

History

The Capital Relocation to Heijo-kyo - An Age of Huge Waste and Executive Power

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In present-day Japan, it is not easy for the government to spend taxes on constructing new public facilities, called *hakomono* in Japanese. This is because building *hakomono* has been viewed as wasteful tax spending. However, the real problem lies in the fact that many of these facilities have not provided substantial benefits to the public due to a lack of planning and operational capabilities. In 710, in accordance with the capital relocation to Heijo-kyo, the former capital Fujiwara-kyo in the southern area of the Nara Basin was abandoned after only 16 years as Japan's capital. It can be said that the incident was a far greater waste in scale than today's *hakomono* constructions. A large city, not a large building, was abandoned to create another city. If this happened in today's Japan, there is no doubt that such a governmental decision would be absolutely rejected by the citizens, and the government would not be able to withstand the criticism.

When Prince Oama won the Jinshin War in 672, he ascended the throne and his reign as Emperor Tenmu started. First, he placed the center of his administration in Asuka-kiyomiharano-miya, located in Asuka. However, he enthusiastically stated that he would create multiple capitals and start constructing the first capital in Naniwa. It seemed that he was inspired by the two large capitals, Changan and Louyang, built by the Tang Dynasty in China. From this perspective, let us look at the present situation in Japan. I wonder why the government does not realize and evaluate the fact that people are souring on the discussions about capital function relocation that are heavily focused on the candidate sites. We obviously live in an age of no leadership in Japan.

When Tenmu declared his intention to have multiple capitals, there was already a capital in Naniwa, called Naniwa-nagara-toyosaki-no-miya, which was created by Emperor Koutoku after the Taika Reform (also known as the Revolt of Isshi). Tenmu planned on renewing the capital in Naniwa as well as building Fujiwara-kyo, a new Chinese-style capital, with the beautiful scenery of the Three Mountains of Yamato in the backdrop. It was probably much to Tenmu's chagrin that he wasn't able to see the completed capital before his death. Finally, the capital was relocated from Asuka to Fujiwara-kyo by his wife, Empress Jitou. Indeed, two capitals – one in Naniwa and another in Yamato – co-existed. The main capital was Fujiwara-kyo, while Naniwa-kyo with the port of Naniwazu played a role as the national hub of water transport. The two capitals were established with a balance between political and diplomatic objectives.

Going back to the capital relocation of Japan today, I think the issue reached a deadlock after it was replaced with the issue of local area revitalization.

Discussion has been focused on the relocation of the capital functions, which is a rather small issue in scale. In this age of globalization, I wonder why there is no discussion about the significance of having two capitals based on a broader vision as in ancient times. It would be ideal to make one capital city that is a center of international affairs and another one that deals with domestic affairs. It is curious that there has never been any consideration given to the idea of making a structure that balances diplomacy and internal administration just like Emperor Tenmu did.

Only 16 years after its establishment, Fujiwara-kyo was wastefully abandoned. It was not an emperor who led the capital relocation but a high-ranking bureaucrat named Fujiwara-no-fuhito, who aimed to assume control over the government by establishing familial ties with the imperial family by having his daughter, Miyako, marry an emperor. After his grandson, Obitonomiko, was born to Miyako and Emperor Monmu, Fuhito's final objective was to have him take over the throne. For the coronation, Fuhito wanted a special stage for the Fujiwara family and decided to build a new capital, Heijo-kyo, in the northern edge of the Nara Basin. However, Empress Genmei, mother of Emperor Monmu and the third emperor in Fujiwara-kyo, was against the capital relocation. The reason was simple. Fujiwara-kyo was created by Emperor Tenmu. On the other hand, Heijo-kyo was a capital built by a senior bureaucrat with a desire to demonstrate his family's power. In the end, Empress Genmei accepted the capital relocation in 710, though unwillingly.

