Japanese Capitals in Historical Perspective

Place, Power and Memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo

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CHAPTER 8

From a Shogunal City to a Life City

*Tokyo between Two Fin-de-siècles**

Mikako Iwatake

In the wake of the by-now celebrated volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), the contributors to which discussed the extent to which traditions could in fact be considered modern inventions, there have been a number of studies on the issue of invented traditions in the context of modern Japan (Fujitani 1996; Vlastos 1998; Shirane and Suzuki 1999). The ideas originally advanced in the Hobsbawm and Ranger book have since been modulated and developed, to the point where tradition today is regarded as more an act of redefinition in the light of changing circumstances than an outright fabrication. Following on from this more nuanced reading of the significance and meaning of tradition, this chapter discusses the (re)making of identity and the (re)writing of history in Tokyo over the last one hundred years. For this purpose, I will draw upon seven major anniversaries held in Tokyo by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) and earlier by the Tokyo City Government between 1889 and 1989. As the following table shows, Tokyo has not celebrated its anniversaries regularly, on the basis of a single historical origin of the city. Rather, the making of identity has been the primary political goal, which then has appropriated historical events of different temporal orders.

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Major anniversaries celebrated by Tokyo Metropolitan (City) Government

Year	*Event*	*Desired City Identity*
1889	Edo 300th Anniversary	(Ambiguous)
1898	30th Anniversary of the founding of the capital	Imperial City
1919	50th Anniversary of founding of the capital	Imperial City
1940	2600th Anniversary of the imperial stater	Imperial/World City
1956	Greater Tokyo 500th Anniversary	(Ambiguous)
1968	Tokyo Centennial	Modern City
1989	Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary	World/Cultural City

This chapter also discusses the emergence of a heroic narrative about the city during the post-World War II years and the political meanings of this narrative. Recently Lisa Yoneyama has discussed how postwar Japan discursively constructed an image of a peace-loving, harmless nation by emphasizing victimization by atomic bombings in Hiroshima and by masking nation's history of military aggression (Yoneyama 1999). Events in Tokyo during the postwar years tend to bear out this interpretation. While the imperialization of historical memory was a critical task until World War II, the de-imperialization of historical memory became an urgent undertaking in the postwar years. In this process, the TMG has produced a narrative for the city which presents it as a victim of a series of catastrophes and a phoenix that comes back as a world city. The various postwar anniversaries have provided an opportunity to represent such a narrative.

In Edo, disjointed and contesting temporal orders – most notably imperial time and shogunal time – have existed side by side. The city's passage from shogunal capital into imperial capital created its own historical consciousness. Each temporal order has been influenced by Judeo-Christian conceptions of time, such as the decade, century, centennial, millennium, anniversary, solar calendar, and the Christian era. In a process aligning itself with the Western powers, Japan adopted the Judeo-Christian temporal system in 1872, after which it was internalized in the assertion of 'indigenous' temporal orders.

Anniversary celebrations might not necessarily be a primary driving force for social change. They often have carried multiple and contradictory meanings and messages. Yet symbolically they have played a vital role in shaping, presenting, and representing a desired identity for a territory, whatever its dimensions. An examination into Tokyo's various anniversaries reveals how the organization of time and political power are closely related, and how the (re)writing of history is a contested terrain, depending on whose historical memory and which temporal order is presented and represented, and for which political end.

The Emperor and the Shogun, Their Time and Their City

Except for the Greater Tokyo 500th Anniversary (*Kaito gohyakunen kinen dai Tōkyō sai*), all anniversaries celebrated either imperial or shogunal time. I would like to give a brief outline of the conflicting relationship between the emperor and the shogun, and their competition over both temporal management and cities.

Around the seventh century, the imperial family of today established itself as the dominant clan. Their power started to decline around the tenth century, and political power shifted to land-holding warrior families, the leading representative of which started to rule in the twelfth century. This did not, however, mean the end of imperial authority. Although deprived of political power, the emperor embodied symbolic and ritualistic authority. In the period of shogunal rule, which continued through to the mid nineteenth century, one of the few arenas where the emperor's power was manifested was the control of time. The setting up of a *nengō* (era name) and the issuing of a calendar were imperial prerogatives.

The *nengō* system is said to have originated in imperial China around the second century AD. It had spread throughout the Chinese cultural world and had started to be used in Japan between the mid seventh and the eighth century. The adoption of *nengō* in written records was a means by which the imperial family represented itself as the ruler of the country domestically as well as internationally in the wider East Asian world order (Tokoro 1996: 3–13).

Before the Meiji era (1868–1912), the emperor adopted and changed *nengō* at critical moments during his reign. *Nengō*, which always consisted of two Chinese characters, were changed upon a new emperor's enthronement as it was seen to symbolically mark the start of the new era. *Nengō* were also changed after an earthquake, flood, famine, epidemic, fire, the appearance of a comet in the sky, or war. After natural as well as man-made catastrophes, a new era name was given and within it the first year started anew. This act was thought to nullify the polluted time and to bring in new time and order (Miyata 1992: 104–108).

In any social organization, time is one of the most fundamental organizing principles. Those who regulate time have power to rule, and for this reason there have been fights over the power to control time.[1] Many attempts were made by the shogun as well as other warriors to obtain the power to regulate time (Miyata 1992: 108–112). For example, in the early part of the Tokugawa period (1603–1867), when the shoguns came to their post the *nengō* was changed even though the shogun's accession to power should not have brought a change of *nengō*.

The adoption of imperially defined time was also resisted. For example, in the twelfth century, regional warriors refused to use a new *nengō* as a sign of challenge to the new emperor, and they dated documents according to the old *nengō*. In the early seventeenth century, peasants in rebellion or those who were converted to Christianity were known to have used what is called a 'private *nengō*' (*shi nengō*) or a 'false *nengō*' (*gi nengō*) to record their deeds. However, the validity of these attempts at creating their own era name remained local, and their *nengō* did not become authoritative, official, or binding (Akasaka 1988: 182–191).

In addition to the setting up of a *nengō*, the issuing of a calendar was also an important task for the imperial house – not that it made the calendar itself as it lacked the sophisticated astrological technology. Instead, it continued importing the Chinese calendar until early modern times. The imperial court issued the calendar and distributed it to various regions. Those who observed the imperial calendar symbolically became imperial people, and the land they lived in, imperial territory.

However, the making of a calendar was also challenged and threatened. In the Middle Ages, Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in various regions started to create their own calendars and distribute them to the people. Many of these were based upon local agricultural practices. They did not necessarily match with the imperial calendar based on astrological observations but were better suited to the life cycle of the people. For the convenience of those who could not read, calendars only with signs and pictures were made. The fatal blow came in 1684, when the astrology office of the Tokugawa shogunate created the first 'Japanese' calendar independent of the Chinese almanac. After this, the power to create a calendar shifted to the shogunate and the authority of the imperial calendar diminished (Akasaka 1988: 186).

