

## Renewal and Reconstruction of Tokyo

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Tokyo is now undergoing “urban renewal without a grand design”. Sky-scrapers are being built one after another under the banner of urban renewal by logic of economy. An area surrounding Tokyo Station, one around Shinagawa Station, Roppongi Hills, and Shiodome Shiosite, you name a few. Cityscapes of Tokyo have been rapidly changing. The Hama-rikyu Garden is a traditional Japanese-style garden located in the heart of the city, and the author sometimes took foreign visitors there. The precious garden, however, is now dwarfed by high-rise buildings at Shiodome Shiosite behind it and deprived of its gardenesque beauty. Yoshio Nakamura, a professor of landscape study at Kyoto University, lamented that the Hama-rikyu Garden is not what it used to be anymore. Ironically, residents can enjoy a view over the garden from the high-rise buildings, which have undermined its beauty.

In a separate case, the Diet Building is now as if it is domineered by high-rise office complexes. The scene is rather weird. Putting aside its authoritarian internal structure, the Diet Building is a symbol of Japan. But its front view has been spoiled completely. If it is true that major cityscapes of Tokyo are so vulnerable to such blunt intrusions, and that there is nothing we can do about it legally, where does a fundamental problem lay?

### **Concentration on Tokyo: Context of World City Tokyo**

Globalization of economy was accelerated from the late 1970s to 80s. During this period, so-called World Cities sprang up. New York City led the trend. Instead of the existing city economy with manufacturing at the center, market economy with multinationals as its vanguard notably spread across the world. A “World City Strategy” came into the spotlight to renew cities by strengthening functions as a World City. Teleport plans of New York City, London, and Chicago were part of the movement, which also affected Japan. At the World Teleport Conference held in Tokyo in 1985, the then governor of Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Shunichi Suzuki, unexpectedly revealed a Tokyo Teleport Plan. The Plan positioned landfills in the Tokyo Bay area as a new Tokyo waterfront sub-center.

Mr. Suzuki said, regarding development of the waterfront sub-center: “I consider construction of a Tokyo Teleport Town as a very important strategic project for Tokyo to develop as a city and become a World City both in name and substance.” Building a city with multiple centers as promoted by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) led by Mr. Suzuki eyed on easing over-concentration on the city center by qualitatively transform its functions to central administrative functions, cultural functions, and functions of a world center for global finance and information. It also aimed to have “centers” at the sub-center and the Tama area take over such decentralized functions and play major roles in economic, cultural, and leisure activities in everyday life of

Tokyo residents.

Afterwards, policies attaching higher importance to enhance World City functions in Tokyo came to be the centerpiece of the TMG. The initiative was also supported by the national government's land policies, including the Fourth National Comprehensive Development Plan. Mr. Suzuki funded foundations and relevant other organizations using huge financial surpluses generated during the economic bubble to move the metropolitan government office to Shinjuku, develop the waterfront sub-center, and build large public facilities. Policies were shifted from a My Town Tokyo to a World City Tokyo. Mr. Suzuki also tried to back off from a policy to monitor land-price fluctuations and a franchise tax because he believed they would deprive Tokyo of its vigor. On the same belief, Mr. Suzuki opposed the idea of moving functions of the nation capital to outside Tokyo. As a result, it is sometimes said, the TMG policies helped various functions over-concentrate on Tokyo.

Over-concentration on Tokyo is considered to be completed in two major phases after World War II. The first phase was during Japanese economy grew rapidly after WWII, and the second was after the oil crisis in the 1970s. During the rapid economy growth period from the late 1950s to 60s, many people and businesses came from all over the country to settle in three major cities of Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. It was when the First National Comprehensive Development Plan and the Second National Comprehensive Development Plan were implemented. The heavy chemical industry played the major part during this period. In 1979, the second oil crisis hit the country. In the aftermath, while Japanese economy was recovering, people and businesses came, once again, to Tokyo. This migration was different in nature from that of the rapid economic growth period. Technology-intensive and capital-intensive investments to meet requirements of the time to save energy and resources set the tone. Heavy industries were taken over by light industries as the economic driving force. At the same time, economy became more global and liberal. The Tokyo Area --- the Metropolitan Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, and Saitama Prefectures --- accommodating the national capital Tokyo had drastically increased its presence. The concentrations on the three major cities are now consolidated into a concentration on the Tokyo Area. Table 1 shows how tremendous the degree of the concentration is.

