



Transportation is the city's arteries that supports various city activities. (Photo taken at Oji-ekimae Station, Toden Arakawa Line.)

Tokyo's urban development: A history of taking up challenges

Tokyo is now standing at several milestones: 150 years since its name was changed from Edo to Tokyo; 100 years since the enactment of the Modern City Planning Act; and 50 years since the City Planning Act of 1968, which radically amended this act. While Tokyo faced various difficulties during this time, it never failed to take up challenges, transforming itself to meet the needs of the coming age or to build the next society.

The building of a modern city, which began with the aim to catch up with the Western powers, first realigned the area of former Edo through city planning projects based on the 1888 Tokyo City Planning Ordinance and land readjustment projects for reconstruction of the Imperial capital following the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake. It then extended beyond this area

And now, new challenges are emerging for Tokyo as it enters the era of a shrinking and aging population, revolutionary progress of ICT, and increasing globalization of corporate activities, among other developments.

The next challenge: Global competition among cities

Today, there are over 7 billion people in the world, and not that far in the future, the world's population will reach 10 billion. Over half of this population lives in Asia. The Asian region is undergoing tremendous economic growth, and companies with their eyes on the world cannot ignore the Asian market. The growth of China is especially notable, and many of the Asian headquarters of major global companies are located in Hong Kong, Singapore and other areas where Greater China and English-speaking world come together. With regard to population, there is no mistake that in time India will overtake China, and the center of the Asian market in terms of population will gradually move westward. As Japan is located in the Far East, what actions should our country take amid such circumstances? How should we address the harsh competition among the world's cities?

A new challenge: A competitive Tokyo

One condition for an internationally competitive city is to have "an environment that can attract and bring about movements at the forefront of the age." New things are born in a society where people boldly take on change. To have this "environment where challenges can be embraced" is the condition for a "competitive city," and to maintain this environment sustainably is the condition for a "city that can remain competitive."

Discussion on renewal of the Otemachi-Marunouchi-Yurakucho(OMY) district, which has been the center of Tokyo since the Edo period and Meiji era, began from 1988, and a significant amount has already been renewed. Currently, urban renewal projects are underway in areas such as Shibuya, Shinjuku and Ikebukuro. And in recent years, new business centers have been born in areas such as Roppongi and Toranomon. It was very lucky for Tokyo that districts that can be used for central operations were born, and, moreover, that this happened at different periods of time. Even if a district comes up for renewal, other districts can continue to firmly support Tokyo's economy. And Tokyo itself can continue to take on the challenge of "always providing the world with a new business environment." There are few megalopolises in the world that have such "systemized sustainability."

Tokyo is in the process of fulfilling the conditions of a "competitive city" and a "city that can remain competitive."



Looking in the direction of Harumi from Roppongi.

Currently over 35 million people reside in the Greater Tokyo Area. Its size will expand with the completion of the maglev Chuo Shinkansen line, and if the area up to Osaka is taken into consideration, a megaregion with 70 million people will emerge. There is no other high population market in the world that is made up of such extremely high quality consumers. Products and services that can be successful in the Tokyo market will be successful in Asia and the world. Thus Tokyo can also not be ignored as a "place for challenge."

A new challenge: An attractive Tokyo

Meanwhile, the number of inbound tourists has been increasing significantly in recent years. Many of them come to Japan, not drawn by the business environment, because they are attracted to Japanese culture, life and history. The unique culture and lifestyles cultivated on the Japanese archipelago stretching from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the south, are characteristics that Japan should be proud of—this is the diverse and individualistic Japan that people find fascinating. Tokyo is the gateway to this Japan, and is also a symbol of the country.

On top of this, Tokyo itself attracts the world with its diversity and tolerance. Japan has one of the longest life expectancies in the world; is a safe country with a very low crime rate; and has a rich nature where you can enjoy the changing four seasons. Its capital, Tokyo, has an expansive green space and water in its center; a dense public transportation network that allows everyone to move around freely and easily; and various individualistic neighborhoods that provide fresh stimulation.

A Tokyo where blue skies and clean air has returned; a Tokyo where various opportunities are available to anyone; a Tokyo where people can keep on taking challenges that are full of hope; a Tokyo where everyone wants to live in or experience at least once in their lives. This Tokyo that fascinates people should be made known as it is to the world.

A competitive and attractive Tokyo will continue to take on challenges to prepare for the next 100 years.



Look back in time to open new doors for the city. (Photo is the former site of Hibiya-mitsuke gate in Hibiya Park.)

Tokyo's Urban Development: Taking on the challenge of becoming a competitive and attractive Tokyo

A city that can meet the cutting-edge needs of the age.

Takayuki Kishii



Land use plans and systems properly lead the city in a desirable direction.



City design enhances the quality of the space.

to include what was formerly called the suburbs of Tokyo through projects for housing land developments along private railway lines in the early Showa Era and land readjustment projects for reconstruction following the end of WWII. Then, taking the opportunity provided by the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, inter-prefectural and key transportation infrastructure including the Shinkansen bullet train, the Metropolitan Expressway, and the monorail to Haneda Airport were built, and Tokyo rapidly grew and expanded. In order to accommodate the resulting influx of people from other parts of Japan, large-scale new town developments were launched, and as the economy grew rapidly, various high-rise buildings, starting with the 1968 completion of the Kasumigaseki Building, began appearing in the city center and subcenters. Skyscrapers are now a natural part of the cityscape. Even after the collapse of the bubble economy, the city continues to be actively developed through urban renewal policies that also use the dynamism of the private sector.



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