smile conceals all visible emotion.

Although a portrait, the background depicts an outdoor landscape.

Da Vinci's use of *sfumato* — the delicate blurring technique that leaves no harsh outlines or brush traces — enhances the softness and beauty of the woman's form.

The work also employs “atmospheric perspective,” in which nearby elements are rendered clearly while distant scenery becomes increasingly indistinct.

Also known as *La Gioconda*, the subject is believed to be Lisa Gherardini, the second wife of Florentine merchant Francesco del Giocondo.



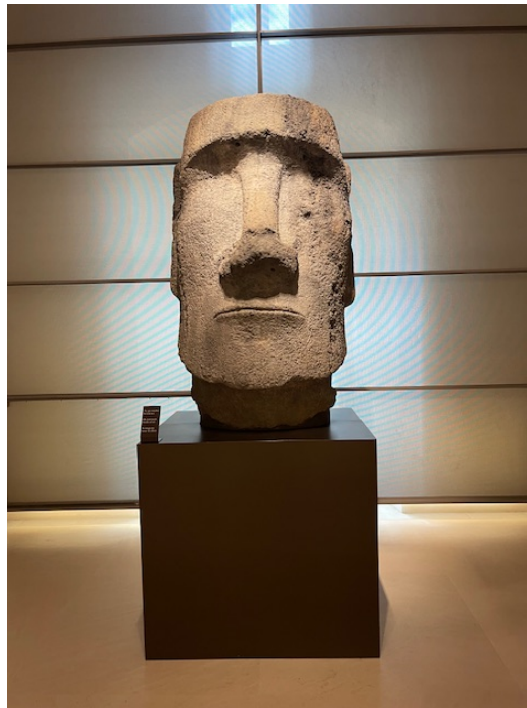
The *Mona Lisa* has also been described as:

“The best known, most visited, most written about, most sung about, and most parodied work of art in the world.”

just in case

Of course.

Yes — the photograph is **genuine**.



By contrast, the Closing Ceremony inevitably reflects the imbalance between those who achieved their goals and those who did not, transforming it into a ceremony for the victors.

To see what is right and fail to act is a lack of courage.

Even back then...

And now, once again.

Sorrow and joy.



The French, known for their confidence and deep love of both them and their country, take immense pride in their culture and history, believing France to stand at the very center of Europe.



Even if you cannot speak French, in any situation, always begin with:

“**Bonjour**”

Place de la Concorde and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

Places such as the Place de la Concorde were also used as venues for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

(July 26–August 11 and August 28–September 8, 2024).



Following the Paris Olympics, Japan celebrated its highest-ever gold medal count, and rightly so.

However, from observing the athletes' expressions, I found their faces on the day of the Opening Ceremony especially striking.

At that moment, their expressions embodied the culmination of the long road toward the Olympics — filled with personal ambitions, goals of achieving personal bests or medals, as well as determination, joy, and gratitude.

Before rankings and medals divided competitors, there existed a refreshing sense of equality rooted in shared aspiration and anticipation.

The Paris Olympics may be described as an “**ideology-driven Olympics.**”



It deserves praise for clearly presenting ideals and themes, identifying and organizing the issues facing the modern Olympic Games, and attempting to incorporate a vision for the future of Olympic operations and competition management.

In that sense, it closely resembles the Okamura style.

However, while the process of creating an inspiring concept, building the team, and presenting the “Paris Promise” through storytelling was admirable, the effort to bridge the gap between idealism and reality — the “permeation strategy” — did not appear to function effectively.

In my view, preparation was insufficient.

This phenomenon strongly resembles what occurs in corporate and business revitalization projects when there is a lack of practical, on-the-ground operational understanding.

Incidentally, one occasionally encounters commentary claiming that Japanese people have overestimated the maturity, freedom, and creativity of French and Parisian culture.



Allow me to state boldly, without fear of misunderstanding:

From the perspective of someone who has deeply understood and experienced France firsthand, I can confidently say that it is not overestimation — it is proper evaluation.

While watching the marathon events, I was particularly impressed by how the course selection was intentionally designed around Paris's landmarks, scenery, and historical heritage.



It felt perfectly suited for exploring Paris through a four- or five-day journey.



The passionate competition of the ongoing Paralympics must not be missed either...



Now then — rise up!

Without dreams, there is no tomorrow. Tomorrow is created by dreams.