Just as there has been a competition over the management of time, there has been competition over the power of place (especially the city). The Tokugawa were the third shogunal house but the first to establish themselves in Edo. By the mid eighteenth century, the city of Edo had grown into one of the largest urban centers in the world, with a population of over one million. With growing economic prosperity, people in Edo entertained a sense of being in the center. Yet Kyoto officially remained the imperial capital, being a city of incomparably greater historical depth. The emperor's residence remained in Kyoto even though the emperor himself was unknown and obscure in the minds of ordinary people throughout the Tokugawa period.[2]

The Tokugawa regime faced a serious crisis in the 1850s and 1860s as it could not cope with the increasing pressure from the western powers and Russia as well as domestic upheavals. The emperor, long cast into obscurity in the popular memory, was rediscovered by antishogunal leagues of warriors for his potential political use in overthrowing the Tokugawa shogunate and was made the symbolic focus of the movement. The forces that coalesced to crush the shogunate 'restored' the ancient imperial order in 1868.

From a present-day perspective, it is often assumed that Tokyo became the capital in 1868. However, this is not the case. For the first time in history, the emperor, then a 15-year-old boy, moved from Kyoto to Tokyo to take up occupancy of Edo castle in 1868. The court families in Kyoto were vehemently opposed to the move. In fact, a 'dual capital system' continued for a few decades as both cities asserted their status as the capital (Ogi 1988: 16–18). The emperor remained in Tokyo and that fact gave Tokyo an advantage in its competition with Kyoto.

Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, a new emperor and *nengō* system were created. The emperor served for life and was no longer to be threatened by political power games, and on his death, he was to be succeeded by his oldest son. A *nengō* was to start at the time of the new emperor's enthronement and remain unchanged until his death. The significance of this system is that time is fixed to the emperor's body. Instead of encompassing plural *nengō* within his time, one emperor has one *nengō* and indeed is made to represent one era. Although in present-day Japan both *nengō* and the Gregorian calendar are in use side by side, significant moments of personal life (for example, date of birth, marriage, and death) as well as social events are officially registered according to imperial time only.

Celebration of Shogunal Memory in 1889

The Edo 300th Anniversary (*Edo sanbyakunen sai*) in 1889 celebrated the 'entrance' into Edo of the first Tokugawa shogun Ieyasu (1542–1616) in 1590. Why was the celebration of Tokugawa memory found necessary at a time when the Tokugawa regime no longer existed? And why was it celebrated on this particular occasion?

The Meiji Restoration in 1868 inflicted great social turmoil. After the Restoration, a wave of emigration took place. By 1872, the city's population had dropped to 580,000, which was almost half of what it had been. The recovery was a long and gradual process. It was around 1889 that the population figures climbed back to the highest level in Edo, more than one million (Ogi 1991: 18).

After the Meiji Restoration the residences of the military, which occupied almost seventy per cent of residential land in the city, were abandoned and left to decay. Remaining castle buildings were burnt down by fire in 1873 and were not rebuilt for over eleven years. For all these years, the emperor lived in a temporary residence in one of the decaying mansions of a former *daimyō* lord. It was in 1889 that the construction of the new imperial palace was completed, after five years of work. It was also around this time that the physical rebuilding of a dilapidated city started in earnest (Fujitani 1996: 67–82).

Having been rebuilt in time for the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in February 1889, the new palace had a symbolic significance in the emerging emperor cult. Only a year later, the Education Rescript (*kyōiku chokugo*) was issued. It was in these two events that the relationship between the emperor as divine ruler and the people as subject was first publicly promulgated. The making of an absolutist imperial system was underway, blending the Prussian monarchical system and Shintoist principles. The emergence of emperor-centered nationalism was around the corner. In terms of demography, the city's symbolic topography, and the shaping of an emperor cult, the late 1880s mark the last stage of a transitional period.[3]

Internationally Japan was struggling to change its position in relation to Asian neighbors as well as the Western powers. The Tokyo City Government and those who were in influential positions had been ambitious in their visions for the city. For example, a commentator wrote that 'Edo had grown into a city with an imperial palace, central government, commercial and artistic centers, the national capital of Japan, and a first-class city in Asia' (*Edo kai shi* 1889: 4). In this wishful portrait of the city, some of the elements which will later constitute a world city are already present, although the term itself was not yet used. Indeed, Tokyo as a first-class city in Asia and further in the world has been the recurring theme over the last century. The aspiration was that Tokyo should be reshaped in the image of great Western cities like London, Paris, Berlin, and New York.

In reality, however, Tokyo started as a 'semi-colonial-type city' (Ishizuka 1991: 23–31).[4] A consensus grew that the only way to get out of a semi-colonial status was to fashion oneself as a colonialist. In the late nineteenth century, Japan emerged as a colonial empire. While striving for the status of a great empire in Asia, it was also important to correct relationships with the Western powers. Attempts were made by the national government to amend 'unequal treaties' imposed by the West in the last years of the shogunal regime.

In this domestic and international situation, motivations behind the 300th anniversary were not necessarily unified. It is possible to locate at least two different kinds of motivations. The first is a rejection of the new order, which was smoldering among former Tokugawa retainers who looked back nostalgically to the memories of shogunal rule. They created an organization called *Edo kai* (Edo Association) and published several journals featuring articles on the virtues of Edo society and culture. The second and more important motivation was that some of the organizers of the anniversary seemed to have been seeking a bridge between the two political orders. They included Maejima Hisoka (1835–1919) and Enomoto Buyō (1836–1908) who were important former Tokugawa retainers and who also successfully found political positions in the Meiji government. These people helped shape the symbolic occasion in a transitional period.

First advocated by people of different motivations, the idea of the 300th anniversary immediately obtained support from the Tokyo City Government. It was considered important at this time to have a public event that would lift regional consciousness and give a chance to put on display to the guests, who included a number of Western diplomats, the city's glorious history.

The nature of the celebration was, however, problematized and even caricaturized by newspaper commentaries. First conceived as the Edo (or Tokugawa) 300th Anniversary, the plan met with criticism because Tokugawa was an abolished regime. A new name, Tokyo 300 Years (*Tōkyō sanbyaku nen*), was proposed but that did not escape criticism on the grounds that Tokyo was only twenty-two years old. As the nature of the anniversary became problematic, many variations started to circulate. The headlines of the newspaper coverage of the day of the anniversary ceremony were varied – Tokyo Festival (*Tōkyō sai*), Edo Festival (*Edo sai*), 300th Anniversary of the Founding of Tokyo City (*Tōkyō kaifu sanbyakunen sai*), and the 300th Festival (*Sanbyakunen sai*) were among the names used.

