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HENRY D. SMITH II

## Tokyo as an Idea: An Exploration of Japanese Urban Thought Until 1945

The idea of the city in Japanese culture is elusive to begin with, and the confused patterns of modern urban growth have done little to clarify it. Yet at the same time, thought about "the city" in Japanese society is today more vigorous and diverse than in the past. The very fact that Japan is already, by some definitions, virtually one hundred per cent urbanized is causing the Japanese more and more to structure their thinking about society and its evolution around the concept of the city, as thinkers in the West have been doing since Aristotle. It seems a good time to begin probing the traditional structure of Japanese urban thought and its modern evolution.

It is easy but misleading to explain the ambiguous structure of Japanese urban thought by enumerating what it is *not*, in relation to non-Japanese (primarily Western) ideas of the city: no indigenous tradition of imposing cosmic symbolism on the form of the city; no tradition of using the city as a metaphor for utopian ideals; and no tradition of the city as an autonomous political unit (with certain short-lived sixteenth century exceptions). All of these negative characteristics can be fairly well explained, as they often are, by Japan's insularity and consequent freedom from disruption by international trade or alien invaders, which helped to crystallize and clarify the city in other cultures. Yet it seems equally important to

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explain the underlying structure of Japanese urban thought in terms of what it *was* rather than what it was not: I will make some general suggestions for this shortly.

But it is in the end impossible to avoid the comparison between Japanese and Western ideas of the city, simply because the Japanese have been so heavily influenced by the latter since the Meiji Restoration. Even today, a substantial proportion of Japanese books on the city are translations from Western languages. The co-existence of continuing influences from the West with surviving traditional ideas of the city immensely complicates the analysis of modern Japanese urban thought. Such key phrases in urban political thought as "citizen" and "autonomy," for example, have been used in almost diametrically opposite senses, depending on whether the point of reference was Japanese or Western tradition (and, of course, depending still further on *which* of several Western traditions).

As a historian my interest lies in the period of the most traumatic threat to the traditional bases of urban thought, namely, the adoption of Western urban ideas during the Meiji period and the subsequent years of very rapid modern urban growth up to the 1930s. My underlying interest is less in the particular case of Tokyo than the broader one of "the city" as an idea in modern Japanese culture. But there are several types of cities in Japan, and I have focused on Tokyo as a useful, indeed essential, starting point, since for better or for worse it was the capital that served as reference for most thought about "the" city—both articulate and implicit—in the years between the Meiji Restoration and World War II. I recognize that this bias obscures the unique character of other large Japanese cities, particular Osaka, which both as a distinctive cultural tradition and as a major economic force was in certain ways critical in molding ideas of Tokyo. Similarly, I have neglected the idea of the provincial city, which found some distinguished advocates before the war (for example, Yanagita, #69, and Inuma, #63), and which has become the focus of much attention in recent years. Yet even in this case, Tokyo has tended to remain the point of reference.

While my primary concern has been with the political aspects of urban thought, I also found it necessary to devote attention to religious and aesthetic conceptions of the city, for these are often tightly interwoven with political ideas. I have found it unprofitable at this stage to define the limits of "urban thought," and I have doubtless neglected many thinkers whose ideas have important urban implications. In the absence of any general writings on urban thought in Japan, it has seemed most profitable to limit myself to the obvious thinkers. My intent has been as much bibliographical as analytical,

and I hope that the list of sources at the end may constitute a preliminary reading list for those interested in pursuing the issues I raise.

### *I. The Structure of Traditional Urban Thought*

Traditional urban thought in Japan may be understood as two layers: on the bottom a largely implicit set of indigenous attitudes from the ancient and medieval periods; and on top an explicit and highly intellectual structure of thought evolved under the Tokugawa political system and molded by Confucian ideology. Symbolized, respectively, by the *miyako* (Nara and then Heian) of the aristocratic court and by the Tokugawa *bakufu* capital of Edo, these two layers have never neatly joined nor have they been in open conflict. Rather they remain two distinct approaches to the city, the one sentimental and apolitical, the other intellectual and moralistic, a contrast which remains in many ways apparent to this day.

*Ancient Attitudes Toward the City.* The older, implicit approach to the city involves three attitudes:

1. *The city as mediation* forms the "ground bass" or *basso ostinato* of Japanese urban thought. Just as the Japanese myths, as John Pelzel (#17) has stressed, reveal no essential contrast between the land of the gods and the land of the mortals, so there is no tension between the real capital and a heavenly form: rather as the palace of the emperor it mediates between the *kami* and men. This is in contrast to the Judeo-Christian symbolic dualism of the city over which God presides (Jerusalem) and the city in which man has fallen from harmony with God (Babylon), a moral dichotomy which structures much later Western urban thought (see #6 and #12). This is also in contrast to the widespread ancient practice of conceiving the city as a cosmic center, expressed through the imposition of an ideal form. While the Japanese did in fact borrow such an intellectual form from China, in the plans of Nara and Heian, they did not sustain it.

The city is similarly a place of mediation between man and nature. This is rooted in the indigenous sense of a continuum of man and nature, and was sustained by the informal mixing of settled and unsettled area in the actual form of the medieval capital: no wall existed to provide either real or symbolic separation of man and nature. In the aesthetic of the urban aristocracy, an ambiguity of nature and artifice was highly prized. The city as mediation similarly

affirms multiplicity and simultaneity of function rather than a dichotomy of commercial and agrarian function. The capital is thus both farm (*inaka*) and market (*machi*), as the proverb affirms: *kyō ni inaka ari* ("country in the capital," from the Kamigata syllabary cards).

2. *The city as process* consists of two interwoven attitudes, the affirming Shinto concept of cyclical renewal and the negating Buddhist idea of impermanence (*mujō*). Both were sustained by the Japanese practice of urban building almost exclusively in vegetable materials (roof tiles were the major exception), subject both to predictable cycles of decay and to unpredictable but frequent destruction by fire (with ritual implications of purification). The idea of cyclical renewal (see #16) found concrete expression in the festivals (*matsuri*) that were celebrated in the traditional city in a pattern that remained at one with the agricultural seasons (in contrast to Europe, for example, where events in the life of Christ came to structure the festival year). Even today the notion of periodic festival remains crucial to the underlying Japanese sense of the city.

The Buddhist concept of impermanence created an idea of the city as ephemeron, with its classic expression in the opening lines of the early thirteenth century *Hōjōki* (#18), in which both the houses of the capital and those who dwell in them are like "the bubbles that float in the pools, now vanishing, now forming, not of long duration." Yet this is not a negation of the city in affirmation of a non-urban environment, but rather the negation of all environment in affirmation of mind. At any rate, total negation was rarely sustained in Japanese thought, and the more characteristic expression of the city as ephemeron was *ukiyo*, in its two meanings of "world of sorrows" and "floating world." This admixture of a Buddhistic negation of the world and an aesthetic affirmation of the moment has characterized all periods of urban cultural flowering in Japan, from eighth-century Nara to post-earthquake Tokyo. It is a sensibility which corresponds well with Carl Schorske's description of the modern (and hence more secular) Western idea à la Baudelaire of "the city beyond virtue and vice" (#12, pp. 109–110): "The city has no structured temporal locus between past and future, but rather a temporal quality. The modern city offered an eternal *hic et nunc*, whose content was transience, but whose transience was permanent. The city presented a succession of variegated, fleeting moments, each to be savoured in its passage from nonexistence to oblivion."

3. *The city as art*, an idea that appears with the growth of great cities anywhere, gained special strength in medieval Japan by its

clear dissociation from the idea of the city as political power. Behind it lay the peculiar developments during the several centuries after the founding of Heian: the growth of provincial power at the expense of the capital, resulting in the sharp separation of power and authority. The capital in this way achieved a special lure as art apart from power and as symbol of the culture at large apart from such power-evoking symbols as walls and monuments. The capital evoked both the authority of letters (poetry more than learning) and the aesthetic appeal of elegance and display. As Yanagita Kunio noted in 1929, the capital was a "spiritual home" (*kokoro no kokyō*) for rural Japan, the source of everything precious and "even today a net which draws us in, the garden of our dreams" (#69, pp. 243-4). As Yanagita emphasized, this idea held only for the capital, not for the "city" in general. It remains problematic how much the idea was undercut when the "capital" was moved from Kyoto to Tokyo in 1868, thus reuniting power and authority.

