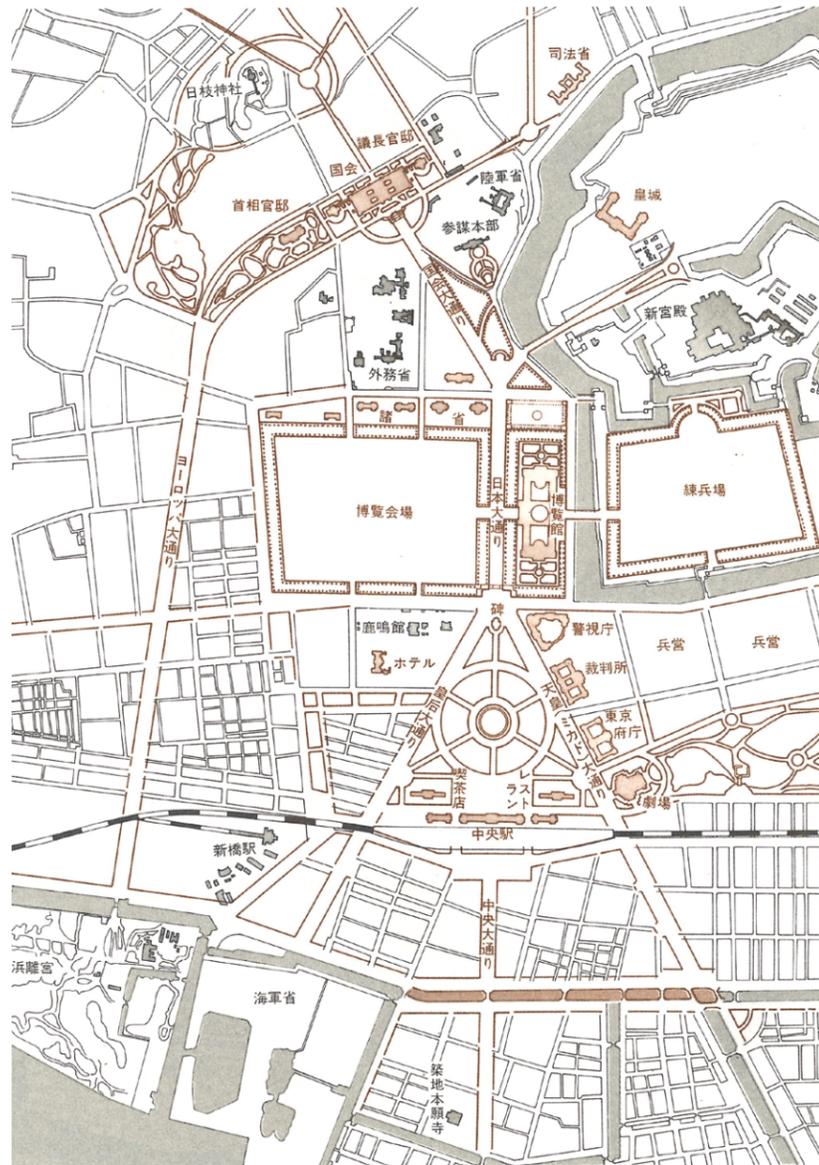


Following the Meiji Restoration, administrative power in Japan was centralized, but the central government offices were housed in quickly refurbished facilities of the former daimyo estates from the Edo period. As these facilities were scattered throughout the city, they faced inconveniences such as difficulties in communications among them; calls for a new government office district gradually arose. Around that time, Foreign Minister Kaoru Inoue was promoting a Westernization policy to introduce Western culture with the goal of amending unequal treaties concluded by the former Edo government with the Western countries. In 1883, the Rokumeikan guest house for foreign dignitaries