Despite the ambiguity and confusion in the nature of the anniversary, however, there was no doubt that it celebrated Tokugawa Edo. The Tokugawa family members as well as previous Tokugawa retainers were among the most important guests at the ceremony. The emperor was not invited, but the crown prince was, showing respect for the imperial family. When the ennobled Tokugawa Ietatsu made a congratulatory speech at a buffet-style banquet after the ceremony, he was received by a 'viva Tokugawa' as well as 'viva Tokyo' chorus (TMG 1987: 205).

The anniversary ceremony took place at a building in Ueno on a clear August day.[5] The building was decorated in the style of Edo castle. In addition to several congratulatory speeches, the day's program included various entertainments. Mixed with Western-style gaiety such as balloons were entertainments spiced with the flavor of Edo – performances by firefighters (on whose clothes were marked the Tokugawa family's *aoi* crest) and dances by Kabuki actors and geishas.

If Shinto was to be made to serve the imperial state soon, the 300th anniversary was predominantly Buddhist. Many of the important temples closely associated with the Tokugawa, such as Kan'eiji, Zōjōji, Dentsūin in Tokyo as well as the Tōshōgū in Nikkō held religious services. In addition, at Zōjōji, a service for the 300th Anniversary of the city's founding was held in the morning, attended by over one hundred monks. Many of them had traveled to Tokyo, some by train, from other parts of the country. Monks clad in robes decorated with a small Tokugawa family crest were seen at railway stations.

As I have shown, symbolic codes for the 300th Anniversary were strikingly mixed and confused. The confusion extended to the finances of the occasion. The Imperial Agency endowed 300 yen, the largest sum of all the donations to the '300th Anniversary of the Founding of the Shogunate.' This was much more than Tokugawa Ietatsu's donation of 200 yen (TMG 1987: 735).

Many ordinary people were not even informed of what the event was all about. Those who were aware of the anniversary celebrated the occasion by hanging lanterns at their doors and windows. The lanterns were of mixed nature. Some had the *hinomaru* flag on them, others the Tokugawa family crest but bearing a caption reading 'celebrating the Meiji Constitution,' whose promulgation had occurred earlier the same year (*Jiji shinpō* 29 August 1890).

The 300th Anniversary purported to re-create continuity against the perceived discontinuity caused by the Meiji Restoration in 1868. It served to give a sense of historical depth to a city whose memory had been seriously disrupted. The paradox of the 300th Anniversary is that shogunal time was brought in at the same time as the shaping of an imperial city was underway. The 300th Anniversary, celebrating the Tokugawa, was possible during this transitional period when Tokyo was still under the shadow of the memory of the Tokugawa, and Tokyo's identity as an imperial city had not yet been fully established.[6]

Creating Discontinuity between Edo and Tokyo in 1898 and 1919

Unlike the 300th Anniversary, which created historical continuity, both the 30th and 50th anniversaries of the foundation of Tokyo (*Tento sanjūnen sai, Tento gojūnen sai*) as the national capital assumed disruption between Edo and Tokyo. And unlike the former, which celebrated shogunal time, the latter celebrated imperial time – counted on the basis of the emperor's residence in the city of Tokyo (fig. 46).

Both the 30th and the 50th anniversaries were meant to establish Tokyo's status as an imperial city. The commemoration of shogunal time was possible in 1889 but would no longer be so in 1898, when the emperor cult was taking a more distinct shape. Tokyo was increasingly heading in militarist directions. Victories in the Sino-Japanese war (1894–95) and the Russo-Japanese war (1904–05), coupled with the consequences of World War I (1914–18), brought Japan more colonial acquisitions and international recognition. Along with these advances, the 'unequal treaties,' embarrassing reminders of Japan's inferior position vis-à-vis the Western powers, were finally amended in 1899.

In celebration of the occasion, the Association for the 30th Anniversary writes that 'our Tokyo now competes in its grandeur with London and Paris, the great cities of the world' (Tento Sanjyūnen Shukuga Kai 1898: 2). The emperor and empress attended the commemoration ceremony held near the imperial palace, to which Western diplomats were invited. The opening speech in praise of the emperor made by the chairman of the anniversary celebrations was delivered in a strikingly formal, classical Chinese style of expression. Entertainment programs after lunch were, in turn, imbued with strong a flavor of Edo and included processions of samurai and maids-in-waiting, acrobatic displays from firefighters, and the singing of *nagauta* songs.

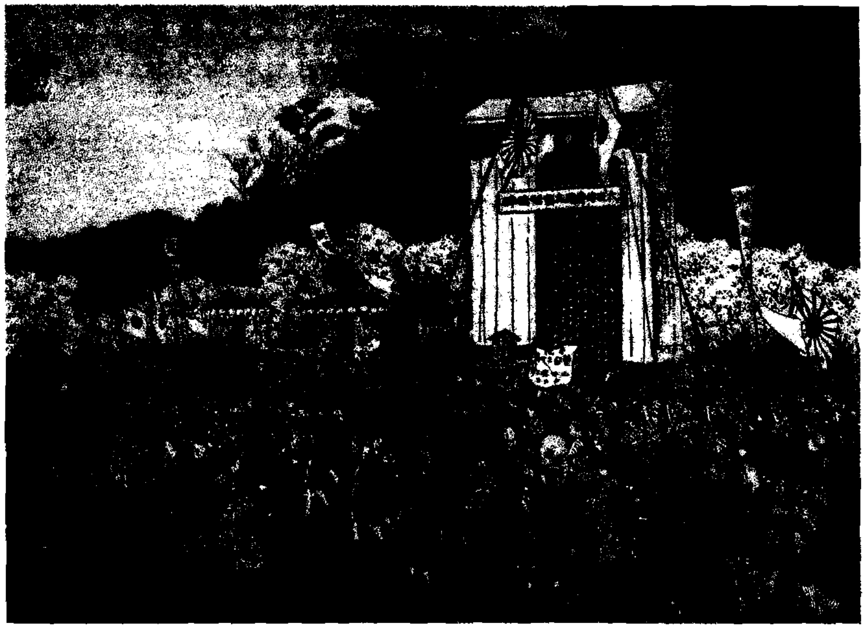

Figure 46 30th Anniversary of Tokyo. Ueno on the day of the festival. *Fūzoku gahō* (Illustrated journal of customs) 25 April 1898, No. 163, special issue for the 30th Anniversary.

Ordinary people were not invited but decorated their homes and streets and organized various entertainment. The city center was crowded and business was brisk for traders selling drinks, foods, and other items (figs 46 and 47). Judging from what newspaper commentators wrote, however, the anniversary organizers did not welcome these festive expressions by ordinary people, who were described by the organizers as looking shabby and plain. Commentators were not only critical of what they saw as official narrow-mindedness, but they also expressed their skepticism about organizing this kind of anniversary event in itself (*Hōchi shinbun*, 12 April 1898).