*Tokugawa Urban Thought: The Samurai Viewpoint.* The upper "layer" of traditional Japanese urban thought was formed as the Tokugawa political system took shape in the seventeenth century. In the course of time, two different viewpoints emerged within this layer, that of the ruling samurai class and that of the subservient *chōnin* class.

The samurai viewpoint, which constituted the mainstream of Tokugawa urban thought, was by no means consistent. In particular, it was characterized from the start by a fundamental tension between: 1) an effectively pro-urban policy stemming from the specific political need to keep the military class sequestered in cities, thereby encouraging pervasive change through the growth of commerce, money, and consumption; and 2) an expressly anti-urban ideology stemming from the general political need to resist any destabilizing change in the overall socio-economic structure. This tension gave rise in the eighteenth century to a debate over pro-urban practice versus agrarianist ideology which would continue into the twentieth century. Each of these two positions implied a different conception of the city.

On the one hand, pro-urban practice was rooted in the idea of *the city as power*, with the following three characteristics:

1. The city was affirmed as the seat of the shogun or, at the *han* level, of the daimyo. This was a bureaucratic rather than an absolutist conception, as seen in the case of Edo, which was considered less the capital of the nation than the private castle of the shogun and the administrative offices that it harbored. The com-

moner district of the city, and even most of the private mansions of the attending daimyo, were considered expendable in time of war (the point of reference in an urban form devised as a mode of defense; see #19, pp. 294–305), and was not an integral part of the city as power.

2. The commoner districts of Tokugawa political cities were governed not as a homogeneous entity, but as an assemblage of disparate administrative blocks, the *chō*. To each *chō* were assigned specific functions of local government to be carried out autonomously but according to standard procedures, particularly the use of mutual surveillance and mutual responsibility. “Autonomy” was thus granted on sufferance, and was considered a delegated duty rather than a right. The city was conceived as a varying number of independent *chō*, and had no corporate identity. Its governance was thus essentially no different from that of the rural villages.

3. Since the physical stability of the city ensured the political stability of the *bakuhau* system, Edo became the focus in the latter half of the Tokugawa period of various fire-proofing schemes (#19, pp. 365–403) to enhance the *permanence* of the city. These plans typically involved rebuilding in brick or stone and concentration into multi-storey row houses to provide room for wide firebreaks. Stimulated by new knowledge of Western city-building, such plans were never instituted until after the Meiji Restoration. *Bakufu* neglect of major reforms to protect Edo from fire was perhaps a mark of belief in the city as “ephemeron”; or more likely, it was because fire was frequent only in the commoner city, leaving the *bakufu* and daimyo territory (the “city as power”) relatively safe.

Standing in opposition to the city as power was the agrarianist conception of *the city as corruption and change*. This idea derived from the Confucian conception of agriculture as the “root” and all other economic activity as non-essential “branches” of a state. Cities were condemned morally for their function of consumption and politically for their breeding of change. For the agrarianist ideologue, the first essential was to relax pro-urban practice, in part by restraints on consumption, but most basically by removing the samurai from the cities. This *dochaku* (return to the land) proposal was first broached by Kumazawa Banzan (1619–91) in the 1670s, but was most systematically argued by Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), Japan’s first articulate urban ideologue, in his *Seidan* (Political Discourses, c. 1727; see #19 and #20). Sorai saw life in the city as like “living in an inn” (*ryoshuku no kyōkai*), since all urban dwellers (but the samurai in particular) were wholly dependent on money for survival,

down to “a single chopstick.” “Living in an inn” thus represented a life of dependence on merchants which was both demoralizing and wasteful. Sorai did *not* propose, however, to eliminate the city; on the contrary he affirmed it for its bureaucratic functions. With Sorai as with all of the many *dochaku* advocates who followed him (detailed in #19, pp. 350–8), cities were undesirable largely to the extent that they produced change: if consumption was maintained at modest and fixed levels, cities were happily tolerated if never morally affirmed.

*Tokugawa Urban Thought: The Chōnin Viewpoint.* Both “the city as power” and “the city as corruption and change” were products of the *bakuhan* system and reflections of samurai class interests. At the same time, a variety of urban ideas emerged from within the urban commoner class itself. None of these ideas harbored the revolutionary potential of the Western concept of the free and independent city (as in the title of “*citoyen*” in the French Revolution). Yet they varied substantially in degree of potential subversiveness. Beginning with the least subversive, I would propose four *chōnin* ideas of Edo:

1. A conservative and ascetic “popular morality” (*tsūzoku dōtoku*, a Meiji term), stressing the virtues of thrift, diligence, and loyalty emerged as the fundamental ethic of the *chōnin* elite during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Shingaku (outlined in #21) was the most articulate and successful of a variety of popular movements stressing “this-worldly mysticism” (Bellah’s phrase). While consumption was criticized on moral grounds which were not by accident consonant with the samurai ethic, profit (although not its increment) was justified and affirmed—by analogy to the samurai stipend. The existence of the city was affirmed, but its growth was discouraged: the city of corruption and change was transposed to the *city of ascetic virtue and stability*, with no essential difference in frame of reference. While agrarianist in sentiment, it was essentially a *chōnin* ethic: I take this to be the symbolic sense of the title of the major work of Shingaku founder Ishida Baigan (1685–1744), *Tohi mondō* (Dialogues of the capital and the country). While Baigan’s ideology was developed in Kyoto, it enjoyed phenomenal popularity in Edo from the 1780’s under the influence of Nakazawa Dōni (1725–1803).

2. An idea of the *city as a family* emerged naturally from the system of *chō* administration, in which the landlords (*jinushi* and particularly their delegates, the *ōya*) were conceived as parents and



the back-alley tenants (*tanako*) as their children. This hierarchical but unifying conception was of course comparable to that of the agricultural village, and as an idea it reemerged in the neighborhood association movement of the twentieth century. It was not, however, an idea of the city as a whole, but rather one of the local neighborhood, the “*machi*” or “*chōnai*.” It found literary expression in Shikitei Samba’s (1776–1822) *Ukiyoburo* (1809–13) and *Ukiyodoko* 1812–23) (as analyzed by Maeda, #23), and has survived in modern Tokyo in *rakugo* story-telling.

3. A culture that combined an affirmation of consumption with a spirit of impermanence survived and thrived in Edo, but only within the carefully segregated *ukiyo* of the theatre and pleasure quarters. Where the older native sensibility would tend to view such activity in a temporal framework of purificatory play (*hare*) apart from the everyday world (*ke*), the static Confucian worldview condemned it morally within a spatial framework as the “*akubasho*” (literally, “bad place”). This moral contradiction led to an idea of the city apart from the city, two cities less in opposition than in different worlds. The consequence was a culture of indirection and disguise, relying primarily on wit, theatre, and antiquarianism for its modes of expression. In this *city of play*, political criticism was possible and indeed common, but tended to be neutralized by the fact of moral isolation.

4. The most independent concept of the city to emerge from Edo was that associated with the “Edokko” (child of Edo). Twentieth-century mythology has greatly confused understanding of the Edokko as he emerged in the late eighteenth century. Thanks to the recent work of Nishiyama Matsunosuke (#22), it is now possible to see the Edokko as representing the distinctive pride in Edo of middle-level localists, particularly the brokers of *hatamoto-gokenin* rice (the *fudasashi*) and merchants in fish and vegetables (perishable, hence local). The connection with *bakufu* retainers gave the Edokko a particular pride in the city as political power (although of a less privatized and more all-enclosing sort than that of the samurai outlined above), while his tradesman function gave him pride in the city as economic power: it was an idea of the *city as prosperity*, revealed in such phrases as “Ō-Edo” and “Edo hanjō.” Close connections with the life of the *akubasho*, constant exposure to destruction by fire, and dealership in perishable goods—all these account for the Edokko’s proverbial contempt of stable wealth and his affirmation of the pleasures of the moment. He thus presented a conspicuous threat to the elite *chōnin* ethic of thrift and diligence.

Yet the Edokko's pride in the city as a whole, both for its economic and political power, made him at best an ambivalent threat to the *bakufu's* conception of Edo.

