



*~Think Together about the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations~*

## Today's Berlin, the capital of unified Germany

### Renovation as a New Capital

Junko Nagai, freelance journalist in Berlin

Seventeen years after the reunification of East and West Germany, Berlin's renovation as the capital of a united Germany is almost complete. The development, however, is still underway, and the charms of the uncompleted capital fascinate many tourists from other parts of Germany and abroad. After Berlin became the capital again, visiting tourists have increased every year. In June this year, approximately 700,000 people stayed at hotels in Berlin, an increase of over twenty percent from the same month of the year before when the FIFA World Cup was held in Germany.

The capital relocation process took a very long time. The Berlin Wall collapsed in 1989. On October 3, 1990, East and West Germany were reunified, and Berlin was designated as the capital, generating tremendous controversy and splitting public opinion. Some argued the Federal Parliament and other government offices should stay in Bonn (population: approximately 300,000), which contributed greatly to Germany's democratization as the provisional capital of West Germany for over forty years. Others argued Berlin (population: over 3 million) should be the capital, although Berlin has a dark past of Nazism. On June 20, 1991, the Federal Parliament in Bonn decided to relocate the Federal Parliament and other major government offices to Berlin. The vote was 338 to 320 by a margin of 18, which was announced as 17 on that day but was corrected later. The relocation, however, didn't start immediately.

The first Federal Parliament session in the renovated former Imperial Parliament building in Berlin was held on April 19, 1999, eight years later. The "capital relocation of the century" was carried out in the summer of the same year. From July to August, the Federal Parliament and other major federal government offices, including the Federal Chancellor's Office, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Federal Ministry of Justice, Federal Ministry of Finance, and Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, moved to Berlin. Six ministries, which are the Federal Ministry of Defence, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, and Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, are still located in Bonn, the federal city.

Responding to the relocation, embassies of over 150 countries that have diplomatic relations with Germany had to move to Berlin as well. Most countries, including Japan, have completed renovating their pre-war embassy buildings or erecting new buildings. An area near the Tiergarten Park is being developed as the new embassy district. The United States is building a new embassy building near Brandenburg Gate.

The infrastructure had to be improved as well and completing the new Central Station was particularly urgent. The Central Station with its glass hall, near the government offices, opened in May 2006, just before the FIFA World Cup. This completed the railroad network connecting Berlin and other cities, reducing the traveling time to Hamburg, Dresden, and other cities. A big disadvantage, however, is that the railroad doesn't share tracks with the U-Bahn (subway) crisscrossing the city. The present Tegel Airport is too small and has no direct flights to Japan. A large international airport will open in 2011 on the premises of the former East German Schöneberg Airport in the suburbs of Berlin.



Berlin Central Station and Spree River

### Environment friendly modern architecture and transparent political system

The political core of the new capital Berlin is the Parliament Building. There is always a long queue of

Berliners and tourists in front of the building. The former Imperial Parliament, built over one hundred years ago in the era of Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany, was a dark masonry building. After four years of renovation costing approximately 42 billion yen, the Parliament still has the old framework, but is a modern and functional building with lots of glass.

A great British architect, Norman Foster, designed the renovation. He created an environment friendly building with many advanced technologies, as well as meeting the request of parliament officials for the new Parliament Building to symbolize freedom, democracy, and clean transparent politics. The new building has a glass dome 23 meters high and 40 meters in diameter. This glass dome is open daily to the public from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. The glass dome symbolizes transparent politics and is an essential part in the lighting and heating systems that use solar light and heat as well as being part of the natural ventilation system. Many new buildings in Berlin are environment friendly buildings. The glass roof on top of the new Central Station has a myriad of solar panels.



Federal Parliament (former Imperial Parliament) building, where there is a long queue of visitors every day



Federal Chancellor's Office with a semicircle blue window called the giant washing machine

The Federal Chancellor's Office is the only building that was newly-built for the capital relocation. All other government buildings are repaired or renovated buildings. A few minutes walk from the Parliament will bring you to the Federal Chancellor's Office by the Spree River, impressive with its bright beige walls and glass windows. The Chancellor's Office, also serving as the Chancellor's residence, was completed in May 2001, eighteen months after Chancellor Schroder started working in Berlin. It took three years and eight months to build, costing 23,250,000,000 yen. Berliners call it the giant washing machine because the 36 meter tall square building with a semicircle blue window looks like one. After unification, touring the Spree River by sightseeing boats became a popular tourist attraction. White sightseeing boats by the giant washing machine are a familiar sight now.

During the last weekend of this August there was a long queue in front of the Federal Chancellor's Office as well. After the capital relocation, the event of Citizens' Government Visit has been held every summer with the Federal Chancellor's Office and other federal ministries' offices open to the public. The Federal Chancellor's Office is particularly popular, attracting several tens of thousands of visitors this year. Visitors can tour the building, seeing many rooms including meeting rooms, press conference rooms, and a gallery where portraits of successive Chancellors are displayed, as well as seeing the heliport and enjoying beer and sausages in a tent built in the riverside garden. Tourists from abroad are also welcome. Chancellor Merkel appears on Saturday afternoons, answering visitors' questions, and discussing with visitors about issues like sending the Federal Army overseas. Here again, the motto is "politics that are open to the public."

Brandenburg Gate, the symbol of unified Germany, is very close to the Parliament building. Major events and festivals, including the open-air New Year's Eve party and the Fan Mile with its public viewing of the FIFA World Cup, are often held around this gate.

Relocating the capital to Berlin also reminded people of the city's dark past as well. Constructing the Holocaust Denkmal (monument) is an effort to overcome this dark past. This monument commemorating European Jews killed in the Nazi era is next to Brandenburg Gate. This central area of Berlin symbolizes both the glory and dark past of the city.