During the thirty years in which the emperor had been living in Tokyo, the city had been functioning administratively as the capital city. Physically it was made an 'imperial city' through the construction of monuments, museums, and military facilities that glorified imperial memories. Yet there was a cautious note to the holding of the two anniversaries. On both occasions the word '*tento*' was used instead of '*sento*.' The former term, which today is out of use, means 'to found a capital city in a certain place,' while the latter means 'to relocate a capital city' (Tokyo City Government 1926). By using the former, Tokyo's status as the capital subsequent to Kyoto is implied. In fact, even as late as in 1919, on the occasion of the 50th

Anniversary, one historian strongly argued that the distinction between *tento* and *sento* had to be maintained (Okabe 1919). The establishing of Tokyo as an imperial city and Japan's capital was a long process, one that was only concluded in the first decades of the twentieth century (fig. 47).

One of the major differences between these two anniversaries is that the absolutist imperial system was much more firmly established by the time the latter was held. Advocacy of the ideology that the emperor was the divine ruler of a dynasty which had continued for over two millennia was much more strongly advanced in the 50th Anniversary.

Another difference is that the 50th was a smaller event than the 30th. On the occasion of the 30th Anniversary, two of the influential journals of the day, *Taiyō* and *Fūzoku gahō*, issued special numbers dedicated to the anniversary. In the 50th, no such numbers were published. Both anniversaries were held in conjunction with other celebrations, the 30th Anniversary, that of the introduction of a new administrative status for the city, and the 50th, the coming of age of the crown prince among others.

Celebration of Imperial Time in 1940

At first glance, the 2600th Anniversary (*Kigen nisen roppyakunen saiten*) does not appear to have any connection with the other celebrations because of its extraordinarily long time span. However, it has an ideological link with the preceding 30th and 50th Anniversaries as well as with the Meiji Centennial, organized by the national government in 1968. All these celebrated imperial time, albeit according to different calendars. The 2600th Calendar Year is based on the myth that Japan's first emperor, Jinmu, ascended to the throne in 660 BC.

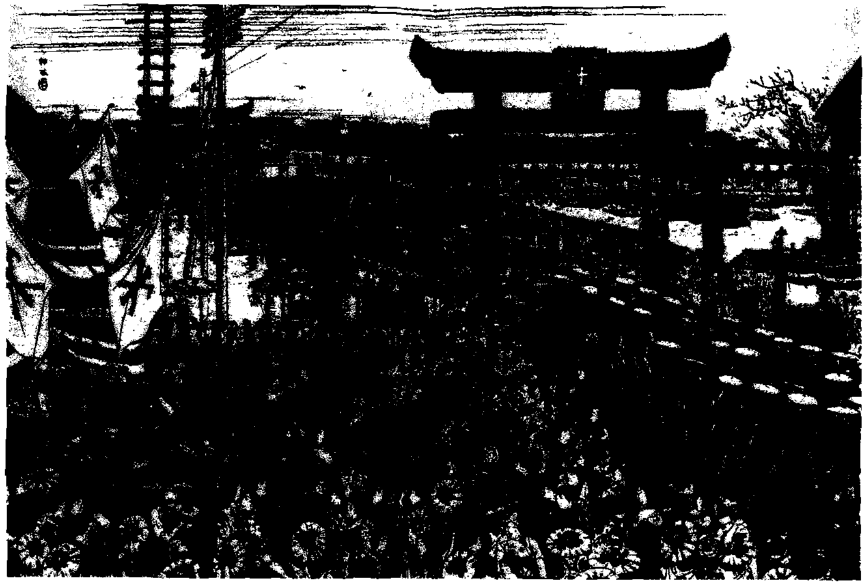

Figure 47 30th Anniversary of Tokyo. Nihonbashi on the day of the festival. *Fūzoku gahō*, 25 April 1898.

The 2600th Anniversary was held immediately before Japan's full-fledged entry into World War II at a time when emperor worship had reached its zenith. According to the imperial ideology, the Japanese imperial family was descended from the mythical figure of Jinmu and reigned without a single break for 2600 years. The idea was propagated that such continuity was unprecedented in the world, and it was used to demand complete devotion from the people. Further, it was used to legitimize the colonial rule of the Great Japanese Empire over the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere.

My major interest here is to point out a striking similarity between the 2600th Anniversary and the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary (*Edo Tōkyō yonhyakunen kinen*). The 2600th Anniversary was a national event of commemoration. However, the Tokyo City Government (TCG) busied itself working closely with the national government. In addition to various ceremonies, commemorative events such as sports days in the style of Nazi sport festivities were organized by the TCG.[7] Although the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) later dismissed the earlier occasion as sheer absurdity (TMG 1972: 1516), there is a striking parallel between the 2600th Anniversary of 1940 and the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary of 1989 in terms of their ultimate goal. Both shared the same vision of Tokyo as a world city. A world city as described in both the TCG and TMG literature means a hegemonic city which serves as a sort of node in a network of important cities in a perceived new world order.

As we will see later, there are also differences in the concept of world city as used in the 1940s and 1980s respectively. One of the major differences between the two, in their application to Tokyo, is that in 1940 the world order refers primarily to the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, while in 1989 the world order is extended to the global scale. Another difference is that in 1940, a world city meant an imperial city. In 1989, ~~however,~~ the world city is deimperialized and presented as a sort of 'autonomous' city-state. Yet another difference is that in the former Edo is not given any significance, while in the latter it holds a central position.

Celebration of Tokyo's Medieval Foundation in 1956

The Greater Tokyo 500th Anniversary (*Kaito gohyakunen kinen Dai Tōkyō sai*) is the only one in which the object of commemoration is a medieval warlord, Ōta Dōkan (1432–86). The anniversary on the surface celebrated the year when he built his castle at Edo, upon which later the Edo castle of the Tokugawa shogunate was built. However, the real intention of the anniversary lay elsewhere.

The end of World War II in 1945 brought the emperor cult to an end. Japan was 'democratized,' and the imperial system was reformed under the guidance of the U.S. Occupation Army. The Greater Japanese Empire had collapsed, and the colonies were lost. The imperial past quickly became a dark side of history. Although Tokyo remained the capital, it was no longer an imperial city. In this context, the celebration of imperially defined time and memory was completely irrelevant, and a historical consciousness independent of imperial time had to be created.

Eleven years after the defeat in the war, Tokyo was recovering from the devastation and starting to show signs of economic growth. A symbolically charged occasion was required to give a sense of regeneration to the city. When the Tokugawa memory could not provide an apt anniversary for the occasion, Ōta Dōkan provided a handy object of celebration.[8] Instead of calling the event the 10th anniversary of the postwar period, the 500th Anniversary of Greater Tokyo gives an image of increased historical depth to a city of which large parts had been burnt down.