## *II. Restoration Tokyo: The City as a Showcase, 1868–1900*

The transition from Edo to Tokyo traumatized the social and economic structure of the city. The abolition of the *sankin kōtai* undercut the foundation of Edo's prosperity, and the transition to a new political and economic base came slowly and after several false starts; it was only in the 1890s that Tokyo recovered the population of Edo at its peak. The indigenous Edo population, politically passive to begin with, was left disoriented and inarticulate, with a few notable exceptions that I will mention below. During these three decades, Tokyo as an idea was to be found among newcomers to the city, both the new ruling elite from west Japan and the flood of rural immigrants from all directions. The dominant concept of Tokyo was as a passive entity. It was that of a showcase, on the one hand a sort of two-dimensional back-drop against which the latest fashions and inventions from the West were displayed, and on the other a proving-ground for institutional innovations.

The administrative reform of the city was typical of this attitude. For the first two decades of Meiji, Tokyo was subjected to one system of government after another in confusing succession (see #14). The final local government system of 1888 was revealing in two respects as it applied to Tokyo. First, the new Tokyo City (along with Osaka and Kyoto) was granted *less* autonomy than ordinary cities through a special law (*tokurei*), abolished in the face of local protests in 1898, that made the prefectural governor ex-officio mayor of the city. Second, local municipal administration extended only as far down as the new borough (*ku*), leaving unattended the neighborhood level which had been so closely regulated in Edo. The city was thus identified with the state at the top but left to its own devices at the bottom, a pattern that remained characteristic until the 1930s.

A grand plan for the building of a modern Western-style downtown area in the nondescript merchant district known as the Ginza, which had been gutted by fire in February 1872, revealed a central component of the official idea of Tokyo as a showcase: the hopes of impressing foreigners with the capital's modernity (see #25). To the degree that the new quarter was to be fire-proof and

multi-storied, the plan was heir to late Tokugawa schemes to enhance the permanence of the capital. But the viewpoint of the foreigner was primary, as the location of the Ginza demonstrates, leading from Shimbashi to the south (where the foreigners got off the train from Yokohama) to the Tsukiji Hotel to the east (where they were lodged) and to the government offices to the west (where they would negotiate revision of the unequal treaties). This Ginza Brick Quarter plan was substantially scaled down in the course of its execution, because it proved unpopular both with politicians and with local residents. Yet the scheme remains testimony to a conception of the city as a showcase for foreigners which was not conceived on as grand a scale until the face-lifting of Tokyo just before the Olympic games of 1968.

But what of the native Japanese reaction to Tokyo of the 1870s? One primary source of evidence is a genre of literature known as *hanjōmono* ("tales of prosperity") which detailed the wonders and novelties of "civilization" in the capital. The prototype was *Tōkyō shin hanjōki* (A Chronicle of the New Prosperity in Tokyo, 1874-76; see #26 and #27), a spicy description of customs in the city written by Tōhoku samurai Hattori Bushō, who had first gone to Tokyo in 1870 at age 29. Written in *kambun* and modeled after a late Edo guide, the work focused on the new and curious, and set the tone of wide-eyed journalistic wonder that characterized the several *hanjōmono* that followed (extending from Tokyo out to Yokohama, Kyoto, and Osaka). Here again, the city was conceived as a showcase, a backdrop for the pageant of *bummei-kaika*.

During the 1880s, the theme of planning Tokyo as a showpiece for foreigners was revived despite the failure of the Ginza Brick Quarter. The most monumental plan, for a vast government center at Hibiya according to blueprints drawn up by German engineers in 1887, was abandoned (see Ishizuka, #8). But the same concern with diplomacy can be discerned in the less ambitious and more practical goals of the Municipal Improvement Act (Shiku kaisei jōrei) of 1888, which was forced through by the government (over Genrōin objections) on the grounds that the city must be presentable to foreigners. Since foreigners were soon to be allowed freedom of residence, the Municipal Improvement Act provided not for a monumental center, but rather for the widening and paving of roads, improvement of water supply, and dredging of rivers. Most such improvements were of course a matter of practical urgency; but the dominant "idea" behind the Municipal Improvement Act as a whole was that of Haussman's Paris, the leading Western urban model for Tokyo at

the time: grand, permanent, and monumental. Despite the urgency of treaty revisions it was not an idea that in itself inspired many Japanese. As with the Ginza project, the Municipal Improvement budgets became bogged down in politics and threatened by military priorities, so that far less was built than planned (for details, see #11).

The government emphasis in urban planning of the 1880s on national political goals rather than practical economic ones was challenged by a small group of "urban modernizers." Chief among these critics, all of whom stood outside the government, were Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834–1901) and Taguchi Ukichi (1855–1905) (see #11, #14 [II/939–949], and #28). Taguchi was particularly vocal, his English-style liberalism arousing a concern for the independent economic strength of Tokyo, and leading him to stress above all the construction of a great international port—a plan which had government supporters but was defeated by strong political opposition from Yokohama. A critic in a different vein was Mori Ōgai (1862–1922), who on the basis of his public health training in Germany attacked the inadequate hygienic provisions in the improvement plans (see #13 and #29). What all these critics shared was a *mechanical* view of the city, the city as a challenge to be met with modern technology and practical learning. This was an attitude that fed directly into the official city planning establishment of the 1920s.

In the 1890s, the dominant idea of Tokyo was as an *object*, to be viewed from the outside. This sense is best captured by the word "Teito" (imperial capital), an old Nara term which became popular from about the time of the Meiji Constitution. "Teito" suggests a Tokyo viewed less as a city than as a symbol of the nation. This is an important shift from the idea of the *miyako*, which was a symbol of the *culture*. While I have already suggested that some of the old cultural affection of provincial Japan for the *miyako* may have been carried over to Tokyo, the idea of "Teito" was nevertheless far more saturated with political than with cultural connotations. Within the domestic context, Tokyo represented "culture" in a new sense, as the Westernized learning and manners necessary for *risshin shusse* (making one's way in the world). Thus Tokyo as Teito remained a passive tool, a means of achievement for the ambitious and symbol of imperial power for the nation as a whole.

But what of the indigenous population of Tokyo, the most obvious potential for an active idea of the city? Least responsive was the local merchant elite, bred in the passive ethic of frugality, diligence, and filial loyalty. The disruption in early Meiji Tokyo obviously

threatened these values, but they provided no basis for an aggressive and politically meaningful idea of the city. Furthermore, the decline of Shingaku and other eclectic *chōnin* religions, owing to early Meiji government persecution, weakened the elite *chōnin* system of belief itself. Yet in broader perspective, Tokutomi Sohō's argument in 1888 that the old Tokugawa merchant elite (*goyō shōnin*) was simply too docile to provide any opposition to the Meiji state is persuasive. In the end, Sohō's own hopes for a "country gentleman" (*inaka shinshi*) class to provide that function were also to be disappointed, and Meiji Japan was left with no "citizen" class either in the city or the country (see Kano, #30, for this interpretation).

Former *bakufu* retainers produced a slightly more spirited response, stemming from their acute resentment of the "country samurai" (*inaka-zamurai*) from West Japan who came carpetbagging into Restoration Tokyo. The earliest such sentiment was expressed by Narushima Ryūhoku (1837–1884), who in the second volume (1874) of his *Ryūkyō shinshi* (A New Chronicle of Yanagibashi), a loving poetic description of the pleasure quarters of the old city, lamented the damage wrought by the new immigrant elite. Although his veiled attack on the illiberal policies of the Meiji government led to his imprisonment in 1876 (see #24), in the end the *akubasho* and its indirection (Ryūhoku wrote in Chinese and criticized only by use of irony) offered little authority. In the late 1880s, *ex-bakufu* retainers again rose in defense of Edo, but this time in a purely antiquarian mode, with none of Ryūhoku's irony. In a series of magazines issued in the 1890s, such as *Edo-kai shi* or *Kyū-bakufu* (see Mizue, #10), these men offered nostalgic reminiscences and reprinted sources on Edo history, but all in a sentimental spirit.

