



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

Learning from the history of capital reconstruction plans - Looking back at Shimpei Goto's achievements in the one hundred and fiftieth year since his birth

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Four hundred years of Edo and Tokyo, and two capital reconstruction plans

Many Japanese cities date back to the Azuchi-Momoyama or early-Edo period, approximately four centuries ago, when they were built as castle towns. They were reconstructed after their destruction in air raids during World War II. Edo (present day Tokyo) was the largest of all castle towns. Edo's urban areas were extended in the reconstruction after the Great Fire of Meireki in 1657. Samurai residences, temples and shrines, and *chonin* (townsmen) houses were relocated, *hiyokechi* (firebreak open spaces) were established, and roads widened. With a population of one million, Edo, along with London, became one of the largest cities in the world.

However, the Meiji government, which took power from the Edo shogunate government, neglected to establish a comprehensive urban policy. They only converted daimyo (feudal lords) mansions in Edo into government offices, military lands, universities, and embassies, reconstructing only a few local areas including the Ginza brick town. In the Taisho period (1912 - 1926), urban problems including insufficient roads, water supply, sewerage systems, slums, and transportation became serious.

In 1909, the first town planning act was established in England. Ten years later, Japan also started urban planning, establishing urban planning and building laws. The Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 destroyed Tokyo. The government immediately started reconstruction of the capital, working on the imperial capital reconstruction project and submitting the budget to the Imperial Diet. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Tokyo City worked together, sharing the responsibility, to implement the reconstruction project, which was completed in 1930. The reconstruction project drastically changed Tokyo, creating a completely new road network in the city center and *shitamachi* (downtown) area, building parks of various sizes and many bridges, establishing elementary schools and small parks next to each other, and producing the Dojunkai apartments. These were the great achievements of the reconstruction project.

Establishing the urban planning law and implementing the imperial capital reconstruction project might have not been possible without the remarkable leadership and insight of Shimpei Goto, who was twice appointed as the Minister of Home Affairs. He was born in Mizusawa in the Sendai domain (present Oshu City in northern Honshu). After working as a physician, he became a government official in the health and welfare administration. He became the Director of the Health Department, Ministry of Home Affairs, in his thirties. Winning the confidence of Gentaro Kodama (Minister of Army, Government-General of Formosa), Goto was appointed, when he was still forty-one, as the chief of civil administration under the Japanese colonial government in Taiwan, where he carried out his work with excellence. Then, after serving as the President of the South Manchurian Railroad, he returned to Japan, when he was fifty-five, to serve as the Minister of Communications. He held many important posts, including the President of the National Railroad Authority, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mayor of Tokyo City, and President of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Institute. He died in 1929 at the age of seventy-one, one year before the imperial capital reconstruction project was completed.

What we should learn from the reconstruction process

Shimpei Goto was different from other politicians. He formulated policies backed by research, clearly defined his visions, and realized policies with teams of highly motivated government officials, experts, and scholars. As a Japanese politician, he was exceptionally keen on improving social infrastructure, including urban planning, water and sewerage, public health, and broad-gauge railways.

Seeing Japan's future development from a global point of view, with an eye toward the West and Asia, Goto worked enthusiastically to improve social infrastructure, particularly focusing on urban planning in Tokyo, strengthen national power, and increase the prosperity of Japan. His major achievements include planning reconstruction after the Great Kanto Earthquake, establishing the Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research, and promoting the broad-gauge railway plan, which later evolved into the *Shinkansen* (bullet train).

Reviewing the reconstruction plan after the Great Kanto Earthquake from the three perspectives of (1) political process and plan downsizing, (2) the positive heritage of accomplished urban planning projects, and (3) the negative heritage of unaccomplished projects provides many important lessons we should learn when thinking of how the future capital should be.

Lessons we should learn from reviewing the political process are that the national government must take responsibility in policy making and adequate human resources must be mobilized. When Tokyo and Yokohama were devastated and capital functions

severely damaged, Goto immediately and clearly opposed capital relocation, issuing an imperial ordinance. He stated, "Not restoration to the former state, but the reconstruction of a new city." This eliminated people's concerns and confusion, giving them hope for the future.

He established the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Institute that ranked equally with the ministries. He mobilized social infrastructure experts from the Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Railways, keeping them away from their daily tasks at the ministries to concentrate on imperial capital reconstruction projects. He appointed Toshikata Sano, a leading young architect who was the driving force behind establishing the urban planning law, as a board member of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Institute. The architect also served as the director of the Building Department. Even today, Goto's adherence to his principles and mobilizing proper human resources has many lessons to teach us.

Establishing the Advisory Council for Imperial Capital Reconstruction, which was composed of elder politicians, leaders of political parties, and predominant business leaders, was a major failure. Members of the Council were given the same status as government ministers. Elder politicians, who did not take responsibility for reconstruction, attacked the reconstruction plan, demanding it be downsized, despite cabinet intentions.