The 500th Anniversary was politically significant in that it also provided a historical framework in which the immediate past, the history of the fifteen years of war from 1931 to 1945, occupied a minor place. By stretching the history of Tokyo over 500 years, the significance of the immediate past becomes smaller. Of the several speeches made at the opening ceremony of the 500th Anniversary, hardly any referred to the fifteen years of war. The sole reference was made by Tokyo's Governor Yasui Seiichirō(1891–1962), who stated that 'we were at a loss in the city, which was completely burnt down in the wartime fires' (TMG 1957: 2). His speech presented the city in a way which appealed to the emotions and concealed the complex historical realities.

It was in this speech that the idea of Tokyo as a victim to a series of catastrophes was first publicly presented. Having referred to the Meireki Fire of 1657, the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, and the fierce American air raids of 1945, the Tokyo governor encouraged people to work together for the future prosperity of the city (TMG 1957: 2). During wartime, the experience of the Great Earthquake was often referred to as a trope for invincibility and recovery not only for Tokyo but for Japan. While his speech can be understood as a continuation of this line of rhetoric, other disasters were newly added in order to enhance a sense of victimhood. If the Meireki Fire of 1657 had been the first significant event worth mentioning in the space of 500 years, it would have left the first 200 years of Tokyo history empty. Yet the 500th Anniversary provided an opportunity to publicly state a new historical portrait of the city in terms of catastrophes. Presenting Tokyo primarily as victim of a series of catastrophes over the three centuries is a way to conceal Tokyo's aggressive role as a military center before and during the war. It is also a way to de-imperialize the historical memory.

Tokyo's past as an imperial city was long forgotten until Aramata Hiroshi's lengthy best-selling novel *Teito monogatari* (Story of an imperial city) came out in the mid 1980s. The fact that Tokyo once was officially called an imperial city appeared as strikingly fresh, especially for the younger generations. While this attests to people's forgetfulness, it also indicates success in the de-imperialization of the city's history.

The TMG gave up the idea of making Tokyo an imperial city, yet the vision that Tokyo would find its place among dominant Western cities was repeated in the Anniversary. In celebrating the 500th Anniversary, the chairperson of the metropolitan assembly of the TMG stated that Tokyo should not just be Japan's capital but a cultural city of the world. As was the case before, Paris and London provided points of reference (*Nikkan tosei shinbun* 15 September 1956).

Unlike its immediate predecessor (the 2600th Anniversary) and successor (the Meiji Centennial), the 500th Anniversary was not a controversial occasion. The focus of commemoration was a lesser figure, a local warlord who was not linked to the imperial period nor to some other politically charged time. Although the 500th Anniversary did contain political rhetoric and historical manipulation, it succeeded in appearing more or less innocent and benign.

Celebration of 'Modern' Japan in 1968

Two centennial celebrations, the Tokyo Centennial (*Tōkyō hyakunen sai*) and the Meiji Centennial (*Meiji hyakunen sai*), were held in October 1968. One was organized by the national government, the other by the TMG. According to the TMG, the Tokyo Centennial was held 'independent of the Meiji Centennial' (TMG 1972: 351) as the centennial of Tokyo as capital of Japan. This independence can be doubted, though, as the relationship between the two was not a simple question. Before examining the Tokyo Centennial, however, I would like to discuss the Meiji Centennial.

The Meiji Centennial, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, triggered a wave of criticism and protest from 'leftist' parties, regional governments, scholars, teachers' unions, and students. A peculiar feature of the Meiji Centennial was its combination of the celebration of both 'modern' and ancient Japan. The Meiji Centennial, on the surface, appeared to concern the celebration of 100 years of 'modern' Japan, but this was only one aspect of it.

A more critical goal of the Meiji Centennial was the celebration of the imperial institution and its imagined continuity from ancient times. This aspect becomes clearer when we look into the focal point of the celebration. When the national government was planning the Centennial, six crucial occasions in the Meiji Restoration were put on the agenda: (1) the day of the coronation of the Meiji Emperor (1852–1912), 13 February 1867; (2) the day the emperor accepted the 'restoration' of political power, 10 November; (3) the day the imperial restoration and the establishment of a new imperial rule was promulgated, 3 January 1868; (4) the day the Five Article Ordinance was issued, 6 April 1868; (5) the day the coronation was held, 26 August 1868; and (6) the day the *nengō* was changed to Meiji (23 October 1868).[9] Of these, the last one was finally chosen as the day to be commemorated (Ienaga *et al.* 1967: 14).

In a speech at the start of the ceremony, the emperor stated that 'we have developed remarkably as a modern nation in the one hundred years *since the nengō was changed to Meiji*' (*Asahi shinbun* 23 October 1968; my emphasis). The emperor seemed to be saying that it was the regeneration of time brought about by the change of *nengō* that had become the driving force of Japan's modernization. He seemed to be thus referring to the power thought to be inherent in the act of the changing of *nengō* since ancient times. In this way, the Meiji Centennial can be understood as a celebration of imperial time.

The celebration of imperial time over one hundred years creates an image of historical continuity which in return covers up historical disruption within that period. The modern imperial system underwent a substantial reformation in the post World War II era. The concept of the Meiji Centennial concealed this grave historical break and celebrated the imperial order as it was created in the early Meiji era, giving thus the impression that the imperial system had continued intact.

Yet with the exception of 'leftist' scholarly and educational circles, the idea of the Meiji Centennial was widely accepted. Ironically, the TMG wrote that a 'history boom' had been created, and soon the Meiji Centennial became a 'national key word' and a 'slogan' (TMG 1972: 343). A huge amount of publications and many television and radio programs featured the Centennial. The popularity of the Centennial and the general acceptance of the historical view it encapsulated was founded, among other things, upon the fact that it had become common for the Japanese people to talk about personal and family history in relation to three *nengō*, the three imperial generations of Meiji (1868–1912), Taishō (1912–26), and Shōwa (1926–89). The time span of one hundred years between Meiji and Shōwa had become a naturalized – although ideologically charged – temporal concept, which penetrated into the sphere of personal life and became a popular reference point for personal and family narratives.

Celebration of 'Modern' Tokyo in 1968

The TMG emphasized that the Tokyo Centennial was 'independent' of the Meiji Centennial and was a celebration of one hundred years of Tokyo as

an 'autonomous regional body' and as Japan's capital (although, as I have shown above, that was not necessarily the case) (TMG 1972: 351). However, the meaning and role of the Tokyo Centennial in relation to national celebration is open to question. Here I will first summarize some of the TMG's critical assessments of the Meiji Centennial as they appeared in the *Tōkyō hyakunen shi* (History of one hundred years of Tokyo), which was published to commemorate the Tokyo Centennial, and then discuss the Tokyo Centennial itself.