It was in the end the Edokko mentality of the middle-level *chōnin* class that produced the only outright critique of the Meiji government's policy towards Tokyo, in novelist Kōda Rohan's remarkable essay "Ikkoku no shuto" (One Nation's Capital, 1898; #32). Rohan, of Edokko craftsman birth, was contemptuous above all of the Satchō country samurai who had no love for the city, but merely used it for the advancement of personal ambitions. Rohan was at the same time critical of conservative sentimentalists who longed for the old Edo. One senses in him both the characteristic Edokko love of the new, and an underlying protest against the conservative moralism of both the merchant elite and the *bakufu* retainers.

Rohan's proposals were unique and radical. Rather than espousing the show-case reforms of the government, he advocated a total rebuilding of the city. His ideal was not a "Teito" but rather a "Taito" (great capital). His emphasis was on high density, both of

wealth to make it prosper (reminiscent of “Edo hanjō” and similar in ends to Taguchi’s proposals), and of people and buildings to make it stand apart from the country. He cited the cities of traditional China and baroque Europe in support of this proposal, which had virtually no precedent in Japan. He also borrowed techniques from the West, notably the construction of multiple-unit, multi-storied, fireproof apartments throughout the city. He likewise devoted attention to all sorts of urban conveniences, from cemeteries and sewers to parks and barbers.

But Rohan’s Edokko mentality, combining both an eagerness for progressive change and a strong hostility to Satchō statism and *chōnin* conservatism, was unique and left no successors. By the turn of the century, the leading idea of Tokyo remained that of the Teito rather than “Taito.”

### *III. Streetcar Tokyo: The City as a Problem, 1895–1923*

It was only after the Sino-Japanese War that Tokyo passed the peak population of Edo and began to metamorphose into a modern metropolis. The population of the city doubled from 1895 to 1923, reaching almost four million on the eve of the 1923 earthquake. Such explosive growth severely strained the already inadequate physical systems of the city and disrupted patterns of urban space. disrupted familiar patterns of urban space.

The symbol of this confusion was the electric streetcar, which within two years from the autumn of 1903, when the first tracks were laid, had spread in a spidery maze of one hundred-odd miles over the face of the city. The streetcars provided both the means of transportation and a target of vengeance in the urban riots that typified this era (anti-Portsmouth Treaty riots, 1905; anti-Katsura riots, 1912; Rice Riots, 1918). The streetcar system itself was a constant political problem, raising in succession protracted disputes over municipal ownership, fare increases, and labor conditions. Particularly during the first decade of operation, the streetcar system was envisioned more as a threat than a convenience. Nagai Kafū depicted it in a 1912 story as a “black forest or doorless maze” (#42, p. 51; see also pp. 33–34), while Natsume Sōseki in *Higan sugi made* of the same year presented an image of the streetcar-city as a puzzle to be solved (see Maeda’s analysis, #41). By the early 1920s, when they carried well over one million passengers daily, the streetcars had been largely absorbed into the daily life of the city; but until then, they remained a powerful symbol of the problematic threat of change.

This uncertainty and confusion was reflected in the urban

thought of the era. Some writers proposed to solve the "problems" of the city through reliance on the technology and institutions of the West, others through a shoring up of traditional ethics; yet few offered any interpretation of the modern city as a distinctive phenomenon, remaining committed to a mechanistic and quantitative frame of analysis. What remained distinctively Japanese was the reluctance to negate the city outright; if unable to offer any creative interpretations of the essential nature of the modern city, the thinkers of these years nevertheless did not tend to flee from it, perhaps suggesting an underlying idea of the city as "mediation."

*The Anti-Urbanists.* This period saw the emergence of an articulate agrarianist ideology that followed closely in the Tokugawa tradition. Even the most aggressive Nōhonshugi advocates, of whom Tokyo University of Agriculture Professor Yokoi Tokiyoshi (1860–1927) was the prototype, tended thus to accept the city as a political and administrative center, and to view the problem of agriculture within a conceptual framework of city-country harmony (see #45, Yokoi's major statement on the city). Like Ogyū Sorai two centuries earlier, Yokoi differentiated country and city primarily in terms of economic function: the country produced and the city consumed. From these parameters follow naturally, in Confucian logic, the ethical judgment of the city as conducive to luxury, insincerity, selfishness, and crime. Yet Yokoi never conceived of any *essential* antagonism of city and country: the city was not irredeemably immoral, but could be saved by regular interaction with the countryside.

Equally revealing was the pronounced ambivalence of the Naturalist writers who came to constitute the mainstream of elite literature in late Meiji Japan. They tended to be anti-urban in their rejection of the decorative didacticism of late Edo literature and in their susceptibility to Western romanticism. Even in their most romantic depictions of nature, however, the city is often close at hand—and rarely obtrusive. Typical is the classic essay *Musashino* (1898, #33) of Kunikida Doppo (1871–1908), in which the author suggests that the charm of the Musashi Plain west of Tokyo lies in its unique pattern of alternating forest and settled area. Doppo agrees with a friend that the *fringe* of the city as it dissolves into country is particularly appealing—a clear expression of the city as mediation.

Among the later and more socially oriented novels of the Naturalists, one also finds, as William Sibley has argued (#33, pp. 167–168), a strong ambivalence toward the city. While most such novels are set in the country, reflecting the provincial origins of the

authors, their heroes are typically oppressed and isolated by rural society, longing to escape to the metropolis as often as to nature. Thus the hero of Shimazaki Tōson's *Ie* (The Family; 1909), "though he plays at farming and contemplates the scenery, easily gives up his bucolic life to return to the crowded *machi* of the city." Perhaps it is most accurate to argue, extending Okuno Takeo's theory about more recent Japanese novelists (*Bungaku ni okeru gen-fūkei*, Shūeisha, 1972), that the Naturalists, being preoccupied with self versus family and society, were not hostile to either country or city in particular, but were rather generally lacking in any strong feeling of specific "attachment to place" (*chien*).

Anti-urbanist ambivalence appeared most acutely in the ideology of the "success" movement which began shortly after the turn of the century. On the one hand, the fundamental utilitarianism of *risshin shusse* led logically to an affirmation of Tokyo and its growth as the mecca of opportunity for ambitious youth. Yet at the same time the opportunism of the ethic encouraged affirmation of the orthodox view of metropolitan life as a source of great spiritual danger. Particularly revealing is *Tōkyōgaku*, written in 1909 by one Ishikawa Tengai (#40). Literally "Tokyo-ology," the title in effect implied "How to Succeed in Tokyo," since most of the volume offered detailed advice on the etiquette and techniques of ingratiating needed for worldly advancement in the capital. Yet the introduction warned that Tokyo was essentially a "battlefield" on which young foot-soldiers from the country struggled for success under such generals as Iwasaki and Mitsui. The losses were tremendous; scarcely two in a hundred survived. Even the survivors, Ishikawa warned, should beware of remaining in Tokyo, since city-born people were destined to mental deficiency after two generations. Utilize the city for the education it offers, he advised, but then get out. (He admits that he himself lingered on a bit.)

*The Municipal Socialists.* Socialists were the most vocal and imaginative thinkers on Tokyo as a "problem" in the late Meiji period. This concern was in one sense anomalous, for neither the earlier *jiyū minken* leaders nor later Marxists devoted any particular attention to the city. More broadly, the municipal socialist ideas may be seen as a link between such "urban modernizers" of the 1880s as Taguchi Ukichi and Mori Ōgai, and the bureaucratic city planning movement of early Taisho: the common denominator was a moderate utilitarian approach and a reliance on proven Western techniques. Meiji socialist interest in the city was also a specific response to one of the great public issues in the early twentieth century, that



of private versus municipal operation and ownership of such newly-introduced modern utilities as gas, electricity, and streetcars. Particularly in Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka, this issue generated much public debate and occasional mass demonstrations.

The concept of "municipal socialism" also related closely to the specific experiences of its two leading theorists, Katayama Sen (1859–1933) and Abe Isoo (1865–1949) (see #13 for an account of their urban ideas). By different routes, both men ended up at theological schools in the eastern United States (Katayama at Yale, Abe at Hartford) in the early 1890s, where they were strongly influenced by the progressive Christian interest in municipal reform at the time. Both returned to Japan in 1896 (also coincidentally), and proceeded to apply the lessons they had learned from American (and, at one remove, English) municipal reform thinkers. Katayama frequently wrote on urban issues (notably government, transportation, housing, and water supply) throughout the years from his return until 1913, and summed up his theories in *Toshi shakaishugi* (Municipal Socialism, 1903) (#36), arguing for democratization of Tokyo city government and for municipal ownership of all major utilities.