A period of the so-called economic bubble, starting in the late 1980s, saw the concentration on Tokyo culminate. During the period, land prices hiked for the third time after WWII, land price speculations and rigs were rampant, and functions necessary for every-day life were driven out of the city center. The excessive Tokyo money, after pushed up land prices of local cities, overflowed the country and headed for the United States, Britain, and other foreign countries, to buy real estate there. In following years after the bubble burst in the early 1990s, a staggering mount of non-performing loans, mainly on real estate, were revealed. Not only business but also national and local governments were busy cleaning up the mess. A huge amount of tax-payers money was spent in the clean-up.

### **From World City to Life City --- The government of Yukio Aoshima**

Yukio Aoshima, who replaced Mr. Suzuki as the governor of Tokyo in 1995, did not completely neglect the World City Strategy and followed his predecessor's footsteps in opposing the idea of moving main functions of the national capital out of Tokyo. However, he chose not to use "World City" as a term to show a general direction the TMG was heading for. Mr. Aoshima put higher priorities on issues that citizens could more easily relate to, including the environment, resources, re-use and re-cycle of materials, measures for the aging society, disaster prevention, and housing. At the end of 1995, his first year in office, Mr. Aoshima set up an advisory committee called "Society to consider on Life City Tokyo". Tokyo residents were invited to participate in meetings, and six ordinary citizens were on the board. In response to the board report, Mr. Aoshima announced in February 1997 a "Life City Tokyo Plan" as the TMG grand scheme.

The Plan tried to return to the origin of a city: A city had been "developed for happiness and better life of people". Based on that, the Plan put higher priorities on "life" functions in a broader sense encompassing such various functions as business, commerce, culture, and shelter. A Tokyo that is full of energy to "protect, support, and enrich the Tokyo people's life" is named "Life City Tokyo". The Life City Tokyo Plan is to create such a city. The basic concepts are 1) Put importance to the perspective of a living citizen and an open government (the perspective of a living citizen, an open government and information sharing, partnership between citizens and the government), 2) Promote city activities free and full of energy (dynamic city activities, development of the infrastructure for activities and easing congestions, increasing forums of social participation, decentralization and deregulations), 3) World peace and respect for human rights (Tokyo in the world, pursuit of world peace, respect for human rights), and 4) Responsibilities for future generations (handing over history and cultural assets, recognizing the limitation of the global environment and building a city which enables sustainable development, for life of future generations).

Among them, 1) marked a departure from the Suzuki government in that Mr. Aoshima's government tried to recast the government jobs from the viewpoint of living persons, not from that of the administration. The living persons meant not only Tokyo residents, but a broader base of people, including commuters from different prefectures to Tokyo, students studying in Tokyo, foreigners, tourists, and shoppers. This interpretation was based on awareness that Tokyo was supported by 32 million people in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, and that the administrative planning and city-building policies with an eye on Tokyo residents alone would have its limits. This perspective had been taken into consideration from the outset when the Plan was drawn up, which made the new government unique compared to its predecessors. Meanwhile, living persons were called for to be aware of their rights and responsibilities as voters and tax-payers and actively participate and act in the public forum, so that they could build a partnership with the government. This was a premise of the Plan, which also drew attention. The idea of an open government

manifested in that the process of putting together the Plan was made transparent. During two and a half months to the end of August 1996, when a mid-term report of advisory committee was due, there were more than 4,500 accesses to the TMG web site. There were also rather unfettered exchanges of opinions over the advisory committee minutes.

In this way, while it inherited such negative legacies as a huge amount of financial deficits from the Suzuki government, the Aoshima government tried to steer the TMG from the perspective of every-day life of Tokyo citizens. Unfortunately for the sake of civil renewal of Tokyo, Mr. Aoshima had to go after only one term before his efforts came in earnest.