The TMG was critical of the 'historical manipulations' and the political use of history by the national government. In the 1960s Japan was enjoying a booming economy. The Olympic Games had been held for the first time in Asia in Tokyo in 1964; one dimension given to them was that of celebrating Japan's postwar economic recovery. Following the Olympic Games, the World Exposition was scheduled to be held in Osaka in 1970. The TMG maintained that the Meiji Centennial was designed to link the two nationally significant events and to keep up the nationalistic momentum that these events created (TMG 1972: 342–3).

The TMG argued that a link existed between the Meiji Centennial and the national government's effort to make 11 February a holiday as National Foundation Day (*Kenkoku kinen no hi*). This was a controversial issue because of its clear link to the prewar emperor cult. Despite strong opposition, however, it was announced in December 1966 that this date would henceforth be a national holiday (TMG 1972: 342–3).

Overall, the TMG's criticism remained limited. As to the political use of history by the national government, the TMG itself could hardly escape from this kind of criticism. The second point, concerning the link between the Meiji Centennial and the setting up of a new national holiday, was never addressed in an explicitly critical fashion but was merely mentioned in a descriptive statement of governmental procedure. The TMG dared not address the essential question of the imperial institution itself in the manner done by scholars such as Ienaga Saburō (Ienaga *et al.* 1967). Although the TMG emphasized its status as the head of an 'autonomous' regional state, officials were aware that they were operating within the national government. In their comments, the essential contradiction of the Meiji Centennial remained unaddressed.

Furthermore, despite the TMG's criticism of the Meiji Centennial and its claim that the Tokyo Centennial was an 'independent' celebration, it has been argued that the Tokyo Centennial was in fact a 'miniature version' (Yoneda 1968: 60), a 'brother' (Yoneda 1968: 59) or even a 'handmaiden' (Tōkyō Rekishi Kagaku Kenkyūkai Iinkai 1969: 63) to the Meiji Centennial. There were indeed similarities. Preparations started in the same year, in 1966, when the similarly named Tokyo Centennial and Meiji Centennial Preparation Committees, were set up. Much of the membership overlapped.

The commemorative ceremony for the Tokyo Centennial, held on 1 October also indicated a link to the national state.[10] The invited guests who attended included foreign diplomats, politicians, representatives from regional and local groups, and ordinary citizens. The ceremony began with a performance of the *Kimigayo* (Your Reign), the controversial hymn with a status close to that of national anthem. This was followed by the song of the Tokyo Metropolis. The Crown Prince made a congratulatory speech following that of the governor of Tokyo. This format indicated that the Tokyo Centennial was not merely a celebration of Tokyo as an autonomous regional body but of a city within the national state. When the ceremony marking the Meiji Centennial was held three weeks later, the two centennials appeared to be linked, with the Tokyo Centennial serving as an introduction to the national event.

The Tokyo Centennial was overshadowed by the Meiji Centennial and failed to obtain the same level of publicity and attention. Ordinary people did not bother to separate analytically two centennials held within the same month. In public consciousness the two became entangled and were perceived as the same sort of event. To the extent that this was the case, the Tokyo Centennial ultimately supported the ideology of the Meiji Centennial, despite the TMG's criticism.

The Centennial celebrations revealed a continuation of the same historical self-portrait as presented earlier at the 500th Anniversary as well as the emergence of the idea of Tokyo as phoenix. In the early stages of preparation for the occasion, the TMG published a report, which included the following comment:

> During the last hundred years, our Tokyo met with a number of catastrophes such as the Great Earthquake and the War. However, having endured them, the city *rose like a phoenix* and developed with miraculous scale and speed. (Tōkyō Rekishi Kagaku Kenkyūkai Iinkai 1969: 63; my emphasis)

In the 500th Anniversary celebrations the idea of phoenix was there, but the word was not used. It now succinctly epitomizes the city's self-portrait. As I will discuss later, this line of historical interpretation continued in the subsequent Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary.

The Tokyo Centennial celebrated the hundred years of 'modern' Tokyo. By defining the beginning of modern Tokyo in 1868, this line of historical interpretation inevitably marginalized Edo (the pre-1868 era) as premodern. In the *Tōkyō hyakunen shi*, we read the following:

> The birth of self-government was simultaneous with the dismantling of the Tokugawa feudal system and Japan's emergence as a modern nation after the Meiji Restoration. The history of one hundred years in Tokyo, in a sense, can be understood as the history of one hundred years of modernity in Japan. (TMG 1972: 576)

What is also implied here is that Japan's modernity was brought about by 'westernization' following the Meiji Restoration. In the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary of 1989, such an orientalist historical interpretation is officially corrected.

Recreating Continuity between Edo and Tokyo in 1989

Unlike the previous anniversaries, no commemorative ceremony was held for the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary. Instead, various anniversary projects (a series of public lectures on the cultures of Edo and Tokyo, the construction of the Edo Tokyo Museum, etc.) were conducted over a number of years and were presented as a part of the larger Tokyo Renaissance Campaign, which was held between 1989 and 1997. Both the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary and the Tokyo Renaissance were image-making campaigns which were intended to transform Tokyo into a world city (Iwatake 1993).

In the 1980s, the concept of world city as a control center in the global economy gained much scholarly attention in urban studies (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Friedmann 1986). On the level of urban administration, the concept has provided a strategy for urban regeneration. After a serious financial crisis in the 1970s, New York City employed the concept as a revitalization strategy in the early 1980s. Taking models mainly from New York, London, and Paris, Suzuki Shun'ichi (b. 1910), who was governor from 1979 to 1995, strongly advocated the idea of world city as Tokyo's identity. The idea of Tokyo as a world city was first made public in the Second Long Term Plan (*Dainiji chōki keikaku*) of 1986.

As we have seen, world city was not a new concept in the 1980s but was advocated in conjunction with the 2600th Anniversary in 1940 as well as in preceding and succeeding years. On an international level, one of its earlier advocates is said to have been the scientist and urban planner Patrick Geddes (1854–1932), who discussed the concept in 1915 (Hall 1984: 1). However, world city in the 1980s was a concept that differed from earlier usage. In the 1980s, world cities were seen as more than just pre-eminent capital cities but as cities increasingly controlled by transnational corporations working beyond the frame of the nation-state (Hall 1984). An examination of the literature published by the TMG shows that the TMG has a composite vision of world city, one that includes the 'classical' idea of world city (*Tokyojin* 1989: 24–35). Whatever the TMG's understanding of world city, its strategy can be seen as an extension of its ambition to make Tokyo one of the world's dominant cities.[11]

While economic and financial power is a decisive factor in a world city, a world city is not only an economic concept; its role as a cultural, artistic, and ideological center is also seen to be crucial. However, Tokyo's cultural profile had been low compared to rival world cities such as New York, London, and Paris (Hannerz 1990). Culture is often associated with history, and the idea behind the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary has helped to re-create a historical depth needed in a cultural city.

