

3. Renovation of Modern Stock

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The objective of this paper is to show:

1. How to manage history in an urban setting
2. Urban heritages in the wider context—not only in terms of individual buildings, but also in the context of urban tissue, infrastructure, and street patterns and
3. How to understand, appreciate, and deal with these urban heritages

Sometimes we have to change important urban stock in redesigning our city; in order to do that without any harm to the surroundings in consideration of the urban complex and its history, we need to understand the real meaning of our urban heritages.

3.1 Lesson from the University of Tokyo and Its Surroundings

3.1.1 Overview of the Past UT

In this historical map of 1883 showing the area around the campus of the University of Tokyo (Fig. 3-1), dark color indicates the brick walls and other fireproof buildings. At that time there was a long main entrance, what we call a *seimon* (the main gate), and it was located as you can see in the picture. The main entrance of that time is different from that of the present. Also, the original campus was where the medical college is located now. Main access of the road at that time was separating the medical school

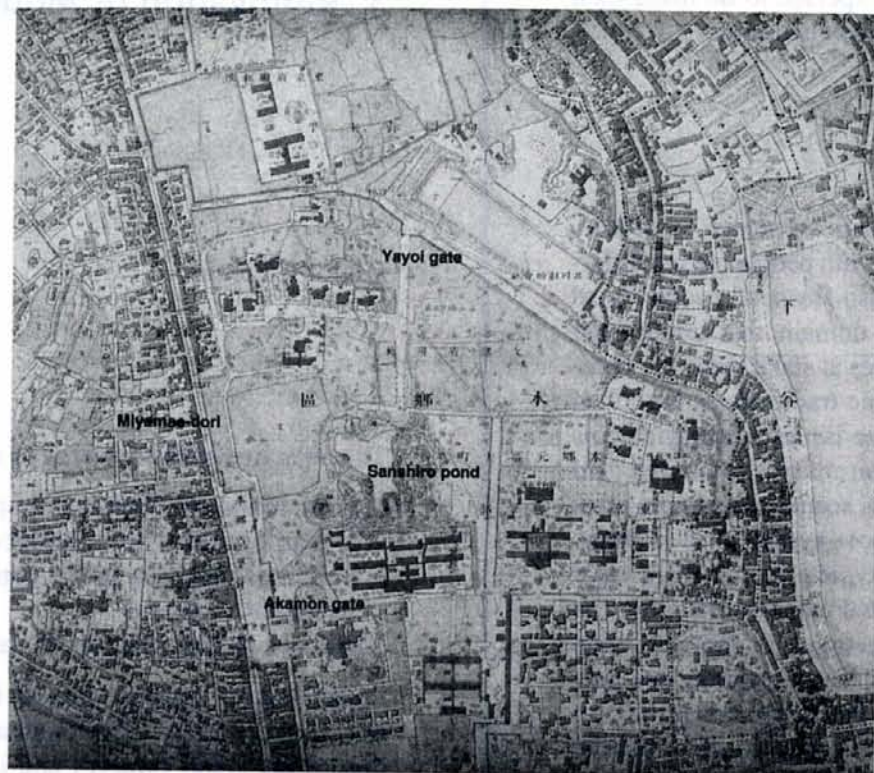


Fig. 3-1. 1883 Map around University of Tokyo by the Bureau of Cartography, the Military of Japan (scale 1:5,000), top being the north

and the rest of the compound. Also, the Sanshiro pond used to be a private garden of the owner's residence.

3.1.2 Process of Formation

The whole compound was owned by a single family, which was a manor family of Kaga-han, which is Ishikawa and Toyama prefectures today. As you know, in medieval Japan, all the landlords of manors in the rural area were requested to have their own Edo, former Tokyo residence, somewhere very close to the capital. So there were main Tokyo residences and the every year or every other year, depending on the distance from Tokyo, the lords of the manors, called *daimyo*, were required to come to stay in Tokyo for one year and return to their own country the next. Consequently, they were all commuting every year or every other year with hundreds or sometimes thousands of warriors.

This was therefore a manor house, but at the same time, an accommodation of a large number of the warriors who supported the manor family. It meant that all the accompanying warriors had a chance to study, to collect many things and information, and to get accustomed to the high culture at the capital. This is one of the unacknowledged reasons that Japanese modernization was so quick.