The facade of the Chancellor's Office on Citizens' Government Visit day



## On-Line Lecture Meetings Being Held

On-line lecture meetings are being held on MLIT's Web page for the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations. Lecture meetings have been held with intellectuals in disciplines including academic and economic sectors. The following lectures have been newly added from March 2007. Please visit the Web page at <http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudokeikaku/iten/onlinelecture/index.html> for more information.

### **Professor Hirofumi Yamamoto**

**(Professor at the Historiographical Institute, University of Tokyo)**



Theme: Relocation of capital function to regain the vitality that regional towns and cities had in the Edo era

Summary

- In the early Edo period, capital functions were shared between Edo and Kamigata. Emerging and traditional royal powers co-existed in the Edo period, with their capitals in Edo and Kyoto respectively.
- With the population mobility resulting from *Sankin Kotai* (dominions residing in Edo in alternate years) and other reasons, regional towns and cities flourished. This is a major characteristic of the Edo era. When correcting today's hollowing-out of regional towns and cities, linking it to capital function relocation, systems in the Edo era may provide some useful clues.
- Since the bakufu (feudal government) had great power in the Edo era, it would have been easier to relocate *bakufu* functions, even if Edo was struck by a disaster. Today, however, the government does not have such power. We need to prepare some backup facilities, replicating how nishinomaru (west ward) backed up honmaru (main ward) at Edo Castle.
- When we think about capital function relocation, we also need to think about how we can solve the issues of declining regional towns and cities, which used to have vitality in the Edo era. For example, holding Diet sessions in several cities in turn might be useful to vitalize regional cities.

### **Mr. Kosuke Motani**

**(Senior Advisor, Planning Department for Regional Development, Development Bank of Japan)**



Theme: National structure that does not depend on Tokyo

Summary

- Many Japanese argue that the over-concentration in Tokyo has economic advantages. Such an argument, however, is based on the domestic viewpoint alone. If the advantages of over-concentration are so great, such over-concentration should be observed in many countries including Western countries and China. In reality, no other city in the world is as over-concentrated as Tokyo.
- Over-concentrated business functions present some risks including natural disasters and uniformed corporate sentiment. Over-concentration increases living costs and decreases quality of life. It is internationally popular to have a national structure where corporations have their head offices in different towns or cities, avoiding the above-mentioned risks and increased costs. Looking at long-term trends and reinventing Japan's industry structure not to depend on Tokyo is important from the viewpoint of national planning.
- The live birth rate in Tokyo is extremely low, less than 1.0. This very low population reproduction is another major problem. Raising children is difficult in an extremely densely-populated environment. Concentrating young people in such an environment certainly accelerated Japan's population decrease. This over-concentration is an issue of burning concern.

### **Ms. Keiko Hirano (Storyteller, newscaster)**

Theme: Building a new city that values both state-of-the-art technologies and basic communication

Summary

- To know the country and region you live in is essential in maintaining the sense of community and learning who you are. From old times, storytellers have passed such knowledge on to others in their communities.
- Going all the way to meet someone and communicate something may look inefficient, but meeting face to face helps people to foster mutual trust and is very important for building bonds.
- Diet sessions could be held in several towns and cities in turn. Through this, people living in regions where Diet sessions are held could have more opportunity to meet the Prime Minister, politicians, and other government officials face to face.
- The new city should employ state-of-the-art technologies with a core of basic face-to-face communication. Creating such an environment of total communication would provide an ideal city to live in.



## Booklet of On-Line Lecture Meetings (Vol. 4) was published

We have published the Booklet of On-Line Lecture Meetings on the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations (Vol. 4), which includes twelve lectures delivered in FY 2006. If you would like a copy, please contact the address below. There is a small fee for postage.



## Learning on the Relocation is Taking Place around Japan

On Tuesday, July 17, four second and third year students from Fujimigaoka Junior High School of Shibuya Ward, Tokyo visited the Capital Functions Relocation Planning Division of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) for a workplace visit. The student studied very hard, listening attentively to the MLIT staff's explanation on the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations.



## Children's Kasumigaseki Tour Days were Held

On Wednesday, August 22, and Thursday, August 23, Children's Kasumigaseki Tour Days for elementary and junior high school students were held. The tour programs included *Let's Enjoy the Virtual Experience of the New Capital Function City!* The program introduced the image of the new capital function city through virtual experience in a PC game. Children also watched a DVD introducing the new city and enjoyed a quiz game on the relocation of the National Diet and related organizations. Posters were displayed and pamphlets and other materials were distributed. Despite the hot weather on both days, more children participated in the tour than last year. Children energetically and enthusiastically participated in the PC game and quiz.



## Topics

### Recent Major Activities Related to Relocating the National Diet and Related Organizations in Each Region

- In Gifu and Aichi Prefectures, the Higashi-Mino and Northern Nishi-Mikawa Capital Concept Promotion Council sponsored a lecture meeting, "Capital Function Relocation and Japan's Future," to promote the significance and necessity of relocating capital functions, inviting Mr. Kisho Kurokawa, architect, as a lecturer. The lecture meeting took place in Ceramic Park Mino (Tajimi City, Gifu Prefecture) on Thursday, September 6, and approximately 250 people attended, including members of local commerce and industry associations and local residents.



### Accessing Various Information

Various information concerning the capital functions relocation has been provided on the MLIT Homepage on the Internet. Please visit this web-site.

Also if you are interested in items in this leaflet and others, please let us know. We are pleased to send related documents to you. We are awaiting your contact.

### We are Waiting for Your Opinion

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