The scholars who were called in to attend the planning of the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary helped radically reinterpret Edo. Among the vast potentialities of Edo society and culture, those aspects that were considered to be immediately relevant to the present were selectively underscored. For example, Edo was re-defined as an information society and a consumption society (Ogi 1991). It was argued that Edo, with its material wealth and huge population of over a million, foreshadowed present-day Tokyo in its prosperity.

This line of historical interpretation fits well into an explosive general interest in Tokyo and Edo which started in the early 1980s. The phenomenon known as 'Edo Tokyo Boom' helped to promote a new view of Tokyo as the most exciting city in the world and Edo as Tokyo's precursor (Gluck 1998). The anniversary drew upon, utilized, and further shaped this discourse.

The new historical interpretation has both domestic and international implications. Domestically it served to differentiate the city from Kyoto. Edo culture was represented predominantly as plebeian in the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary projects. For example, in Edo Tōkyō Jiyū Daigaku (Edo Tokyo free university), a series of public lectures on the cultures of Edo and Tokyo, Edo culture was discussed in terms of popular literature, popular music, popular theater, popular religion, and popular entertainment. Typically, Edo people were depicted as argumentative, short-tempered, consumption-oriented and unpretentious. Such a representation makes a sharp contrast to the generally-held view of Kyoto culture and people as being aristocratic and pretentious.

In the international context, such an interpretation, which was imbued with a strong 'counter-Orientalist' overtone, redefined the relationship between Edo-Tokyo and the West. It negated the widely held historical view that 'premodern' Edo underwent 'modernization' through Westernization (Reischauer 1981). In fact, some influential scholars have argued that Edo was already modern or even postmodern (Tanaka 1986: 230–245; Karatani 1988).[12] Throughout the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary, the argument was made that it was the continuity between Edo and Tokyo – and not Western influence – that prepared the ground for Tokyo's own development into a world city.

Within the recent writings of anthropologists and others, 'postcolonial' histories have taken a central position within academic and related production. In many parts of the world histories are being rewritten in such a way as to make a counter statement to hegemonic modernist narratives (Foster 1991). The way in which Edo has been appropriated in the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary can be understood within this context.

The heroic historical narrative that was presented earlier in the 500th Anniversary and in the Tokyo Centennial was reinforced in the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary. In spite of a number of catastrophes – repeated fires in the Edo era, 'unequal treaties' imposed by the Western powers, the Great Earthquake of 1923, and the American air raids in 1945 – Tokyo rose like a phoenix and grew into a world city.[13] These historical interpretations – Edo-Tokyo continuity and Tokyo as a victim and a phoenix – are now officially sanctioned by the TMG and put on display most visibly in the Edo Tokyo Museum, the first historical museum of the city, opened in 1993 as part of the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary.

The Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary celebrated shogunal time. In re-creating an identity for the city, the TMG chose regional time based on the Tokugawa legacy, which was independent of imperial time. Shogunal time was seen to be more suitable for current political purposes than imperial time or the time of a lesser warlord. By emphasizing Tokyo's status as a world city directly linked to other core cities of the world, the TMG wished to take what might be thought of as a city-state attitude vis-à-vis the national government. The celebration of national imperial time became irrelevant in this connection. However, this does not mean that imperial time had lost its legitimacy. As I have shown above, imperial time continues officially to bind and regulate social and personal lives in Japan.

Tokyo as a Life City

Aoshima Yukio (b. 1932), who served as governor of Tokyo from 1995 to 1999, harshly criticized the former Suzuki administration for being a product of the speculative 'bubble economy' of the 1980s. Aoshima maintained that the idea of world city placed priority on economic achievement over people's real interests such as welfare and environmental concerns. He put forward the idea of a *seikatsu toshi* (life city or quality life city) to replace Tokyo's identity as a world city (TMG 1997).[14]

Aoshima's policy did, however, represent a partial continuation of the strategies of the Suzuki administration. The idea of a quality life city had already been advocated by Suzuki in 1993 as an integral part of world city (TMG 1993). The idea was also in line with the new national policy made public by the national government in the Quality Life Country (*seikatsu taikoku*) Plan of 1992 (Keizai Kikakuchō 1992). Although the TMG tries to be 'autonomous' where it can, its policy is set within the larger national domain. The Aoshima administration can be seen as a revision and continuation of already existing policies.

A parallel shift of emphasis can also be observed in scholarly discourse. Recent urban studies have taken a critical attitude to the concept of world city or global city for its focus on economy and have redirected attention to such issues as class, gender, and ethnicity, which are seen to be of concern to more people (King 1996).[15]

Concluding Remarks

The present chapter has discussed anniversaries as political action and rhetorical means by which performers attempt to accomplish practical and symbolic goals. In Tokyo the (re)making of identity and the (re)writing of history have been conscious and interventive strategies. There has not been a single agreed point of origin for the city. At important moments in the city's existence, historical pasts of different temporal origins have been appropriated for desired political ends.

Of the anniversaries discussed here, the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary seems to have been one of the most successful in mobilizing and attracting general interest. This is partly because it drew upon an already existing explosive interest in Edo and Tokyo and succeeded in not appearing to be a mere imposition from above.

The term Edo Tokyo 400 Years articulates the relationship between Edo and Tokyo in a way in which the previous anniversaries did not. The Edo 300 Years was a name which caused bewilderment. The concept of Greater Tokyo 500 Years included Edo in its timespan but told its audience little about Edo and its relationship to Tokyo. The 30th and 50th Anniversaries and the Tokyo Centennial did not include Edo at all in Tokyo's history. The Edo Tokyo 400 Years, on the other hand, situated Edo at the very foundation of Tokyo and underlined historical continuity (instead of disruption) between the two.

This in return marginalized the impact of Japan's 'Westernization' – it did not interrupt the historical continuity between Edo and Tokyo. The root of Tokyo's present-day prosperity – it was saying – is situated not in the borrowings from the West but in indigenous Edo experiences. The success of the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary can also be attributed to the fact that the concept captured the postmodern and counter-Orientalist mood in Tokyo quite well. If Edo was the past which was marginalized in a process of Westernization, a postmodernist turn rediscovers it and embraces it.

While the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary tried to minimize Western influence in the history of Tokyo, the strong identification with a handful of prominent Western cities has prevailed in the imagining of an identity for Tokyo. All the anniversaries of different temporal orders share one thing in common, that Tokyo should find its place among these cities. Such a longstanding and one way aspiration seems to have been finally realized in the 1980s, when international scholarly circles started to discuss Tokyo as a 'world city' (Friedmann and Wolff 1982) or a 'global city' (Sassen 1991).

