

02 Period of high growth and the transformation of housing

In the 10 years from 1955 to 1964, the population of the Greater Tokyo Area increased by more than 5 million. This rapid increase in population led to the appearance of areas with close-set wooden apartments that were densely concentrated, had poor housing quality, and were disaster risks. Many were conveniently located for commuting, right outside the Yamanote line, which circled central Tokyo, and among them, there were areas where over half of the homes were such apartments, forming what was called the “wooden rental apartment belt.”

In order to address Tokyo’s accelerating population, large quantities of public housing were constructed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Association (later the Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Corporation), and the Japan Housing Corporation.

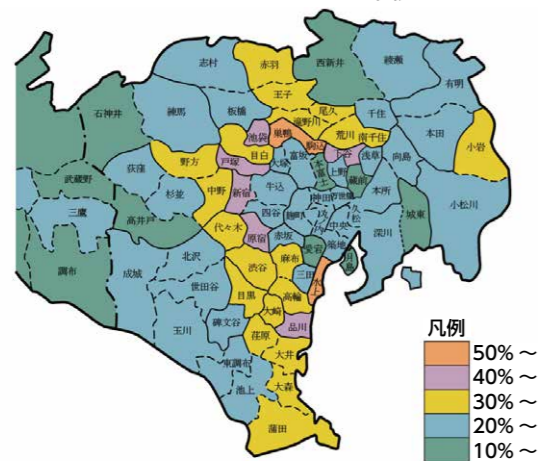
Meanwhile, from the early 60s, as workers’ incomes grew and lifestyles improved with Japan’s economic growth, the

government began advancing a policy to encourage home ownership. Against this backdrop, the Local Housing Supply Corporation Act was enacted in 1965. In the following year, the Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Corporation and Tokyo Metropolitan Land Development Corporation were merged and the Tokyo Metropolitan Housing Supply Corporation (JKK) was born to supply quality housing.

Around this time, land acquisition in the city center was becoming difficult due to soaring land prices. Taller buildings began to be constructed from needs arising for more efficient use of land and fire resilience. In the suburbs, systematic construction of large public housing developments (*danchi*) was briskly underway. With the development of the housing supply system, the number of houses surpassed the number of households in the early 70s, realizing the goal of “one household, one home” and solving the issue of absolute shortage of housing.



Metropolitan Nishi-Okubo apartment house
Shinjuku-ku (late 1940s to early 50s)
In the mid-1940s, metropolitan housings were also wooden structures. During the period of high economic growth, large numbers of private wooden rental apartments were constructed and housed the many young people flowing into Tokyo.
Source: *Jutaku 50 nen shi: jutakukyoku jigyo no ayumi* (50 years of housing history: projects of the Bureau of Housing). Bureau of Housing, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.



Tokyo’s wooden rental apartment belt (late 1960s)
Map showing distribution of private apartments in Tokyo, almost all of which are believed to have been wooden apartments. Areas with such apartments making up over 30 percent of all housing spread out within and outside the Yamanote line.
Prepared from *Nihon kindai toshikeikaku no 100 nen* (100 years of modern urban planning in Japan) by Yorifusa Ishida, Jichitaikenkyusha.



Harumi high-rise apartments
Source: Housing Apartment History Hall, Urban Renaissance Agency.



Inside an apartment unit
Source: Housing Apartment History Hall, Urban Renaissance Agency.

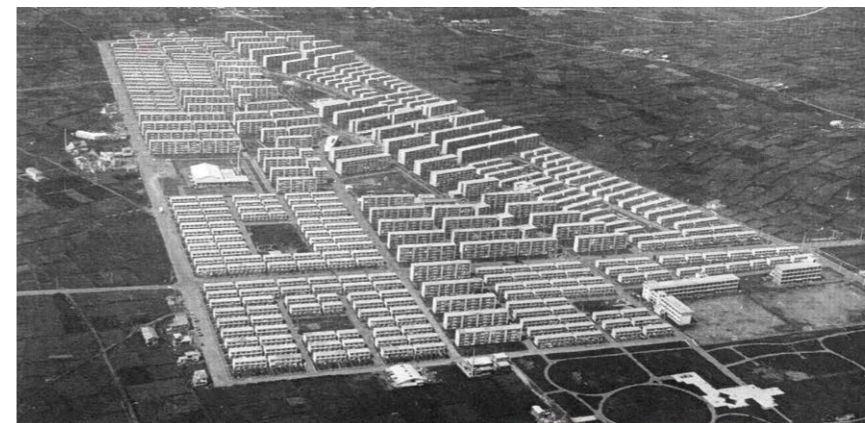
Public housing constructed in the late 1950s
In the late 1950s, 6,000 to 7,500 units were constructed a year, including the Ogikubo Danchi and Asagaya Danchi public housing developments (both completed in 1958), and Aoto Danchi and the Harumi high-rise public housing developments (completed in 1957). The photo is the Harumi high-rise apartments managed by Japan Housing Corporation (1957).



Metropolitan Kojimacho apartment house, Taito-ku
Construction began on the metropolitan Kojimacho apartment house (170 units, 11 stories high) in Taito-ku in 1964 as the first metropolitan high-rise. Higher buildings began to be introduced from around this time.



Metropolitan Asagaya apartment house (1958)
Built by Japan Housing Corporation as a 350-unit multi-family housing for sale, it comprises mid-rise RC condominiums (photo above) and two-story terrace houses.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



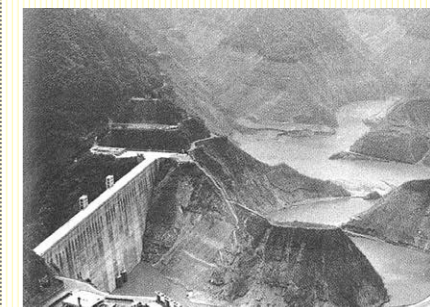
Murayama public housing development (late 1960s to early 70s)
The period of mass construction of housing began from the latter half of the 1960s. The Murayama public housing development was the largest metropolitan housing development in Tokyo at that time, with 5,260 housing units constructed on a 55-hectare site.
Source: *Jutaku 50 nen shi: jutakukyoku jigyo no ayumi* (50 years of housing history: projects of the Bureau of Housing). Bureau of Housing, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Restoration of water supply after the war and the Olympic drought

- Immediately after the end of WWII, about 80 percent of water supply was lost to leaking due to damage to taps from the devastation of war and building removals, in addition to insufficient efforts for water source development and maintenance of water supply during the war. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government formulated a water supply restoration plan and reopened construction of the Ogouchi Dam, which was shelved during the war, and advanced the development of water sources.
- From the early 1960s, high economic growth brought about a concentration of industries and the population to the National Capital Region, and the amount of water used per person increased through the spread of baths and washing machines at homes. This coupled with the lack of water sources led to water shortages occurring almost annually from 1958. With a long-term drought affecting Tama River from 1961, at night, water was supplied under reduced pressure.
- With the Tokyo Olympic Games on the horizon, in July 1964, the Ogouchi Reservoir dried up. The drought was so severe that cracks in the earth could be seen, earning Tokyo the name, “Tokyo Desert.” However, in August it finally started raining at the water source, and along with an emergency measure to draw water from the Arakawa River, Tokyo was able to avoid a drought crisis.



Water line at a water supply truck during the Olympic drought
Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.



Ogouchi Dam during the drought (1964)
Source: Bureau of Waterworks, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.