After the Meiji reform in 1868, however, the warrior class was abolished. They had to leave Tokyo and settle down in their own country and sometimes set up commercial activities. It meant that many huge lands became vacant at that time, so the central government confiscated these lands to convert the sites into modern facilities like the City Hall, government buildings, universities, and many other public edifices. This is how a vacant land owned by a single family turned into the first national university of this country.

3.1.3 Structure of the Campus of the University of Tokyo and the Surroundings

3.1.3.1 Inside the Campus

It is clearly seen in the picture (Fig. 3-1) that all the development of this area was from the south. From the Tatsuokamon gate, which is on the very old axis, turning right to left, and the Akamon gate, one can recognize the oldest line of trees in this area. All the buildings were demolished mainly by the earthquake in 1923, but were eventually renovated and extended to the north. The guest house of the university used to be the residence for invited foreign scholars.

3.1.3.2 Surroundings—Nezu District

The surroundings have changed slightly over the years. For example, the road Hongo-dori and the Akamon gate were moved slightly, enlarged, and networked. Today we have a very wide slope down to Nezu, and the Kototoi-dori and another road, Shinabazu-dori running through this area. When one leaves by the Yayoi gate, there used to be a firing range for shooting practice. It is strongly recommend to walk this original, historic road because many old temples are located along the way.

3.1.3.3 Surroundings—Hongo District

When one looks at the other side of the campus, Hongo district, there is a whole built-up area. As seen in the late eighteenth-century map (Fig. 3-2), land use was clearly demarcated, pink being for temples, purple for lands owned by the temple, and grey for mercantile establishments. There were the warrior