Government policy making should be independent of the recommendations of advisory bodies as well as educating the public and manipulating public opinion. The role of the Advisory Council for the Imperial Capital Reconstruction should have been limited to experts from various disciplines providing opinions and advice, not a miniature version of a congress or senate where politicians engage in political performances. The War Damage Reconstruction Institute did not have such an advisory council, making it possible to promptly rebuild cities and towns throughout Japan. After the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, a government reconstruction committee was established. It is worthwhile to examine and compare the pros and cons that these examples provide.

Positive and negative heritage of imperial capital reconstruction

Thanks to imperial capital reconstruction projects, roads and parks in Tokyo were greatly improved in the early thirties, and Tokyo was reborn as a beautiful city. Many high-quality privately owned buildings were built throughout Tokyo. Today, people cannot see the heritage of the projects because the original beauty of the completed facilities has been lost. Strips of land along main streets with trees and plants, including Gyoko Street and Showa Street, were removed after the World War II. Today, the Metropolitan Expressway runs above Sumida and Hama-cho Parks. The parks themselves have been redesigned.

After the Ministry of Home Affairs completed main streets, bridges, and parks, they were placed under the control of Tokyo City. After the war, many streets, parks, and public buildings were further transferred from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to the city wards. Some wards, however, little understood the values of the imperial capital reconstruction heritage because they were not directly involved in implementing the reconstruction projects. For example, concerning Motomachi Park and the nearby elementary school, the only reconstruction project area still existing today, the ward proposed the elimination, not the restoration, of Motomachi Park. This is a negative aspect of the transfer, where the history and culture of the city are neglected.

Looking at Paris, she was made into a beautiful and magnificent city with an iron hand. Poor people were driven away, and first-class areas along the newly built main streets were sold to wealthy people. The imperial capital reconstruction projects, however, did not adopt such forced removal. The city was redeveloped step-by-step so that newly built areas blend well with old Edo streets. In return for a 10 percent reduction of their land, original residents were able to stay on. This lenient land rearrangement enabled many small residences, legacies of Edo's *chonin* residences, to remain along the streets, while resulting in a messy cityscape.

Today, Tokyo's *shitamachi* area, the old downtown, is filled with many small mid-rise buildings and apartments. This owes much to the imperial capital reconstruction projects, but few local residents know the history of the projects. Looking at Sumida Ward, the southern half of the ward (Honjo) has a more orderly cityscape, thanks to the imperial capital reconstruction projects. The northern half (Mukojima), however, was excluded from the projects, and old agricultural fields were urbanized without planning, resulting in a very densely populated area. The difference between these two areas is obvious.

Many projects of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Plan had to be downsized or abandoned due to recommendations of the Advisory Council for the Imperial Capital Reconstruction and budget reductions from the Imperial Diet. As for areas escaping from the fire following the earthquake, all urban planning projects had to be abandoned except for two projects: widening the Keihin Kokudo road (between Shinbashi and Shinagawa) and building the Meiji street (Tokyo's first ring road).

The War Damage Reconstruction Plan implemented by prefectural governments and cities, not by the national government, had significant results in Sendai, Nagoya, Hiroshima, and Kagoshima as well as other areas throughout Japan. In the Tokyo Metropolitan area, however, most projects of the War Damage Reconstruction Plan were abandoned with the sole exception of the station square. This resulted in an expansion of unplanned development, inside and outside of the Yamanote Loop Line. Most parts of the main roads (the ring roads, No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4, and radial roads, No. 5 and No. 6) and subsidiary streets are still uncompleted today.

The two reconstruction plans, i.e. the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Plan and the War Damage Reconstruction Plan, were downsized and not sufficiently completed, resulting in a lack of open space in Tokyo. Building elevated highways during the redevelopment of Tokyo for the Tokyo Olympic Games thus required sacrificing trees lining streets, parks, and canals that were built in the imperial capital reconstruction project. As a result, Tokyo residents have limited opportunity to enjoy walking on tree-lined streets or talking with friends in parks. They may mistakenly understand that the Metropolitan Expressway, made of iron and concrete, and today's Showa Street are what urban planners intended for Tokyo.

Due to the budget reduction of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Plan, most multipurpose underground conduit projects were also abandoned. The only exceptions were Kudansaka and Kyobashi, where they were built on a trial basis. Thanks to the imperial capital reconstruction project, well-paved roads, trees lining streets, and sidewalks became ordinary to citizens. Multipurpose underground conduits, however, are not common yet in Japan. Without them, Japanese streets are still filled with many utility poles. In this regard, Japanese cities lag behind other cities in the developed world. Even in colorful and lively areas like Shibuya and Roppongi, if you look up, you will see many wires running like spider webs. This is more negative heritage due to the downsizing of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Plan.