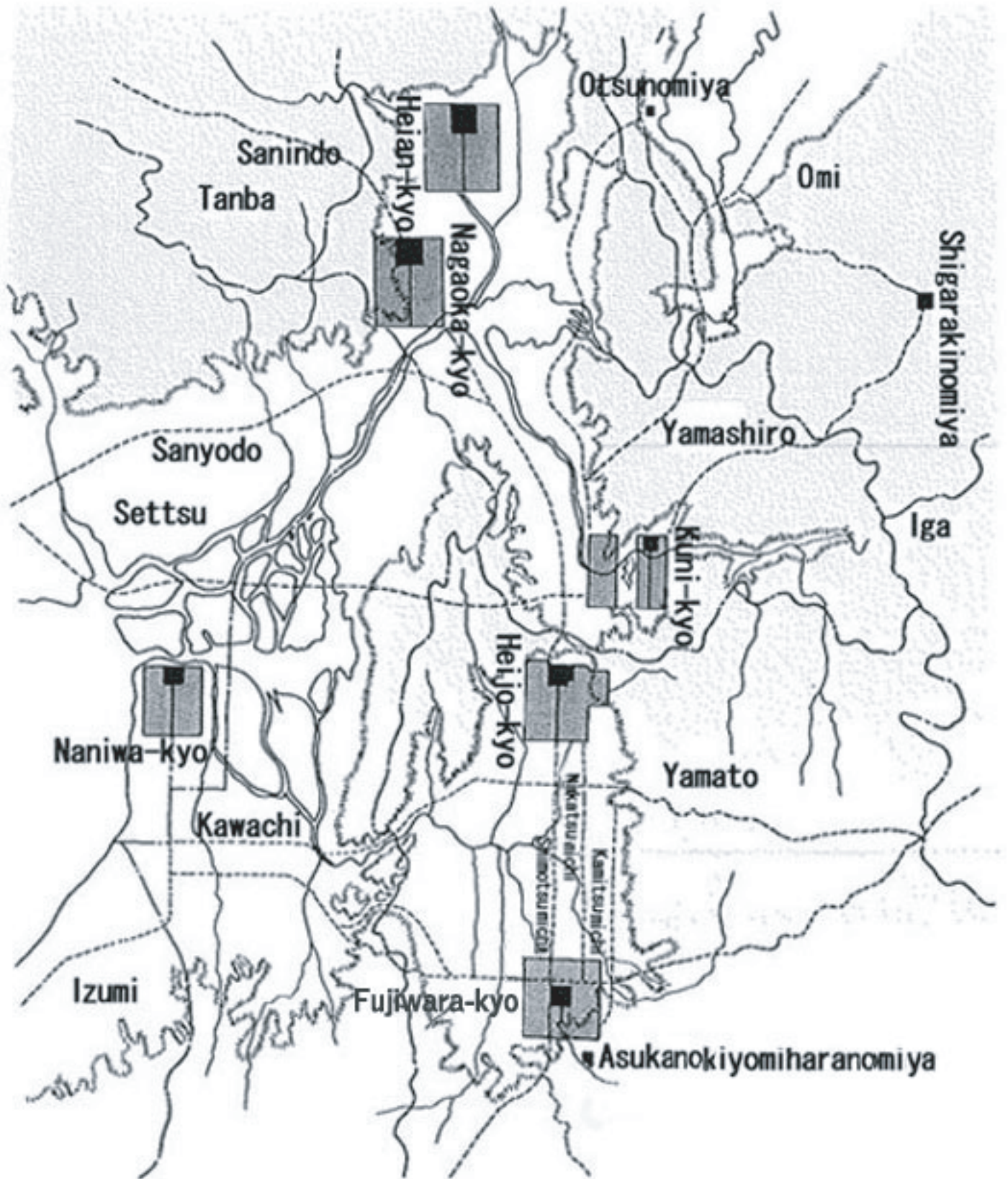
In this way, Fujiwara-kyo ended its role as a capital after 16 years, before it was sufficiently developed as a city. How would we react if we saw such a situation today? Another huge amount of money was spent building a large city from scratch. It is likely that the engineers involved in the Fujiwara-kyo construction were called up again for the Heijo-kyo project. We can easily imagine their complaints about building another capital all over again. On the other hand, Naniwa-kyo underwent a renewal. Thus, the double capital system continued.