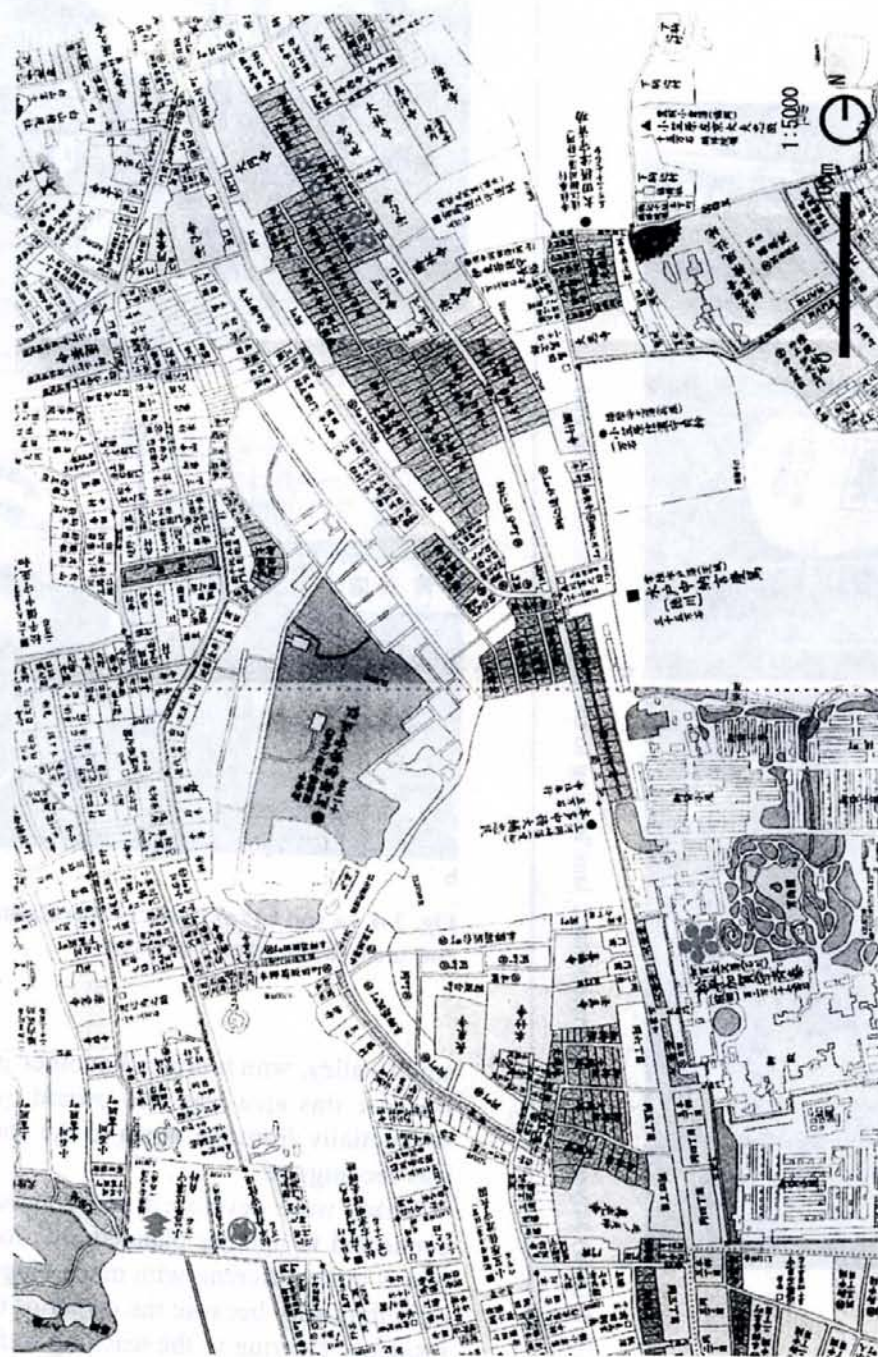


Fig. 3-2. Late eighteenth century Map of the west side of the university campus

class residences and the commercial residences with a temple in the middle, so the respective street plans were completely different from each other.

Going out from the main gate, and turning right and left, one can see a small street, Miyamae-dori (Fig. 3-3). The four pictures of the Miyamae-dori shows this small lane as a main access to the former shrine site, which was located at the end of the lane and later abolished and subdivided into anonymous townhouse lots. However, the name of the lane, Miyamae-dori, literally Shrine Front Street, and the rather compact and straight townscape with the lost shrine site at the end, is almost forgotten, barely indicates that this small lane was designed as an access to the shrine.

3.1.3.4 Surroundings—Focal Point

There is a very strange focal point at the end of the Miyamae-dori. Japanese houses are usually made of wood, which means you need to create a building by posts and beams on a rectangular plot. This rectangular plot is convenient to build, and it is also the traditional type of Japanese buildings. So the rectangular street pattern is easy to understand. However here, this focal point is very strange because it has a sharp angle so that buildings are too difficult to fit in the rectangular plot. Why was this kind of pattern created in the late nineteenth century?

Fig. 3-3c shows a triangular space in the middle of the site. When one looks at this map again, it can be seen this area used to be a shrine, called Eisei shrine, within a huge compound of warriors' residences. It was decided to make use of a small private shrine in this area and make approaches to the shrine with shop houses, which enabled the builders to subdivide and develop the area as residential and commercial quarters. They tried to make a good focus for this area by this small development. That was the role of the shrine. This small space (focal point) was the open space in front of the shrine. But now, the shrine is already gone and all has been changed.

Fig. 3-4a is a famous picture of the small focal point in the 1920s taken by Ihei Kimura, one of the greatest photographers in modern Japan. This shows the focal point of different activities, at the different angles of the roads. The former police office here has been converted into some kind of firefighting activity center (Fig. 3-4b).

The map in Fig. 3-5 was created by our lab members, based on several historical maps of different periods. The colors indicate the different time spans in which the road was constructed. It also shows the analysis by our lab members. How had this strange junction been created? Our hypothesis is that this axis came from other directions crossing over the