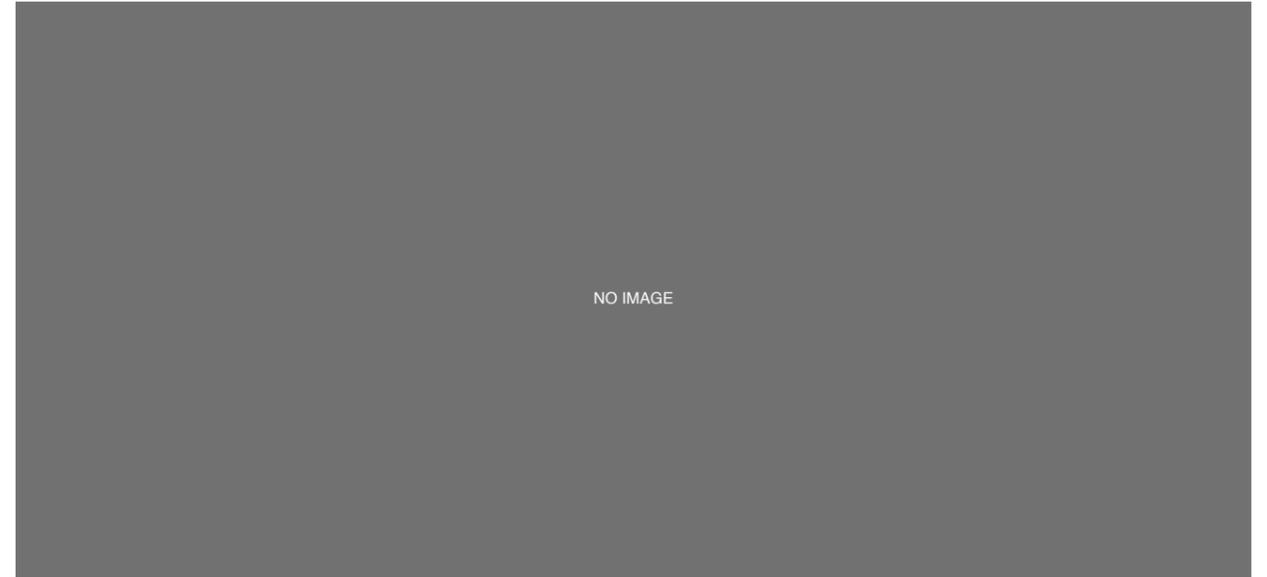
was completed, and plans to build a government office district was advanced as an important government project. In 1886, a plan was formulated by *oyatoi gaikokujin* (foreign nationals who were employed to import advanced technologies, learning, and systems from the West for the encouragement of new industry) but was not realized due to failure of the negotiations to amend the unequal treaties and Inoue's subsequent fall from power. As accomplishments of the plan, however, the two red brick buildings of the Justice Ministry and the Daishin-in (Supreme Court) were built, and the concept was incorporated in a new plan to relocate some of the facilities, such as the National Diet Building.



Drawing of government office centralization plan proposed by Böckmann

Böckmann conceived a grand plan to establish a central belt from Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple to Kasumigaseki. A system of radial roads was planned with avenues from three directions gathering at a monument established in the center of this belt. This plan called for placement of a central station, hotel, the Tokyo Prefectural Office, court, police department, new Imperial palace (Meiji Palace), assembly building, and government offices along the radial roads.

Source: Terunobu Fujimori. *Meiji no Tokyo Keikaku* (Plan of Tokyo in the Meiji era), Iwanami Shoten.

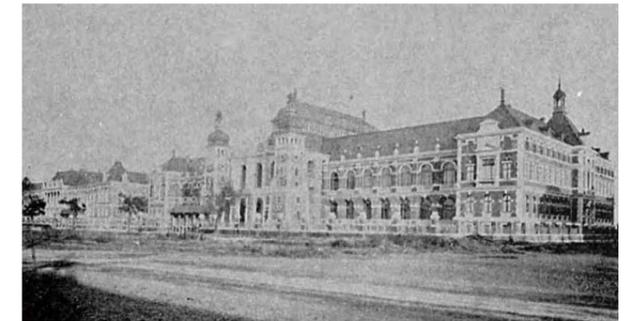


Rokumeikan From the collection of the Architectural Institute of Japan.

Rokumeikan guest house was constructed under the design of Josiah Conder as a place to entertain foreign dignities and let the Western countries know that Japan has embraced Western culture.



Ministry of Justice "Scenes in the Eastern Capital of Japan." From the collection of the National Diet Library.



Daishin-in (Supreme Court) *Nihon no meisho* (Japan's scenic spots). From the collection of the National Diet Library.

Buildings designed by Hermann Gustav Louis Ende and Wilhelm Böckmann

The Ministry of Justice and Supreme Court buildings were designed in the neo-baroque style by Ende and Böckmann. The Ministry of Justice building still exists and has been designated an important cultural property of Japan.



Bird's eye view of the Ginza and Kasumigaseki area

Photo taken in 1904 from an air balloon. From the collection of the Cultural Projects Office, Sayegusa.

A photo taken from a bird's eye view looking in the direction of Kasumigaseki from Ginza. As opposed to the high concentration of buildings in the Ginza area at the bottom of the photo, it is seen that the area near the center of the photo, where the government office district, Hibiya Park, and Rokumeikan are located, has a comparatively low concentration of facilities.