We cannot easily evaluate the extravagance of the capital relocation to Heijo-kyo since the ancient political system was totally different from the modern-day system. However, critics today view things only within the scope of over-concentration in Tokyo. When it comes to our national land system, they state repeatedly the necessity of implementing local sovereignty, for example through "Doshu-sei," and do not try to know opinions of the people outside of Tokyo. When I compare the current situation with the capital relocation of Heijo-kyo, and when I realize that there is no one who can talk about the national land with political, administrative and executive power, I feel despair rather than disappointment.

Related Information

◆ Ancient Capital Location Map

(Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties Historical material No.57)



Related Information

◆ Capital Relocations in Asuka and Nara Period

| Year | Capital Relocation | Emperor | Reign |
|------|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| | | the 35th Kogyoku | 642 - 645 |
| 645 | Taika Reform (Revolt of Isshi) | | |
| | Relocated to Naniwanagaratoyosaki | the 36th Kotoku | 645 - 654 |
| | | the 37th Saimei | 655 - 661 |
| | Relocated to Otsu in Omi | the 38th Tenji | 668 - 671 |
| | | the 39th Kobun | 672 - 672 |
| 672 | Jinshin War | the 40th Tenmu | 673 - 686 |
| | Relocated to Asukanokiyomihara | | |
| 694 | Relocated to Fujiwara-kyo | the 41st Jito | 690 - 697 |
| | | the 42nd Monmu | 697 - 707 |
| 710 | Relocated to Heijo-kyo | the 43rd Genmei | 707 - 715 |
| | | the 44th Gensho | 715 - 724 |
| 724 | | the 45th Shomu | 624 - 749 |

<Reference>

Nara Prefecture Visitors Bureau

Nara Prefecture Tourism Information Yamato-ji Archive

Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

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Embassy Visit & Interview

The Past, Present and Future of Brasilia and the 50th Anniversary of the Capital Relocation



Mr. Eduardo Teixeira Souza
Secretary, Head of the Economic Sector
The Embassy of Brazil in Japan

Purpose for and Process of Relocating the Capital to Brasilia

Congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the capital relocation from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia. First, we would like to know what kind of purpose the capital relocation served. We hear that the capital was relocated to improve the inland region and to balance the development of the whole country.

In fact, the plan to relocate the capital to Brasilia was made back in the 18th century when Brazil was still a Portuguese colony. In the 19th century, a group of researchers, including geologists, was dispatched to the candidate areas to find the best place for the new capital. Finally, the capital relocation was executed by Juscelino Kubitschek, who became president in 1956.

During the 1950s, Brazil had just begun to be industrialized, so the capital relocation got off the ground fairly smoothly. The relocation work started in 1955 and was almost completed by 1960. It took only about five years to move the capital.

The first and the biggest goal of the capital relocation was to establish Brazil's identity. Brazil consists of multiple ethnic groups. The old capital, Rio de Janeiro, was influenced very strongly by Portugal. For the unification of a multi-ethnic population, it was essential for the country to build a single city that could symbolize the nation and its citizens.

Secondly, there was a need to distribute the population, which was concentrated in the coastal area, to the inland areas. The third purpose was to develop inland areas through promoting civil engineering works and agriculture in Cerrado (bush prairie) by moving the labor force. Cerrado is also called the Savanna of Brazil. Its soil was very fertile, but the land needed to be improved for agricultural purposes. In this respect, Japanese immigrants have made considerable contributions.

We can say that all the original purposes of the capital relocation have been achieved. Today Brasilia has a population of 2.5 million and is the third-largest city in Brazil in the sense of economy size. Per-capita income has reached 20,000 US dollars and the education level of the city is the highest in the nation. In addition, Brasilia has become the center of cultural activities such as movies, the arts and architecture. People from many different cultures gather in the city, not only from other areas of the country but from other South American countries. Brasilia is a city where a variety of people express their ideas to seek better opportunities.

In the early days after the capital relocation, many people who worked in Brasilia used to return to their hometowns, such as Rio de Janeiro, on weekends. Today this is no longer common. Even people who have just started working in Brasilia seldom return to their hometowns. Brasilia has grown to become a city where many people want to live permanently.