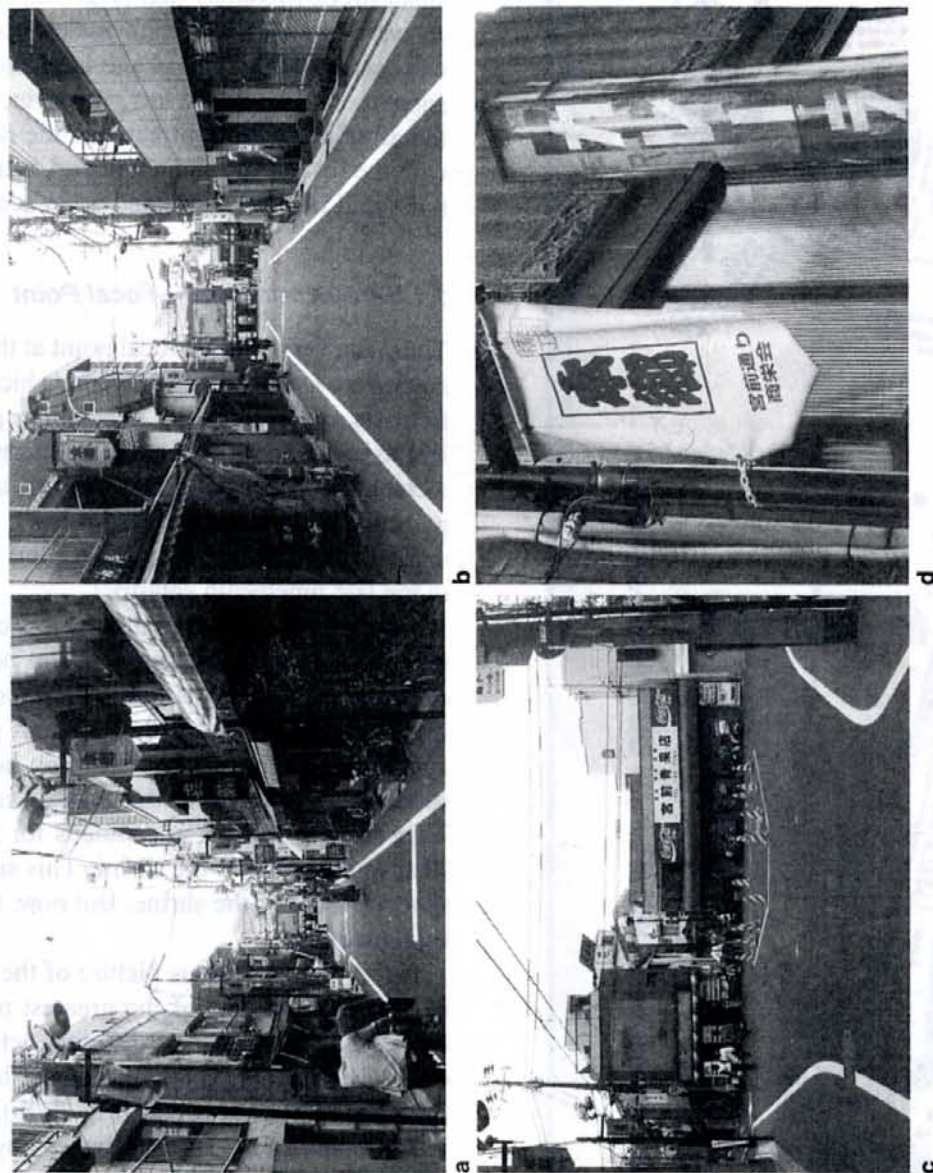


Fig. 3-3. (a-d) Miyamae dori, a small historic lane leading to the former shrine site at the end



a



b

Fig. 3-4. (a and b) (a) Photo of Ihei Kimura in the 1920s featuring the Miyamae-dori area, (b) the same site today

small valley, which created another junction on another road, and so on. Because this area was also owned by a single family and (re)developed sequentially from the north to the south in the late nineteenth century, it was rectangular.

Roads were developed and connected to this area. Crossing a bridge connected to another planned area to the northwest, one can see that the plot is quite different, with much bigger detached houses. These are houses of high quality because the owner of this area tried to create a high-quality residence catering to the teaching staffs of this university. Therefore, when one walks around this area, one can feel the townscape is quite different.

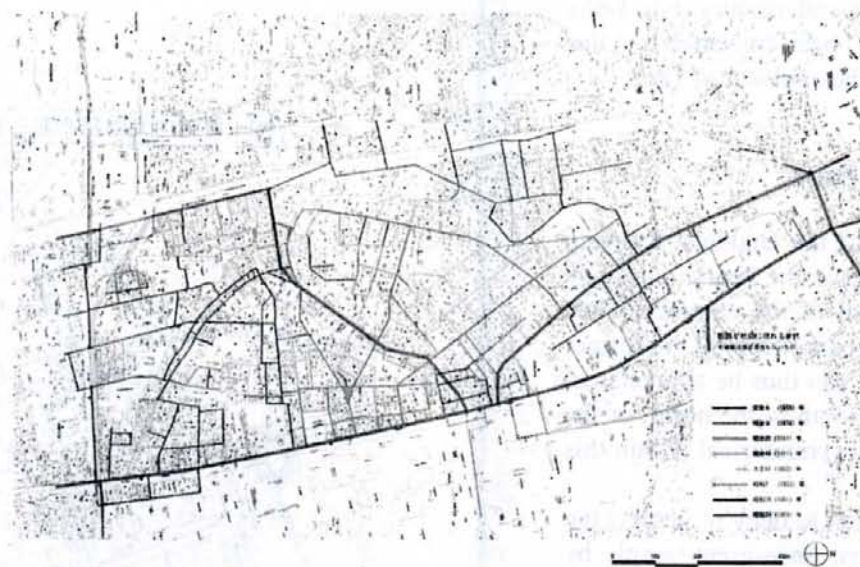


Fig. 3-5. Street pattern of the Hongo District, showing the evolution of the blocks, Darker colors indicating the older streets

At the southern part of area shown in Fig. 3-2, in the middle, there used to be a temple surrounded by a mercantile settlement. The street pattern is exactly the same as that in premodern times, even though it might have had a different name and a different landowner.