Abe Isoo followed Katayama in introducing Western reform movements (*Ōyō shisei ron*, 1908) and in stressing the need for widespread municipal ownership of public conveniences, in *Toshi dokusen jigyō ron* (Municipal Monopoly of Utilities, 1911) (#37). Abe went one radical step further than Katayama in proposing public ownership of all urban land—indeed a revolutionary idea in Japan, where since the Tokugawa period urban land had been exempt from major taxation. Yet this idea appeared in isolation and generated little interest. By the beginning of the Taisho period, meanwhile, the major issues of utilities management had been essentially solved (typically by compromise) in Tokyo and other large cities. The issue of the democratic reform of municipal government in the direction of greater autonomy, which had also been of major concern to Katayama and Abe, was to continue for three decades and more, with the liberal position of the municipal socialists being upheld by the Anglo-American style reformers of the Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research.

*The Bureaucratist Reformers.* Throughout the Meiji period, the call for modernizing and rationalizing Tokyo along utilitarian Western lines had been limited largely to critics outside the government. From early Taisho, however, a pervasive de-politicization of the urban reform movement began, as bureaucrats and professionals

began to address themselves to the city as a problem. By this time, the Parisian model of rebuilding for monumental effect had been abandoned for good in the wake of successful treaty revision and of the mediocre results of the Municipal Improvement program in Tokyo. The upshot of this new movement for efficient urban rebuilding was the City Planning Law (*Toshi keikaku hō*) of 1919 and its sister Urban Building Law (*Shigaichi kenchikubutsu hō*). (For details on the drafting and operation of the City Planning Law, see #11, #48, and #49.)

Unlike the 1888 Municipal Improvement Act which it replaced, the City Planning Law of 1919 applied not only to Tokyo, but to all metropolitan areas (at that time, the six cities of Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe), revealing an important shift in thinking from the "capital" (*teito*) in particular to the "large city" (*daitoshi*) in general. By creating a new bureaucratic hierarchy, the laws spawned much writing on municipal government and city planning in the 1920s. Particularly important in the early years were the publications of the Urban Study Society (*Toshi kenkyūkai*), founded in 1918 by Gotō Shinpei (1857–1929), then Home Minister and the pioneering figure in Japan's modern city planning movement. The Society was composed largely of Home Ministry officials and soon became a semi-satellite of the ministry's City Planning Section (Bureau from 1922); its monthly *Toshi kōron* (*The Urban Review*, #51) remains the key source for bureaucratic thinking on prewar city planning. Similar semiofficial organizations later appeared in Osaka and Nagoya (#61, #62), both of which contributed vigorous new initiatives in city planning in the 1920s; in particular Seki Hajime (1873–1935), mayor of Osaka from 1923 until 1935, stands out as an urban thinker in clear opposition to the centrist ideologues of the Home Ministry (#57, #58).

As with their Meiji predecessors in the movement for urban modernization, the city planners of the Taisho period turned almost exclusively to the West for inspiration, drawing in particular on the models of Germany, England, and the United States. Germany, as the pioneer in the techniques of modern city planning (land readjustment and zoning), was the natural model for the technical framework of the 1919 City Planning Law. For ideological inspiration, however, Japanese urban thinkers turned rather to the Anglo-American tradition. English influence was most notable, in Japan as elsewhere, for the idea of the Garden City, which however tended to be interpreted in uniquely Japanese ways. One of the earliest introductions of the Garden City, for example, was by a group of Home

Ministry officials whose basic concern was not the building of new medium-sized cities as Ebenezer Howard had first proposed (*Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, 1898), but rather a characteristic agrarianist “harmony” of city and country (#35). The only actual “garden cities” built in Japan were in fact Tokyo suburban developments, designed under the tutelage of aging urban modernizer Shibusawa Eiichi (1840–1931) (see Watanabe, #47 for details). The only major prewar thinker in city planning who consistently advocated the planned dispersal of large metropolitan concentrations into small- and medium-sized cities was Home Ministry official Iinuma Kazumi (#63). For most other urban thinkers, bigness as such was not the problem of the big city.

It was the United States which in the end had the most powerful ideological impact on Japanese urban reform thought. The closing decades of the nineteenth century in America had seen the beginning of what Robert Wiebe has called “the search for order” (in a book of the same title, Hill and Wang, 1967), as a modern professional middle class emerged championing a new ideology of bureaucratism. This ideology was particularly strong in the area of municipal reform, where a revulsion over the abuses of boss-dominated big-city politics was fused with a faith in social science as an infallible tool for fathoming and serving the “public good.” This bureaucratist faith in a “scientific” approach to issues formerly dominated by politics fell on fertile ground in Japan, where the prolonged political debate over municipal ownership had frustrated many urban reformers and where bureaucratism, as Tetsuo Najita has argued (*Japan*, Prentice-Hall, 1974; p. 5), had formed an “underlying ideological consensus” since the Tokugawa period. As with the English “garden city,” fresh Western ideas offered happy confirmation of established Japanese ideology.

This American influence, already evident in a high percentage of translated books on urban issues, was vastly enhanced by the person of Charles A. Beard, who visited Tokyo for six months from the fall of 1922 at the invitation of Gotō Shinpei—who was by then mayor of Tokyo (for Beard in Japan, see #55). Beard, in addition to his better known talents as a historian, was a dedicated municipal reformer and former director of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. His final report on the reform of Tokyo appeared on the eve of the Kanto earthquake (published in English in late 1923 as *The Administration and Politics of Tokyo*, #56), a lucid and eminently rational set of scientific proposals for the overhaul of Tokyo’s inefficient system of administration. Precisely for its neglect of cultural and

political variables, the report had a lasting impact on Japanese urban thought, one which remains strong to this day.

Yet just beneath the surface of the happy consensus between Beard and his bureaucratist hosts lay deep-rooted ideological assumptions that were in fundamental conflict. The term "citizen," for example, implied in the American tradition a realm of "public" activity outside of the formal institutions of government, activity of the sort typified by foundations like the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, and by philanthropists and private citizens like Beard himself. The Japanese "*shimin*," however, tended to suggest a hierarchical loyalty of urban residents to the city government, and thence even to the state: thus the term was used as the title of a nationalistic Min'yūsha tract in 1896 to mean something like "loyal imperial subject" (#31). The term "autonomy" (*jichi*) in Japan similarly implied a commitment to the national good, an idea reflecting the Tokugawa concept that local governments performed certain tasks out of dutiful loyalty to the state rather than as a local right. This orthodox statist ideology in fact characterized the thinking of most bureaucratist city planners, of whom the prototype was Ikeda Hiroshi (1881-1939), author of the City Planning Law (see his writings, #52). While wholly dedicated to the cause of more systematic and generous attention to urban problems, Ikeda and other officials like him saw the issue as one of priorities *within* the national government rather than between the national and local governments.

To the degree that a firm ideological grasp of Anglo-American urban ideas did survive in Japan, it is to be sought primarily among the personnel of the Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research, established in 1922 under the leadership of Gotō Shinpei and with a grant from zaibatsu leader Yasuda Zenjirō (1838-1921). But Gotō was a bureaucrat rather than a private citizen, and Yasuda's motivations seem to have been narrowly political, so that the "private" character of the Institute was compromised from the start. Many of the trustees were drawn from the ranks of the national bureaucracy, and pressure for adherence to state guidelines increased noticeably in the war years. Nevertheless, the Tokyo Institute of Municipal Research, by virtue of its financial independence, was of critical importance as a bastion of liberal Anglo-American thinking on municipal government and urban problems in the prewar period, and its many publications (particularly the monthly *Toshi mondai*, #60) as well as its complete library remain the major source of materials for the study of the modern Japanese city (for details on the Institute, see #54).