What was the reason why the capital relocation was completed in such a short time, just five years?

I can say it was largely because of the leadership of President Kubitschek (*1).

Mr. Kubitschek was extremely charismatic. As legend goes, he captured everyone's heart with his magnetic charm. I think his charm was a big driving force for the project. In Brazil, there is a legend saying President Kubitschek was the reincarnation of a Pharaoh of ancient Egypt and Brasilia is the reincarnation of the ancient Egyptian city Akhenaton.

Another reason for the short-term completion was the fact that the construction was executed during a period of strong economic growth in Brazil. At that time, Brazil's real economic growth rate was 8 to 10% annually. The economic dynamism supported the capital relocation project.

(*1) President Juscelino Kubitschek, the 22nd president of Federative Republic of Brazil, was born into a family of Czech immigrants. He was elected as the president in 1955 and was in office for five years beginning on January 31, 1956. He aggressively promoted the construction of the new capital, Brasilia with the slogan "achieve 50 years of progress in five years."

Wasn't there any financial difficulty in carrying out the capital relocation?

As I mentioned before, the 1950s were a period of rapid growth for Brazil; therefore, the country could generate enough cash flow and could self-finance the basic construction.

However, along the line, the government needed financing. There were arguments about borrowing money to build a new city, but ultimately, the country received loans from the World Bank and private financial institutions.



How did the capital relocation affect the former capital, Rio de Janeiro, and the largest business city, Sao Paulo? Also, how did the people in those two cities evaluate the capital relocation?

In the case of Rio de Janeiro, when it lost its position as a capital, various city planning projects were called off. Rio is a major city both commercially and industrially, but today it has various problems as a result of losing those planned developments.

On the other hand, Sao Paulo benefited from the capital relocation to Brasilia. In connection with the capital relocation, there were a variety of investments, and many investors were companies based in Sao Paulo. However, it was not Sao Paulo that received the greatest benefit from the capital relocation. Belo Horizonte in the State of Minas Gerais and Goiania, the capital of the State of Goias, were the two cities that achieved the most development through midland developments. For Brasilia, Belo Horizonte and Goiania functioned as strategic bases for supplying people, building materials, steel, machinery, food and more. Particularly, it is well known that the surrounding areas of Belo Horizonte hold the largest iron resources in the nation. Furthermore, the capital relocation strongly encouraged people to migrate from the coast to inland regions. As a result, the central plateau in Brazil grew into a dynamic center in Brazil. Today, Belo Horizonte (population: 2.5 million), and Goiania (population: 1.5 million) enjoy the highest level of development in Brazil.

Also, Campo Grande (population: 750,000) and Cuiaba (population: 600,000) developed vastly with the capital relocation. These developments, seen in the 1950s and the 1960s, are regarded as Brazil's version of the exploration of the West that happened in the late 1800s in America.

Brazil won the right to host the 2016 Olympic Games(*2). Did Brazil's efforts toward hosting the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro aim at the reconstruction of Rio?

Actually, there is a grand plan to revitalize Rio de Janeiro. Rio represents Brazil. It is probably the first city that comes up many people's minds when they hear about Brazil. However, Rio fell into a very difficult situation because there were not any major city planning projects for over 20 years.

Today, there are various plans to revitalize all blocks of Rio, and the Olympics are connected to those plans. In downtown Rio, there are buildings that are over 200 years old and show the influences of Portugal and France. But they are currently in danger of falling down. Along with the Olympic-related projects, there are plans to rebuild such buildings.

(*2) The 2016 Olympic Games: Rio de Janeiro was selected as the host city of the 31st Summer Olympic Games in 2016. It will be the first time the Olympic Games are held in South America.

Can you tell us about the transportation between Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo?

There is a large amount of human traffic between Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Generally, people travel by air since these cities are about 1,200 km apart.

There are also many people who take a day trip to Brasilia from the other two cities. The three cities are also connected by overland routes with roads of two to three lanes. There are also many bus routes. It is our dream to travel between Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo by bullet train

Development of the Area Surrounding Brasilia

What is the present situation of Brasilia's satellite cities?