### **From Life City, again, to World City --- The government of Shintaro Ishihara**

The government of Shintaro Ishihara, who took over Mr. Aoshima as the Tokyo governor in 1999, shifted its gear during the first term from the existing diversification policy aiming at a multiple-center city to a city renewal policy promoting return to the city center. The TMG in collaboration with the central government set up a City Renaissance Headquarters and spearheaded such efforts as to regain international competitiveness of Tokyo, nurture new industries, and develop the infrastructure for every-day life. Roppongi Hills, a new Marunouchi Building, and Shiodome Shiosite, referred to earlier, are positioned as locations to attract visitors to the city center. They are in line with the concept of “Tokyo Plan 2000 --- To be a World City Everybody Wants to Come” (January 2001), a basic scheme and comprehensive plan of the Ishihara government. The theory of World City Tokyo re-emerged assuming even a stronger tone than that of the Suzuki government. The new strategy was set out in details in “Vision for Building New City of Tokyo --- Solid Path Towards Urban Renewal” (October 2001). The Vision aimed at “creating an International City Tokyo, leading the world with its charm and liveliness”. The followings are its concepts of city-building.

#### *1) Maintenance and development of vigor of the city with international competitiveness*

Tokyo is located in the Tokyo Metropolitan Area, which accommodates functions of the national capital. In order for Tokyo to continuously prosper as a city and secure its residents with rich, stable, and fulfilling life, it is indispensable to strengthen international competitiveness of Tokyo in terms of business, the environment, and industrial activities and maintain and develop its vigor as a city.

#### *2) Co-existence with the environment in a way to make sustainable prosperity possible*

In building the future city of Tokyo, having a broader perspective on the environment of the Tokyo Area as well as the whole Metropolitan Area, with an eye on conservation of the global environment, it is indispensable to reduce burdens on the environment and co-exist with the environment and amid at sustainable prosperity as a city.

#### *3) Creation and dissemination of unique urban culture*

Urban culture nurtures attractions of the city, induces exchanges between people, and serves as an incubator to new culture. Urban space is the best manifestation of the cultural status of the city. Therefore, it is essential through the future city-building to create and spread unique urban culture.

*4) Realization of the quality living environment where people can live safely and healthily*

There remain challenges for Tokyo in terms of the living environment, including emergency risks with a possible earthquake, insufficient housing and living environment standards, air pollution caused by automobiles. It will continue to be an important subject requiring efforts to realize a Tokyo which is comfortable to live for all residents, including foreigners.

*5) Participation of various entities such as residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations and collaboration among them*

In order to steadily proceed with the future city-building process, from the viewpoint that “interests commonly held by various entities are true publicity”, it is indispensable to invite participation of and promote collaboration among various entities such as residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations with shared goals.

Admittedly, the Ishihara government’s Tokyo Renewal Plan has in the background measures to bring residences back to the city center supported by falling land prices after the economic bubble burst and a ring megalopolis scheme with an eye on the whole Tokyo Metropolitan Area. Still, it has put highest priority to “maintenance and development of vigor of the city with international competitiveness”. For that purpose, in collaboration with the national government of Junichiro Koizumi, the Ishihara government has had some areas designated as City Renewal Special Zones. In such zones, deregulations will induce large-scale re-developments, and high-rise buildings will be built. Seven areas, i.e., an area surrounding the Tokyo and Yurakucho Stations, the Akihabara/Kanda Area, an area surrounding Shinjuku Station, and the Tokyo Waterfront, have already been designated as City Renaissance Urgent Development Zones. The Ishihara government has already revised the ordinances governing the assessment of affects on the environment. As a result, requirements for construction of high-rise buildings are eased. Thus, the legal environment is now expedient to build new buildings.

In addition, by taking advantage of various bonus plans under the Building Standard Law and midair rights over un- or under-utilized land, high-rise office complexes and hotels are being built one after another. These large-scale developments are not from the perspective of renewal of Life City Tokyo as much as for the purpose of maximizing corporate profits and cleaning up non-performing loans by liquidating land. As a result, it looks like a revival of a real-estate bubble in some locations of the Tokyo city center. On the other hand, however, small and mid-sized office buildings are suffering a higher vacancy rate, or worse, bankruptcy. It is because such a trend has stimulated competition among buildings and caused great migrations of tenant companies. There was even rumor of the 2003 crisis, in which supply of office spaces would exceed demand.