The theme of bureaucratism cannot be dismissed without special reference to the thought of Gotō Shinpei, the pivotal figure in the history of modern Japanese urban planning thought (for a brief account in English, see #50). While certainly the bureaucratist urban modernizer par excellence, constantly commissioning scientific surveys and proposing extravagant budgets for urban improvement, Gotō's urban thought had other dimensions. Reflecting his early medical training, he insisted on a biological conception of the city, an important contrast with the mechanistic thinking of most other urban reformers and a fascinating parallel with his contemporary, the Scottish biologist Patrick Geddes (1857–1932, author of *Cities in Evolution*, 1915). Viewing the city (and the state) as an organism, Gotō was hostile to mechanistic partisan politics (a hostility which Yasuda had apparently hoped to compromise). Yet at the same time Gotō's writings reveal a parallel emphasis on a "spirit" of *bushi*-like idealism, an emphasis which clearly qualifies his "scientific" apoliticism. Hence Gotō concluded a talk on "City Planning and the Spirit of Autonomy" in 1922 (#53) by tracing the Japanese spirit of "democracy" and municipal autonomy back to such paragons of sincerity as Sugawara no Michizane and Kusunoki Masashige!

*The Urban Moralists.* Parallel with and often influencing the utilitarian approach of the city planners were a variety of urban improvement efforts along more traditional moralistic lines. While largely uncoordinated, these various movements at both the national and local level constituted what was in effect an "urban improvement movement" not so different in its goals and means from the official Local Improvement Movement that the Home Ministry devised for rural Japan (for which see Pyle, #38). While varying in locus of initiative and level of fervor, all of the three major types of participants in this "movement"—social policy bureaucrats, moral education propagandists, and neighborhood association organizers—were in general agreement on the need to mobilize traditional values in an effort to stave off the debilitating effects of modern urban change.

The most bureaucratic of the three approaches was that of the social policy planners in the Home Ministry's new Social Affairs Bureau (Shakaikyoku, 1918), which was soon complemented by parallel organs in prefectural and municipal governments to deal with specifically urban social problems (in Tokyo City, a Shakaikyoku was established in December 1919). The "social projects" (*shakai jigyō*) undertaken by these authorities included not only charitable institutions such as orphanages and schools for the handicapped, but also general social services such as markets,

health centers, employment services, and credit institutions (for Tokyo, see #64). To the limited extent that housing policy was covered, the links with city planners were very close (see Akagi, #49). But all were commonly rooted in the underlying ideology of “social policy” as it had emerged from the thinking of the Social Policy Association (Shakai seisaku gakkai, 1896–1925), a common front of academics and bureaucrats modelled after a German group of the same name and dedicated to staving off socialism through enlightened social reform. (For a provocative analysis of this school, see Pyle, “Advantages of Followership,” #38.) Although the Association was instrumental in the theoretical conception of the rural improvement movement, the membership’s concern with urban problems—specifically, the labor problem—was even more basic. Kuwata Kumazō (1868–1932), for example, wrote a long article in 1900 on “Municipal Social Policy” (#34), arguing that “since the city is the center of the labor problem, municipal social policy should occupy the lead in all social policy” (p. 80)—an argument revealingly parallel to that of Katayama Sen in the same years for “municipal socialism.” Kuwata outlined various institutions for an urban social policy, most of which would in fact be undertaken by Tokyo City in the 1920s—albeit on a generally modest scale.

Separate from the evolution of a bureaucratic social policy for cities in these years was an overtly ideological campaign to combat the extravagance and selfishness for which Confucian orthodoxy had long condemned the city. The initiative came largely from the Home and Education Ministries, but was eagerly supplemented by the Education Associations (*Kyōikukai*, semi-official groups of local educators) of Tokyo Prefecture and Tokyo City. The campaign, which has been traced in rich detail by Yamamoto Tsuneo (#39), began as early as 1902, but was escalated first after the 1908 Edict (Boshin shōsho, the so-called “thrift and diligence rescript”) and then following the Kōtoku Incident of 1910. This “urban moral education” (*toshi kyōka*) movement ranged from extensive programs of public lectures to the encouragement of popular entertainment (both traditional *yose* and the new cinema) as channels for the inculcation of thrift, diligence, and loyalty to both city and nation.

It would be misleading, however, to overemphasize such efforts at didactic “popular education” (*tsūzoku kyōiku*) from above. It is doubtful first of all that the movement was at all effective, particularly considering its small scale relative to the total population of Tokyo. More importantly, as a few critics of the campaign argued (#39, p. 17), popular belief in early twentieth-century Tokyo was

still so strongly colored by the didactic moralism of Edo culture that any such campaign was like carrying coals to Newcastle. It is also well to recall that late Meiji and Taisho Tokyo witnessed a substantial growth in popular religious movements, ranging from Christianity and Okada Meditation for intellectuals to Tenrikyo and Nichiren for ordinary people. On the whole it would seem that far more moralizing came spontaneously from within the lower and particularly middle levels of Tokyo culture than the Home and Education Ministries could ever hope to infuse from above.

The most dramatic evidence of the internal potential of Tokyo culture for mobilizing traditional moral sentiment was the phenomenal growth of neighborhood organizations (*chōnaikai*) in this period (see #14, IV:268–292 for a good secondary analysis, and #66 for a primary survey). Wholly spontaneous organizations at the *chō* level, the *chōnaikai* rose in number from a mere 39 in 1897 to 452 on the eve of the Kanto earthquake, by which time about half the city was organized (the other half following quickly in the decade after the earthquake). While diverse in organization, the *chōnaikai* were essentially a means of sustaining local community solidarity in the face of rapid population turnover. While clearly drawing on the tradition of *chō* autonomy in Edo, the *chōnaikai* were distinctly modern in their contractual nature, relying on written charters and voluntary participation (although in fact few refused to pay the dues).

Two characteristics stand out in the ideology of the *chōnaikai* as seen in their charters of these years (#65). First and least surprising was a strong emphasis on cooperativism, mutual aid, and friendship within the neighborhood—a clear reflection of the familial urban neighborhood ethic of the Edo period. At the same time one finds a strong identification with the nation, not only in such specific functions as behind-the-lines support of military activities (a clear legacy of the Russo-Japanese war effort), but more broadly in the rhetoric of the charters, which encourage “reverence for the kokutai,” “providing the foundation of a healthy nation,” and “displaying the true character of the Japanese people by adhering to the Imperial Rescript on Education and the 1908 Edict.” It is no surprise that the *chōnaikai* offered virtually no resistance to incorporation into the formal administrative apparatus of the state in the 1930s—indeed, many local leaders had been seeking such recognition for years.

Yet the fact remains that the *chōnaikai* were created from below, with the primary initiative coming from local merchants. What emerges here is *not* an idea of Tokyo as a whole: despite efforts by city officials to propagandize the idea of Tokyo City as a whole as a

“family” with “City Hall as the housekeeper” (#39, p. 225), in fact “Tokyo” provided only the weakest conceptual link between neighborhood and state. The city of the *chōnaikai* was thus an amorphous assortment of neighborhood units founded, as Tawara Motoaki has argued (#14, p. 280), in a spirit of solidarity (*seiitsu*) rather than of independence (*jiyū*), looking at once vertically to the state and horizontally to the community.

*The Medievalists.* The decade of the 1910s saw a variety of reactions against both the materialistic modernizing and the traditionalist moralizing of the trends outlined above. At the most elemental level, there arose a new wave of nostalgia for old Edo in an antiquarian mode, relishing the rapidly disappearing past for its own sake (see Mizue, #10, for a bibliography). It was in 1910 that Mitamura Engyo (1870–1952), son of a *bakufu* retainer, launched his prolific career in the chronicling of Edo history and customs (collected in #44), and in 1920 that Yada Sōun (1882–1961) began serializing in the *Hōchi shinbun* his place-by-place encyclopedia of local urban lore, “Edo kara Tokyo e”, to continue until the earthquake (#46). Unlike those who reminisced of Edo in the 1890s, this generation was notable for its post-1868 birth and consequent lack of any direct knowledge of Edo.