Brasilia's central area is called Plano Piloto (pilot plan) area. Around the area, there are 15 to 16 satellite cities. Each of them has different characteristics. For example, there is a city called Taguatinga with a population of about 500,000. This city's commercial development is distinguished. On the other hand, Ceilandia, with a population of about 300,000, is a city where extremely poor people live. Water supply and sewage systems have just been fully implemented in the city with help from the government.

Brazil's current biggest challenge is to provide a means of transportation from the satellite cities to Brasilia. Furthermore, Brazil still has a number of people who are unable to be a part of society without receiving support from the government.

In the late 1990s, the income disparity among people increased the risk of social unrest. In the past ten years, about 30 million people were able to move up from the impoverished class to the lower-middle class or even to the middle class. This was made possible by the social policies that were created in the time of the former president Cardoso. Due to these policies, the disparity has been eased in recent years.

Can you tell us about future development projects for the surrounding areas of Brasilia?

Currently, the development of the area that connects Goiania and Brasilia is on the table as a project to take place in the next 15 years. The population of these two cities and the vicinity is about 4.5 million.

The income level of the people who live in the area is fairly high. They have potential in business sectors such as biotechnology research and commercial aviation industry development. There are aerospace-related industries in a city called Anapolis. Brazil is considering high-tech development in the area connecting the two cities as a goal for the next 15 years.

People's Recognition Level of Brasilia

What do you think about people's recognition level of Brasilia in Brazil and overseas?

In my personal opinion, the recognition level of Brasilia among the general public in Brazil is extremely low. Topics of Brasilia-related news are almost all political and administrative. Brasilia is a dynamic city and has many cultural activities, but that image has not reached many people in the country. About 2.5 million Brazilians visit Brasilia each year, and the majority of the visitors are on business. There are few tourists in Brasilia. Most foreigners who come to Brazil visit the Amazon or the coast area. Brasilia has only about 250,000 visitors from overseas annually. As a matter of fact, many foreigners who visit Brasilia are interested in architecture. Brasilia was built based on the philosophy of the Athens Charter (*3).

Many architectural structures in the city show strong influences of Le Corbusier or of Bauhaus, an art institute at the center of German architecture in the early 20th century.

(*3) The Athens Charter: A city planning and construction principle that was adopted in 1933 at the meeting of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), an international conference for architects. The subject, the functional city, was discussed at the meeting based on the ideas that Le Corbusier (an architect who engaged in functional, practical and universal design projects through a new technology using steel frame and reinforced concrete buildings) advocated.

Can you think of any problems that Brasilia currently faces?

One problem is that Brasilia has grown much bigger than originally planned. As far as the original plan, the predicted population in 2000 was 600,000. However, the population of the whole Federal District of Brasilia including its satellite cities has reached 2.6 million.

Today, the center of Brasilia, called the Plano Piloto area, is a UNESCO cultural heritage site. But within 30 to 40 kilometers, there are satellite cities that have serious issues in terms of infrastructure, education or public security. Since the central area of Brasilia is very rich, there is a remarkable income gap between the satellite cities and the central area.

Can you tell us about the charms of Brasilia? Also, how should Brasilia change in the future?

What attracts me most is that Brasilia gives everyone a sense of freedom. People come to Brasilia from every corner of Brazil and the world. The city provides all of them a chance to establish an identity. Including religious activities, people can choose a free-wheeling lifestyle in all aspects. I think it is appealing. I personally want Brasilia to adopt a subway system like Tokyo's. Brasilia's public transportation system has much room for improvement. It would be very useful to have a subway system like Tokyo.

My greatest dream is to see Japanese-made bullet trains running in Brazil. Bidding for the project will start soon. Because of financial issues, the General Auditor's Office is currently reviewing a number of factors. Since 2010 is an election year for Brazil, I think the government is trying to find the best timing. The expectation of the introduction of bullet trains and high-speed railways is growing extremely high in the country. It will start with the route between Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. But connecting all major cities with bullet trains is our big goal for the future.