When one looks at Tokyo in the Asian context, it is easy to notice that neighboring cities in Asia have never been a frame of reference in the making of Tokyo's identity. As famously enunciated in the slogan coined by the Meiji era educational Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), '*datsua nyūō*' (out of Asia, into Europe), Asia was not an object of Japanese aspiration.

The heroic self-portrait of the city as victim to a series of catastrophes assumes a most significant meaning when Tokyo is situated in an Asian context. Before and during World War II, Tokyo was an imperial city and a colonial center which dominated many parts of Asia. One of the most significant turning points in the history of Tokyo is the postwar era, when the relationship between Asian countries had to be renegotiated. Tokyo's heroic self-portrait emerged during the postwar years as a way to redefine Tokyo's position as a victim and not an aggressor, de-imperializing, in the process, historical memory.

The making and remaking of Tokyo's identity then has a domestic dimension. Domestically, it has been critically important to redefine the city's relation to Kyoto. Starting second to Kyoto, Tokyo needed to establish itself first as an imperial city. After World War II, Tokyo was no longer an imperial city and a new identity was needed. The idea of world city separates Tokyo from Kyoto, as the latter is not Tokyo's rival in the hierarchy of world cities.

The strong identification with a handful of Western cities, distancing from Asia, and the making of an identity distinct from Kyoto have been some of the most critical elements in the cultural politics of the city of Tokyo. It is within these international and domestic complexes, which are mutually interconnected, that the (re)making of identity and (re)writing of history is undertaken.

Notes

1 The fight over temporal control is not specific to Japan. Zerubavel discusses the relationship between the calendrical system and political power, and points out how in the French and Bolshevik revolutions, the setting up of a new calendar was seen to be an integral part of social reformation (Zerubavel 1981: 82–95).

2 Today historians agree that ordinary people knew very little about the existence of the emperor during the Tokugawa period. Even in the early Meiji period, the emperor was not linked to national consciousness nor were his political and representational roles articulated yet (Fujitani 1996: 7–9).

3 A sense of the transition is also manifested in the way in which the city was named. In the period approximately between 1868 and 1889, the same Chinese characters which today are pronounced 'Tōkyō' were read 'Tōkei.' The city was no longer Edo but not quite Tokyo yet (Ogi 1988).

4 According to Ishizuka, the presence of French and British troops, the guarantee of immunity for Westerners, and unequal trade conditions are some of the indicators of the city's 'semi-colonial' status (Ishizuka 1991: 23–31).

5 Ueno was symbolically Tokugawa territory as Kan'eiji temple, one of the most important temples for the Tokugawa, was located there. The remaking of Ueno into imperial territory was undertaken later through the construction, for example, of the Imperial Museum (Fujitani 1993: 96–97; 1994: 80–81).

6 In recent years, Fujitani Takashi has argued that the imperialization of historical memory between the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been central in the crafting of national unity in Japan (Fujitani 1993; 1994; 1996). One of his points is that contrary to an often-held view that the imperial institution is an age-old tradition, it is a new invention in Japan's modern experience. He is critical of the idea that history and culture for the Japanese have always centered on the imperial institution. However, in an ironical way, his study gives an impression that in the (re)writing of modern national history, if not earlier history, the emperor was indeed a central figure. He writes that his work is an attempt at 'deconstructing official memories' (Fujitani 1993: 105). He seems to equate official memories with imperial memories, giving thus supreme power to the imperial memories that he tries to deconstruct. The 300th Anniversary indicates that there was also a pull toward a different kind of historical memory.

7 It had originally been hoped that the first Olympic games in Japan would be held in 1940 in conjunction with the 2600th Anniversary. However, the plan was not realized until 1964.

8 However, this is not to say that the TMG has not paid a tribute to Ōta in other ways. Ōta was sometimes presented as a 'founding father' of the city. There was a statue of him in front of the former TMG building.

9 Dates are translated from the original lunar calendar into the solar calendar.

10 1 October is the Day of the Citizen of Tokyo (*Tōkyō shimin no hi*), commemorating the fact that the citizens obtained the right to elect a governor on 1 October 1945. Before then, the national government had appointed a governor.

11 As has been pointed out by Anthony King, the concept of world city has a strong association with that of former colonial centers (King 1990, 1991).

12 For a critique of rosy illusions about Edo, see Koyano 1999 and Sakurai 2000.

13 Such a presentation successfully influenced the way in which scholars look at Tokyo (Ishizuka 1991: 2; Cybriwsky 1991: 7, 78–93).

14 Aoshima did not launch another anniversary event because the Tokyo Renaissance Campaign, which succeeded the Edo Tokyo 400th Anniversary, officially continued through the spring of 1997. Nor did Aoshima's governorhood change the way in which the history of Edo and Tokyo was represented in the Edo Tokyo Museum.

15 In 1999, Ishihara Shintarō (b. 1932) was elected Tokyo's governor. Enjoying great popularity, he has made an number of public comments in which he has indicated, among other things, disdain for Korean and Chinese residents in Tokyo and for handicapped people. His vision of Tokyo appears to share common features with the imperial city of the Japanese colonial empire in the 1930s and 40s.

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CHAPTER 9

Time Perception, or the Ineluctable Aging of Material in Architecture

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> *The flow of the river is ceaseless and its water is never the same. The bubbles that float in the pools, now vanishing, now forming, are not of long duration: so in the world are man and his dwellings. It might be imagined that the houses, great and small, which vie roof against proud roof in the capital remain unchanged from one generation to the next, but when we examine whether this is true, how few are the houses that were there of old. Some were burnt last year and only since rebuilt; great houses have crumbled into hovels and those who dwell in them have fallen no less. The city is the same, the people are as numerous as ever, but of those I used to know, a bare one or two in twenty remain. They die in the morning, they are born in the evening, like foam on the water.*
>
> Kamo no Chōmei, *Hōjōki* (trans. Keene 1955: 197)

In this chapter I would like to investigate the relationship between time perception and concepts surrounding the preservation of buildings.[1] In the West, buildings are generally thought of in terms of aging and the ensuing problems of conservation, relying on a linear concept of time, the origins of which lie in Christian eschatology. In Japan, however, the idea of cyclical time underlies the conscious awareness of the perishability of matter and the potential renewal of form. This idea of cyclical time is related both to the seasonal and agrarian cycles venerated in Shintōism and to the Buddhist concept of cyclical time and rebirth. In Buddhist texts, time is not perceived as a linear process but as cyclical. The 'four aspects of duration' are 'apparition' (*sho*), 'duration' (*jū*), 'deterioration' (*i*) and 'disappearance' (*metsu*) (Girard 1990: 406). In the human life cycle, we have the image of birth, living, aging and death. I would like to outline an analogy with the life span of a building: 'apparition' is the moment of construction,