Distinct from the antiquarians was a diverse group of writers and artists whom architectural historian Hasegawa Takashi, in his provocative cultural history of the 1910s, *Toshi kairō* (The urban corridor, #43), has tagged “medievalists.” These men shared a hostility toward Meiji Japan for its classicism, monumentalism, weightiness, moralizing, anti-individualism, utilitarianism, and above all its rusticity. They were men of the city, urbane and cosmopolitan, drawing with equal facility on Japanese tradition and on such diverse Western medievalist sources as Art Nouveau, Post-Impressionism, and utopian anarchism. They dominated the elite culture of pre-earthquake Taisho Tokyo, but defy easy categorization in terms of urban ideas. Let me oversimplify by proposing two basic styles, those of the Shirakaba-ha and the Pan-no-kai.

The Shirakaba-ha (1910–23) was in its underlying sensibilities quintessentially urban, drawing at once on an aristocratic sense of urbane refinement (the founding members all being Peers School graduates) and on a certain bourgeois liberal commitment to individual freedom. Yet it was precisely this individualism that forced the members to reject, if only subconsciously, the nascent trends of commercialization and massification in Taisho Tokyo. Under the influence of Tolstoy, leading Shirakaba-ha members tended to reject



the city in favor of a utopian vision of primitive community, of which the clearest expression was the "New Village" (Atarashiki mura) movement of Shirakaba-ha founder Mushanokōji Saneatsu (1885–1976). They thus reflected an anti-urban ambivalence not so different from the Naturalists against whom they rebelled.

Of more positive relevance to Tokyo as an idea was the Pan-no-kai (1908–12), a group of writers that took its name from a *fin de siècle* German literary clique. Far less properly bourgeois than the Shirakaba-ha, the Pan-no-kai aestheticists were organized not around a monthly magazine, but around monthly parties at restaurants by the rivers of Tokyo (Hasegawa's "urban corridors"). The group included as an occasional member Nagai Kafū, a few years senior to the rest, whose writings provide the most sensual and concrete idea of Tokyo of any modern author, an idea which has been developed in masterful detail by Edward Seidensticker (#42). Yet in the end, Kafū's Tokyo was really Edo, and his urban literature a passionate and enduring affirmation of the disappearing city of wood and water.

It was rather the younger founding members of the Pan-no-kai who sought to combine old Edo with modern Tokyo. Unlike Kafū, they did not turn to Edo directly, but ironically through the mediation of late nineteenth century Western artists. The sensibility of the group is expressed in a 1910 poem by Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942), which opens with the title of Whistler's celebrated painting of Battersea Bridge (itself inspired by an early Hiroshige print of Nihonbashi): "Nocturne in blue and gold/Duet of spring and summer / In young Tokyo a song of Edo / Both shadows and light within my soul" (#43, p. 55). One senses here a lyricism that fuses the new and the old in a distinctly modern sensual appreciation of the city as it exists at the moment. This sensibility continued in the late 1920s, but largely cut adrift from the living memory of Edo, which was to be snuffed out by the Great Kanto Earthquake.

#### *IV. Post-Earthquake Tokyo: The City as Modern Life, 1923–1937*

The mid-day earthquake of September 1, 1923 destroyed much of old Tokyo and led in turn to broad changes in the patterns of Japanese thought about the city. It was only a handful of intellectuals who responded to the disaster with nihilistic despair or nostalgia for the past; most greeted the ruined city rather in a much older spirit, with a fleeting sense of Buddhistic resignation and an even

stronger spirit of renewal and affirmation of the present (I rely here and in my following argument on Minami, #68). The city was rebuilt rapidly and haphazardly, to the distress of the infant profession of city planning and its leader Gotō Shinpei (for details, see #11 and #48). The city as a “problem” scarcely disappeared; on the contrary, the problems of both physical and social planning were exacerbated by continued population growth and chronic economic depression (see #67 for some details). Both moralists and technocrats redoubled their efforts in all of the modes previously described; yet such efforts tended to become segmented and routinized, no longer attracting attention as ideas. Both morals and politics seemed of little relevance in the wake of the earthquake, and it was rather a new concept, that of “modern life”—and more basically, of “life” (*seikatsu*)—which came to dominate discussions of the city and its future.

To the extent that “modern life” designated an environment filled with the customs and machines of industrial civilization, post-earthquake Tokyo bears a certain resemblance to early Meiji Tokyo. “Modern life” was pronounced *modan raifu* as often as *kindai seikatsu*, and critics were quick to point out the pervasive Western—particularly American—cultural influence. Yet this superficial similarity to *bummei-kaika* Tokyo belies an essential contrast: whereas earlier “civilization” was viewed as alien and curiously out of place, the new customs and technologies of the 1920s were perceived as emerging naturally from within Japan’s growing industrial economy. The city was no longer a “showcase” for novelties from abroad, but rather itself a powerhouse of innovation, as suggested, for example, in a 1931 photo-essay in *Chūō kōron* entitled “The Character of Great Tokyo” (#75), which is saturated with images of machine power and production. The older agrarianist conception of the city as passive and parasitic was broadly challenged for the first time.

The change was reflected also in the response to new modes of machine conveyance that transformed the shape and tempo of post-earthquake Tokyo. Literature in the late 1920s reveals little of the fright and confusion that the introduction of the electric streetcar had inspired two decades earlier. People rather seemed now to be comfortable with machines, and the city itself acquired a sense of organic movement in which people and machines both blended and blurred into a unified kinetic landscape. By the late 1920s, streetcars seemed almost a Meiji antique in the face of new high-speed elevated lines, which with their vastly increased capacity created the new

phenomenon of the “rush hour.” Buses and taxis multiplied like rabbits in the decade of cheap gasoline after 1927, and even a subway was opened in 1926. Urban dwellers themselves became more physically active, as a craze for sports and dancing swept the city.

The city as “modern life” evolved in two realms, that of the home and that of the streets—both products of the new-middle-class consumerism that underlay this new idea of the city. The “modern home,” revealed best in such women’s magazines as *Shufu no tomo* or *Fujin kōron*, involved not only the artifacts of the “cultured life” (*bunka seikatsu*) of the suburban new middle class (electric fans, radios, overstuffed chairs) but also a new ethic for the acquisition of such conveniences, an ethic that might be called “conscientious consumerism.” While stressing the familiar *chōnin* virtues of thrift and diligence, this ethic placed primary emphasis on rational planning for individual convenience. The home of “modern life” was typically separated both from extended family and from place of work, and less inclined to active neighborhood involvement than the traditional *chōnin* home; yet as an idea it never implied the sort of anti-urban sentiment and commitment to the nuclear family that one finds in American suburban ideology. The home as “modern life” in post-earthquake Tokyo had rather the effect of affirming the city, in that it involved a sense of permanent settlement. It is from these years that one can speak of the “Tōkyōjin” (Tokyoite, in distinction to the traditional Edokko), committed to the city as a way of life and taking a positive interest in feathering the urban nest.

The other realm of “modern life” was that of the *sakariba* (literally, “thriving place”), the popular centers of entertainment and shopping that took shape in these years. The *sakariba* differed from the old *akubasho* of Edo in that they were unregulated, open to anyone (including, increasingly, women), and located at the centers or sub-centers of the city rather than segregated on the fringes. The *sakariba* became the centers of the many innovations associated with “modern life”: dance halls, movie theatres, neon lights, department stores, flappers, and dating. The *sakariba* as an idea, however, as seen in the frequent sketches of “modern life” in the magazines and newspapers of the late 1920’s, was complex, and involved at least three different components.

The first was itself the most “modern,” the view that the life in the *sakariba* represented nihilistic escapism in the face of mounting unemployment and economic hardship during the depression. This essentially economic interpretation reflected the growing influence of Marxism among Japanese intellectuals, and was presented in its

most characteristic form in a brief article in 1929 by critic Ōya Sōichi (1900–1970) in *Chūō kōron* entitled “The Modern Phenomenon and the Modern Class” (#73). Ōya saw “*modan*” behavior as a reflection of the economic dilemma of the urban new middle class, particularly the growing unemployment among recent college graduates. This created an “intellectual proletariat” addicted to the fleeting pleasures of the *sakariba*, which offered “sensations without feelings, stimuli without excitement, today without tomorrow.” This interpretation, which was not without overtones of Confucian moralism, dominated the journalistic critiques of “modern life” in the years 1928–31, and tended to focus on the Ginza as the *sakariba* par excellence, the avant-garde of modernism and the quintessential city as escapism. The classic description of the Ginza in this vein was Andō Kōsei’s *Ginza Saiken* (Pleasure Guide to the Ginza, 1930, #76).