Brazil planned its capital relocation for over 200 years. And 50 years have passed since the capital relocation took place in 1960. Do you think the capital relocation from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia was successful in terms of results?

I can say that the capital relocation to Brasilia was absolutely necessary. I think that the relocation project was essential in terms of establishing the national identity. It was beyond mere economic factors or infrastructure issues of the country.

It was significant for Brazil to create its own national identity by overcoming the influences of countries such as Portugal, France and the United States. Brasilia's city structure is uniquely Brazilian, although it has partially adopted the architectural style of other countries, such as France. For a young country like Brazil to establish its identity, the construction of the new capital Brasilia was a must. I believe that no one questions the construction of Brasilia today.

Japan and the Relocation of Capital Functions in Japan

Tell us about your impression of Japan and your thoughts about the relocation of capital functions in Japan.

It has been a year and a half since I came to Japan. I like Japan very much. I think Japan is a great country. In the case of relocating the capital functions in Japan, it is important that the government provide people with sufficient information.

In Brasilia's case, the government raised national awareness by conducting surveys on construction designs or holding competitions for urban planning ideas. I think it is essential to involve people in discussions that way. As far as I have learned by traveling in Japan, Japanese people seem to be very interested in eco-tourism, so I think adding such an element would be an effective way to evoke their interest. I hope that Japan will realize a new city utilizing its superb cutting-edge technologies.



DD Wave / Embassy of Brazil

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Parliament Buildings around the World

Design Representation

◆ Federative Republic of Brazil (Brasilia)

Design Represents the Characteristics of Each Legislative Branch



The National Congress Building of Brazil

The National Congress Buildings in Brasilia were designed by Oscar Niemeyer, a renowned Brazilian architect specializing in modern architecture. Viewed from the front, the downward half-sphere building on the left is the Senate and the upward half-sphere on the right is the Chamber of Deputies. In between, there are two vertical office towers containing the congress headquarters. According to Mr. Niemeyer, he designed the Senate building to express its conservative nature and the Chamber of Deputies building to express its openness to people's voices and new ideas. It is said that there is no other parliament building in the world that represents the characteristics of congress.

◆ Republic of Palau (Melekeok)

A Parliament Building to Symbolize the Country



Parliament Building of Palau

The white, Western-style parliament building in Melekeok is called the "White House" just like the President's office in the United States. After independence in 1994, Palau asked an architectural firm in the U.S. to make some design proposals for its congress building. The design ideas included traditional Micronesian style that received considerable support. However, after much discussion, the country chose a design that is widely adopted in the West with an aim to present Palau to the world as an independent nation with principles of "civilization, democracy and freedom."

*This article was created with the cooperation of Minoru F.X. Ueki, Ambassador of the Republic of Palau in Japan. We wish to express our cordial gratitude to him. (An article about visiting the Embassy of Palau will be in the "Embassy Visit & Interview" section of New Era Vol. 71.)

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Relocation of Capital Functions around the World

◆ The Capital Relocations Realized by Strong Leadership

Federative Republic of Brazil (Brasilia)

President Kubitschek regarded as “the reincarnation of a pharaoh of ancient Egypt”



Surprisingly, the capital relocation to Brasilia was completed just five years after construction began. This great accomplishment was due to the strong determination of President Kubitschek, who came into office in 1956, that the capital relocation would be completed during his term, with the slogan “Achieve 50 years of progress in five years.” The capital relocation was supported by Brazil’s strong economy at that time, but there is no doubt that the charismatic president and his strong leadership made it possible. The charm of Mr. Kubitschek must have driven the people who worked on the project to attain this great achievement. Mr. Kubitschek, regarded as “the reincarnation of a pharaoh of ancient Egypt,” is still called JK and is well-liked by people in Brasilia. Besides achieving the capital relocation in such a short time, it should also be noted that he created a capital with an outstanding design designated as a World Heritage site. Today, Brasilia has grown to be a city with a population of over 2.5 million that enjoys not only economic wealth but flourishing cultural activities. There is no doubt that the capital’s prosperity was realized through Mr. Kubitschek’s aggressive promotion of the capital relocation as well as his obsession with the capital’s landscape.