For real renewal of Tokyo, the Ishihara government should give up World City Tokyo as the central idea of city-building. Instead, it should reinstate at the centerpiece of city-building “co-existence with the environment in a way to make sustainable prosperity possible”, “creation and dissemination of unique urban culture”, “realization of the quality living environment where people can live safely and healthily”, and “participation of various entities such as residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations and collaboration among them”.

### **From World City to Earth City**

The recent large-scale Tokyo make-over plan seems to aim at survival and restructuring of Tokyo, which has suffered damage as a World City. A “Strategic Plan for Crisis Relief” of the TMG (1999) mentions as follows: “Tokyo has a potential to develop as a global player, representing Asia. However, since the economic bubble burst, the city has been malfunctioning, especially in areas of finance and economy, unable to exert all its strength. Thus, the city is losing its vigor and international competitiveness.” This is where self-consciousness and self-imposed mission of Tokyo as a driving force of Japan are raised: Revival of Tokyo is revival of Japan. The earlier-mentioned “maintenance and development of vigor of the city with international competitiveness” is a policy guideline in this context.

However, haven't things changed yet? At least, since the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, situations regarding globalization and world cities appear to have qualitatively changed. World cities could only exist under stable world order and peace. Despite that, they have widened economic gaps in the world, exacerbated social destabilizing factors, and become an “object of resentment”. The current situation could be described as a natural consequence when we come to realize globalization was mainly driven by market economy spreading around the world.

This is where globalization of civism comes into the limelight. Globalization has two aspects: Economy and people's mind. Two major areas of the latter are human rights and the environment. We know that global warming, desertification due to deforestation, unusual weather, the North-South issue, destruction of the environment and health problems caused by the market's failure, and other issues have been mainly brought about by globalization of economy. We also know that the super power, which emits carbon dioxide most, is against various international efforts, including the Earth Summit, and the Kyoto Protocol for prevention of global warming. In this way, globalization has proceeded with its economic and mind aspects unconnected with each other, resulting in the tragedy in 2001.

This is why a shift from an economy-oriented World City to a mind-oriented World City is necessary. “Report on a Survey about the Future Image of the Metropolitan Area” (1995) issued by the Metropolitan Area Development Bureau, the National Land Agency, presented such a perspective and named a to-be World City as an “Earth City”. Its basic understanding is as follows: 1) As the economic globalization proceeds, it has become important

to have a perspective of the entire earth in urban development and activities. 2) The deteriorating global environment has urged man to look back and think over the past urban activities that pursued material prosperity in the framework of World Cities. 3) Business-centered urban development, which was hastily carried out mainly in city centers, while cities were turned into World Cities, has caused un-balanced use of land among business, residence, and nature. Thus, key words for re-casting are co-existence, collaboration, and maintenance.

Among them, “collaboration” is about considering other cities within and outside the country as partners, not rivals. In such relations, cities will be dialogue partners seeking to develop together on equal terms through mutual exchanges. “Maintenance” is about sustaining urban activities and the urban and global environment and passing them on to generations to come. So, when facilities are developed, they would be mid-sized and low- or mid-rise buildings, in harmony with the rhythm of nature, with a high degree of amenity, landscape, and water and greenery, and secured safety. From such a viewpoint, the current construction of large-scale high-rise buildings in the city center endorsed by the TMG is obviously run counter to the “Earth City”. It is time to grow out of the stereo-typical thought of city-building putting priority to the economic globalization.

### **Conclusion --- Relativization of Tokyo**

History is one major explanation to over-concentration on Tokyo. That is, since the Meiji era, Japan had modernized itself rapidly and effectively by putting Tokyo as the control tower to catch up with Western powers. Such efforts were not, however, limited to the areas of politics, administration, and economy. An education system and national consciousness also supported the development. A social hierarchy has been formed with Tokyo at the top. A rank of values has also been instilled in the people’s mind. One of the legacies would be adverse effects of the over-concentration in Tokyo. This is a paradigm that should be abandoned, now that it is the 21st century.