In the late nineteenth century, this old street pattern was quite different from that of the present. Today, if one walks near the post office on the Hongo-dori, one can notice that there is some gap between the southern part and the northern part. This gap is also clear with the name of this district; Hongo 5-chome and 6-chome, each of which used to be a warriors' holding and a merchants', respectively. This gap therefore came from the two different old land uses. Also, there is no straight road crossing this area. That is because the consequences of development were quite different from each other.

To sum up, when one understands the history and subsurface design concepts of an area, one can have a clear understanding of that area. Also, when architects or designers today cope with the area as well as individual buildings, they can have a clear idea of what should be done or what should not be done to make visitors easy to appreciate the area. The first thing they have to do is to understand the area.

3.2 Message from Ueno Park

3.2.1 Introduction

Ueno Park used to be a huge compound of temples. The whole area, including the Tokyo University of Fine Art, the cemetery area, and the shop houses area near Kototoi Street, was all owned by a temple called Kanyeiiji. This huge temple compound was created in 1625 by Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu to house cemeteries of the Tokugawas and at the same time to protect the northeast part of Edo. It was believed that the northeast part of Edo was very vulnerable to the devil, so they created a huge temple in the northeast side of the capital to protect the residents. Fig. 3-6a shows the land use of the site in the eighteenth century, as superimposed on the current map.

At the eastern part of Ueno Station, there is a commercial street whose networks were made in the medieval era. But the western part of Ueno Station is quite different. Current visual differences are based on historical land uses.

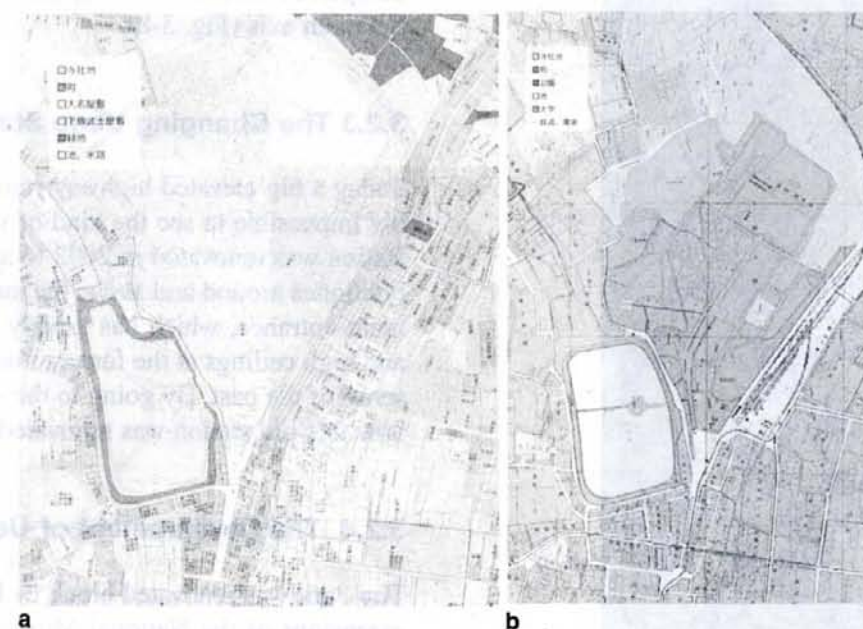


Fig. 3-6. (a and b) (a) Shows eighteenth century land use on top of the current map, while (b) illustrates the early stage of Ueno Park in the late nineteenth century

Here is another picture of the area in the late nineteenth century (Fig. 3-6b). It illustrates the early stage of Ueno Park, which had been converted into that use in 1883 after all the buildings were burned by the civil war in 1868.

3.2.2 Design Concept of Ueno Park in the Past

Ueno Park used to be a part of the compounds of the Buddhist Kanyeiiji Temple, and the central government tried to reserve the spatial structure of this temple compound, including the main hall of the entrance. They appropriated the site and designed a modern-type park, keeping the former spatial structure of the temple. Its spatial structure can thus be appreciated: for example, the main access should be from the south to the north, or the layout of the exposition held at this site should be symmetrical within this axis (Fig. 3-7).