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*This article was created with the cooperation of Mr. Eduardo Teixeira Souza, Secretary and Head of the Economic Sector of the Embassy of Brazil in Japan. We wish to express our cordial gratitude to him. (An article about visiting the Embassy of Brazil and interviewing with Mr. Souza is in the “Embassy Visit & Interview” section of New Era Vol. 70.)

Republic of Palau (Melekeok)

Capital Relocation Accelerated by President Nakamura



The capital of the Republic of Palau was officially relocated on October 1, 2006 from Koror on Koror Island to Melekeok on Babeldaob Island. Prior to the relocation, about 65% of the country’s population (approx. 20,000) lived in Koror under overcrowded conditions. After World War Two, Palau was under U.S. rule as one of the UN’s trust territories in the Pacific Islands. The self-ruled government that was inaugurated in 1981 formulated a constitution in which relocation of the capital was stipulated. The new capital was supposed to be decided within 10 years of the ratification of the constitution. The government finally chose Melekeok, approximately 30 kilometers from Koror. The United States extended two million dollars in economic aid to Palau, and the Melekeok local government provided land for the new capital project. Under these circumstances, President Nakamura, a descendant of Japanese immigrants, came into office in 1993 and issued a presidential order to accelerate the capital relocation. In 1994, Mr. Nakamura established a capital relocation advisory committee to decide on the design of the parliament building, on which construction began in 1998 following the adoption of the 1996 National Capital Construction Law. The parliament building was completed in 2001 and the capital was officially relocated in 2006.

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Regional Information

◆ Major Activities in Local Regions Regarding the Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations

▶ Fukushima Prefecture

Representatives of the tri-area* liaison conference for the relocation of capital functions visited the House of Representatives, the House of Councilors and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism on March 17, 2010, to collect information about the current situation of the conference committee of each house in regards to the relocation of the Diet and other organizations as well as about the schedule of future conferences. (*Tochigi/Fukushima Area, Gifu/Aichi Area, and Mie/Kiou Region)

◆ Other Topics

▶ Nara Prefecture (the 1300th anniversary of capital relocation to Heijokyo)

In Nara Prefecture, as 2010 began, the 1300th anniversary of capital relocation to Heijokyo started. Since April 24, 2010, a variety of events have been held at the historic site of Heijo Palace. The reconstruction of the first Daigokuden has been completed. Visitors can see the building's engineering and experience the culture of ancient times. At the Heijokyo History Museum, virtual reality images including the spectacular capital of Heijokyo and the voyages of Kentoshi (imperial missions to China) are shown using the latest VR technology. A replica of the Kentoshi vessel is also exhibited. At the Heijokyo Experience Center, visitors can experience a simulated archeological excavation and wear ancient costumes. The autumn Heijokyo fair will begin October 9, 2010. On November 7, the last day, visitors can participate in a celebration carnival which is the closing event of the fair. Aside from these events, Nara has much more to offer. For details, visit the website of the Association for Commemorative Events of the 1300th Anniversary of Nara Heijokyo Capital <http://www.1300.jp/>.



The First Daigokuden



Kentoshi Vessel

▶ Mie Prefecture (Friendship with Republic of Palau)

The 1981 constitution of the Republic of Palau clearly stated that after putting a temporary capital in Koror, a permanent capital would be built on Babeldaob Island within 10 years. However, the plan was neglected for a long time. In 1999, former president Kunio Nakamura created a capital relocation plan, and finally the capital was relocated from Koror to Melekeok (Babeldaob Island) on October 1, 2006, 25 years after the constitution was ratified. Mr. Nakamura, whose father was from Ominato of Ise City, visited Mie Prefecture even before the independence of Palau, including a visit to the Governor in August 1993. In October 1994, soon after independence, he revisited Mie Prefecture with a folk dance company from Palau to participate in the festival "Matsuri Mie '94", which contributed to the success of the event and deepened the friendship between Mie and Palau. The two regions, both in rich marine environments, had had a close relationship since the Taisho era. On July 25, 1996, a delegation from the Republic of Palau and President Nakamura visited Mie to sign a friendly coalition agreement.

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