In discussions over possible transfer of main of the national capital functions, experience of Germany, which has diversified the capital’s functions to different major cities across the country, is often referred to. Don’t we need a decentralized society where different cities are independent of and supplementary to each other, sharing the nation’ functions, rather than the national government functions concentrated on a sole city. If this is the case, one of the key words would be “relativiation of Tokyo”. It is a break from the bondage of a value that Tokyo is the absolute No.1. It is also a departure from the inflated brand image of Tokyo and mental dependence on Tokyo in our mind. It can be described as “graduation from Tokyo” in national consciousness.

To move main of the capital’s functions from Tokyo is an opportunity to turn Tokyo “one of the cities”. It is to take off a mantle of a World City. Tokyo’s strong attraction should hopefully be turned into the city’s vigor mainly in prominent culture and economic accumulation as New York City. It

is also to tap into the potential of Earth City Tokyo.

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Table 1: Shares of TMG and Tokyo Metropolitan Area in the Nation

	TMG		Tokyo Area (1 Metro & 3 Prefectures)			Unit
	#	%	#	%	%	
1 Population	11,889,535	9.7	31,222,465	25.4	(1988)	persons
2 Foreign residents	196,400	20.9	300,628	31.9	(1988)	persons
3 Employment (permanent residence)	6,005,485	10.3	14,741,019	25.3	(1985)	persons
4 College students	592,653	28.7	881,729	42.7	(1989)	persons
5 Corporate headquarters	797,483	11.9	1,561,998	23.3	(1986)	locations
6 Workers at corporate headquarters	7,956,724	14.6	14,661,720	27.0	(1986)	persons
7 Offices	213,443	17.3	337,427	27.3	(1986)	locations
8 Workers at offices	3,864,447	21.6	5,660,175	31.6	(1986)	persons
9 Information service offices	8,906	35.5	10,583	42.2	(1986)	locations
10 Workers at information service offices	233,981	49.2	273,506	57.5	(1986)	persons
11 Corporate with capital of 500MM or more	534	59.5	577	64.3	(1986)	companies
12 Foreign corporations	1,077	84.9	1,127	88.8	(1987)	companies
13 Gross prefectural product	640,471	18.3	1,104,975	31.7	(1987)	1000 million yen
14 Prefectural distributive income	410,338	15.0	882,072	32.3	(1987)	1000 million yen
15 Ordinary corporation income	171,686	48.1	193,850	54.3	(1987)	1000 million yen
16 Collected national taxes	167,577	36.9	220,278	48.5	(1987)	1000 million yen
17 Corporate tax of collected national taxes	76,822	47.6	87,909	54.4	(1987)	1000 million yen
18 Collected local taxes	39,407	29.3	56,749	42.2	(1987)	1000 million yen
19 National bank deposit outstanding	1,248,619	38.3	1,588,544	48.8	(1988)	1000 million yen
20 National bank lending outstanding	1,678,199	49.3	1,931,698	56.8	(1988)	1000 million yen
21 Amount of cleared bills	33,120,599	83.0	33,304,948	83.4	(1988)	1000 million yen
22 Stock selling/buying commissioned & own	4,823,334	68.8	5,066,757	72.2	(1988)	1000 million yen
23 Shipment of manufacturers' products, etc.	184,569	7.3	636,977	25.1	(1987)	1000 million yen
24 Wholesales	1,516,218	34.0	1,773,356	39.7	(1988)	1000 million yen
25 Retail sales	151,519	13.2	315,959	27.5	(1988)	1000 million yen
26 Gross supply of information	60,310,000	14.6	144,410,000	34.9	(1987)	billion words
27 Gross consumption of information	1,246,000	9.8	3,072,500	24.2	(1987)	billion words

Tokyo no Shinsei --- Nijuisseiki Shakai no Tokyo Toshin, Research Dept., Planning &amp; Deliberation Office, TMG, pp. 50-51.