- References
1. Akira Koshizawa, "Reconstruction Plans." Chuko Shinsho, 2005.
 2. Akira Koshizawa, "Shimpei Goto and Tokyo Urban Planning: Stateman, Shimpei Goto - His Life and Achievement." (Urban Problem Open Lecture Booklets) Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research, 2007.

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 October 2007. Please visit the Web page at <http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudokeikaku/iten/onlinelecture/index.html> for more information.

Professor Masumi Shiraishi (Professor at the Faculty of Policy Studies, Kansai University)

Theme: The relocation of the national Diet and related organizations requires public acceptance

Summary

- In order for the public to accept the relocation, the national benefits of relocation, as well as the cost-benefit performance, should be made clear.
- Under the present circumstances, building a national consensus may be easier if relocation is kept to the minimum, only for backing up a system of critical functions, and using more money for solving Tokyo's problems and revitalizing regions with battered economies.
- I hope the new city, where capital functions are relocated to, achieves what existing cities cannot in terms of environment-friendliness and measures for meeting the needs of our aging society. In addition to infrastructure, other aspects such as amenities for better life must be improved.

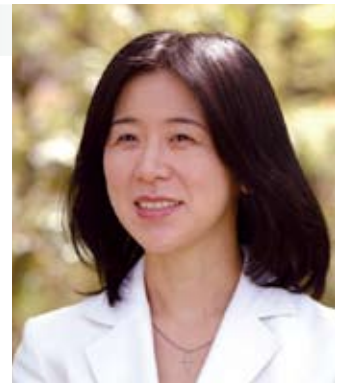


Ms. Izumi Kuwano (Managing Director of Yufuin Tamanoyu Hotel)

Theme: The relocation of the national Diet and related organizations will trigger reviewing the relationships between Tokyo and other regions.

Summary

- The future city, where the national Diet and related organizations will be relocated to, should have the rural amenities of many regions throughout Japan. Something interesting may evolve when they are combined in the future city.
- In the future, it is important that large cities and rural areas complement each other, rather than conflict with each other. For that purpose, rural residents should help urban residents understand more about rural areas.
- The relocation will trigger reviewing the relationships between Tokyo and other regions. I hope that other regions will be able to communicate with each other directly, not through Tokyo.



Professor Noyuri Mima (Professor at the School of Systems Information Science, Future University Hakodate)

Theme: The relocation is a good opportunity to realize cooperative politics and public administration.

Summary

- When relocating the capital functions, it is important to take into account the living environment of the residents, as well as administrative and other such functions. New and old residents should work together to build a community.
- Showcases where the government's policy on science technology is displayed and forums for dialogue should be established in the new city. A mechanism where academic, business, and government circles cooperate in politics and public administration is also necessary.
- In order for the public to better understand capital function relocation, presenting an idealized vision, considering the views of ordinary citizens, is necessary. When building the new city, it is important to present a clear concept at first to avoid paying too much attention to the technology.



Ms. Mari Christine (Intercultural communicator)

Theme: Capital function relocation requires sensible (common-sense) judgment of each and every individual.

Summary

- A disadvantage of the excess concentration in Tokyo is that it creates a wide gap between the haves and have-nots. While maintaining the advantages of concentration, it is necessary to implement measures to prevent overly large gaps.
- When thinking about the capital function relocation issue, we need to think more about where our hearts and souls are and where the Japanese spirit is.
- The capital function relocation issue requires each of us to make a sensible (common-sense) judgment, examining necessary public investment. The issue has to be discussed thoroughly, listening to the opinions of the public. It may be a good idea to establish an open forum for discussion, where people from various backgrounds can participate.



Professor Jiro Hirano (Journalist, Professor at Gakushuin Women's College)

Theme: Capital function relocation has already started – The government must take initiative and come up with a clearly delineated plan.

Summary

- Like some other countries, Japan should think about national structure from multiple perspectives. Temporally relocating capital functions away from Tokyo, for example, may be a good idea. This may be the Japanese version of capital function relocation.
- Considering Tsukuba Science City and on-demand systems via the Internet, capital function relocation, in some sense, has already started.
- For well-balanced national development, restructuring national land is inevitable. In order for voters to approve, a vision must be presented. The government must take the initiative and present a sound plan.



Topics

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

- The Fukushima Prefectural Government held an art contest, inviting elementary school pupils living in the Prefecture to submit a painting of A City Submerged in Forest. The Prefecture proposes such a city as the image of a new city in the 21st century. Selected works were on exhibit from November 2007 to January 2008. The Prefectural Government also exhibited panels and distributed pamphlets to promote the significance and necessity of relocating capital functions.
- The Tochigi Prefectural Residents' Meeting for the Relocation of the National Diet and Related Organizations had an information corner at the Tochigi Housing Fair 2007 held in Utsunomiya City from October 19 to 21. Panels were exhibited and pamphlets were distributed, providing information on capital function relocation.



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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