A second and at first sight more traditionalist sense of the *sakariba* was conveyed best in a novella of Kawabata Yasunari (1901–1973) of 1930 entitled “Asakusa kurenaidan” (The Asakusa Crimson Gang, #71). Reflecting a strongly surviving Edo commoner character, the Asakusa of Kawabata’s novel has a certain mystical, hidden quality. It is in a sense the city as a *trickster*, showing itself in shifting and contrasting guises. The young *shitamachi* youth in the Crimson Gang are similarly unstable, metamorphosing from one calling and guise to another in a manner reminiscent of Edo theatre. Yet it is at the same time a very different city from that of Kafū, since it exists wholly in the moment and is freely accepting of modern change. In fact, Kawabata’s descriptions of the physical city ring with a sensuous appreciation of the hard, cutting qualities of the steel and concrete that identified reconstructed Tokyo, an aesthetic that echoes the imagery of sharpness in the Edokko-like bravura of the gang members themselves.

The third conception of the “modern life” in the streets was that of the city as *ordinary life*, as depicted for example in a short sketch of the Shinjuku area in 1929 by modernist writer Ryōtanji Yū (1901– ) (#72). Shinjuku was an appropriate choice for an “ordinary” conception of the city, a newly emerging area of bars, theatres, and department stores around a major rail terminal on the western edge of the city, with neither the class of Ginza nor the traditional mystique of Asakusa. “The hue of daily life is deeper than that of pleasure” in Shinjuku, where waves of commuters inundate the rush hour platforms, suburban housewives don incongruous fox stoles for midday shopping, and an endless variety of

restaurants offer second-rate food at cut-rate prices. If nothing is fine or special, neither is anything pathological in this ordinary place: the phlegm on the side-walk is free of tuberculosis. Such homely images add up, Ryōtanji concludes, to “a vortex of modern city life.”

This feel for the city as ordinary life was conveyed also in the technique of “modernology” developed by a young Waseda architecture instructor named Kon Wajirō (1888–1973) in the years after the earthquake. Kon, drawing on the techniques of the rural folklore movement of Yanagita Kunio and aided by a number of colleagues and students, set out to record in minute detail the patterns of everyday behavior in Tokyo. Kon christened his new discipline “*kōgengaku*” (replacing the *ko* ‘old’ of *kōkōgaku* ‘archaeology’ with *gen* ‘contemporary’), for which he provided an Esperanto coinage “*Modernologio*” (#74). Using both drawings and text, the modernologists traced the course of a young middle-class housewife browsing in a department store, enumerated every worldly possession of a *shitamachi* day-laborer, analyzed the successive changes in leg position of a seated cafe waitress, and mapped the sites of suicides in Inokashira Park. While “modernology” did not in fact develop into an academic discipline, it suggested an idea of the city as an amalgam of diverse patterns of ordinary life. In a sense, it brought the idea of “modern life” back close to the idea of the “home”, and it is no coincidence that Kon himself moved on to the systematic study of home economics (*kaseigaku*) in the 1930’s.

It was more in this anthropological spirit of Kon than along the economic lines of the journalistic critics that one finds the beginnings of the academic study of the contemporary city in Japan by Okui Fukutarō (1897–1965). Although in fact a professor of economics (at Keio University), Okui used a sociological approach to the city, influenced primarily by the Chicago school of Park and Burgess. Synthesized in his voluminous *Gendai daitoshi ron* (The Modern Metropolis, 1940; #78), Okui’s studies began in about 1932 and focused on evolving spatial patterns of life and customs in Tokyo—including, for example, a study of the *sakariba*. The term that Okui most commonly used to describe the object of his study was “phenomenon” (*genshō*), suggesting an increasingly experiential conception of the city—a revealing contrast to the idea of the city as a problem.

Indeed, one is struck by the general absence in the decade after the earthquake of any strongly hostile analysis of the modern city in Japan. The apocalyptic anti-urbanism of Oswald Spengler (*The De-*

*cline of the West*, 1918–22), for example, had only the slightest influence. Spengler's general thesis was introduced from an early date by journalist Murobuse Kōshin (1889– ) in *Bummei no bōtsuraku* (The Fall of Civilization, 1923) and *Tsuchi ni kaere!* (Return to the Earth, 1924) (#59); yet these simplistic volumes attracted no following. It was only in the writings in the mid-1930s of such a radical agrarianist as Tachibana Kōsaburō (#77) that Spengler was to find a more authentic spokesman in Japan; yet even then, anti-urbanism was less a matter of belief in the impending collapse of the city than a conventional attack on the city as the source of the increasing misery in the Japanese countryside.

More characteristic of Japanese anti-urbanist thought in these years and in many ways a highly modern analysis of the city was Yanagita Kunio's insightful *Toshi to nōson* (City and Village, 1929, #69; see also Iesaka's analysis, #70). Yanagita was interested in city "life" not in the sense of customs (as with Kon Wajirō) nor of "phenomena" (as with Okui Fukutarō), but rather in the sense of the term as used by Louis Wirth in his classic 1938 essay on "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (#15), to indicate a characteristic pattern of human relations. Yanagita's observations on the transitory and segmental nature of social relations in the city are in fact very close to Wirth's analysis. Nevertheless, Yanagita stopped well short of the generally bleak "ideal type" of urban life suggested by Wirth. For Yanagita, as for many generations of Japanese urban thinkers before him, the city was neither an idea nor an ideal, but rather a real place for 'mediation' which would always retain its harmony and interdependence with the less densely settled world around it.

#### *Epilogue: Wartime Tokyo, 1931–1945*

During the war, the city largely disappeared as an idea in Japan. The city as "modern life" vanished in the early 1930s, the victim of mounting ideological suppression of individualism and consumerism. Politically, the movement for greater autonomy for Tokyo reached an anti-climax in 1943 when the long-awaited Tokyo Metropolis (Tōkyō-to) was created, repairing the irrational separation of Tokyo Prefecture and Tokyo City. Yet far from enjoying greater autonomy, as reform advocates had long urged, the new Tokyo Metropolis was even more closely controlled by the national government than in the past. Similarly at the lower administrative levels of Tokyo, the *chōnaikai* which had emerged spontaneously since the late Meiji period were now formally incorporated into the state

hierarchy, and then further divided into the *tonarigumi* as a means of wartime control. Hence both at the highest and lowest levels, Tokyo lost much of its political identity.

The field of city planning saw a similar sublimation of the city, first into regional planning and then into national planning (see #9 for a bibliography). The various books written in this field were not of the de-centralizing Anglo-American tradition, but rather of the totalitarian Nazi and Soviet lineages. Perhaps the most provocative of these was *Kokudo keikaku* (National Planning, 1943; #79), by Ishikawa Hideaki (1893–1955), a leading city planner who proposed a hierarchical scheme based on modules called “spheres of living” (*seikatsuken*) as the basis for national planning. But here again, the city as such was dissolved into the nation. Planning for the city itself was focused almost exclusively on the overbearing problem of air-raid defense. It was ironically in the spring of 1945, the season of the great fire-bomb raids that laid Tokyo to waste, that Tokyo Institute of Technology Professor Tanabe Heigaku put the finishing touches on his definitive *Funen toshi* (Fireproof city, #80). The book was actually published on August 15, an irony only heightened by the zeal with which Tokyoites set out to rebuild the city in the same old dense, wooden pattern.

The postwar decades have seen urban thought, together with the city itself, rise again like the phoenix from the ashes. While many new ideas of the city have emerged, few of the older ones have completely disappeared, however outdated they may seem. My hope is that this rough outline may provide a tentative framework for sorting out the current tangle of urban ideas in Japan as well as for analyzing modern Japanese society in general.

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tion of bibliography, but monographic research is to be expected over the next few years. The theme of the city in modern Japanese literature has been recently developed in a provocative series of articles by Maeda Ai of Rikkyō University (#24, 27, 41). In a similar vein, but stressing architecture more than literature, is Hasegawa Takashi's *Toshi kairō* (#43).

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