But at the same time, the central government tried to deny or neglect the shogunate legacy by replacing the memory of that once-great temple by then ultramodern urban facilities such as museums and expositions.

In the late nineteenth century, several expositions were held at this site, whose main access is very similar to previous access routes to the Kanyeiji Temple. From 1911 to 1953, there were several new buildings created along the main axis (Fig. 3-8).

3.2.3 The Changing Ueno Station

Today a big elevated highway runs in front of this station, so it is regrettably impossible to see the kind of view as shown in this Fig. 3-9. The Ueno station was renovated in 2002 to accommodate fashionable restaurants and boutiques around and above the main concourse. This picture shows the old main entrance, which has greatly changed its appearances. Only the huge and high ceilings at the former main entrance section remain to give a good sense of the past. By going to the second floor of Ueno station, one can see how this old station was renovated to modern use.

3.2.4 The Development of Ueno Park

The Park was renovated block by block in the 1910s. There was a series of extensions of the National Museum from 1932 to 1956, and then another access to the Park was gradually created to cross the main access, followed by the introduction of the Ueno Zoo, the Ueno Public Hall, and the

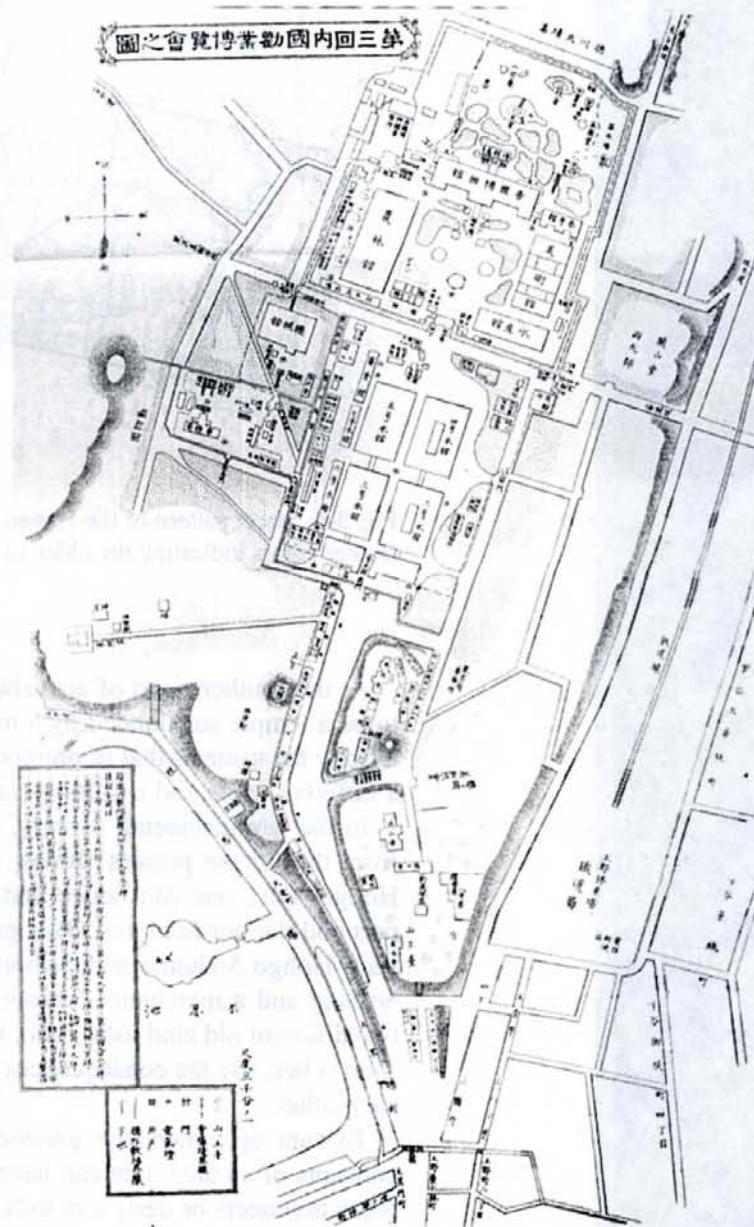


Fig. 3-7. The Map showing the layout of the 3rd National Industrial Exposition held at Ueno Park in 1890

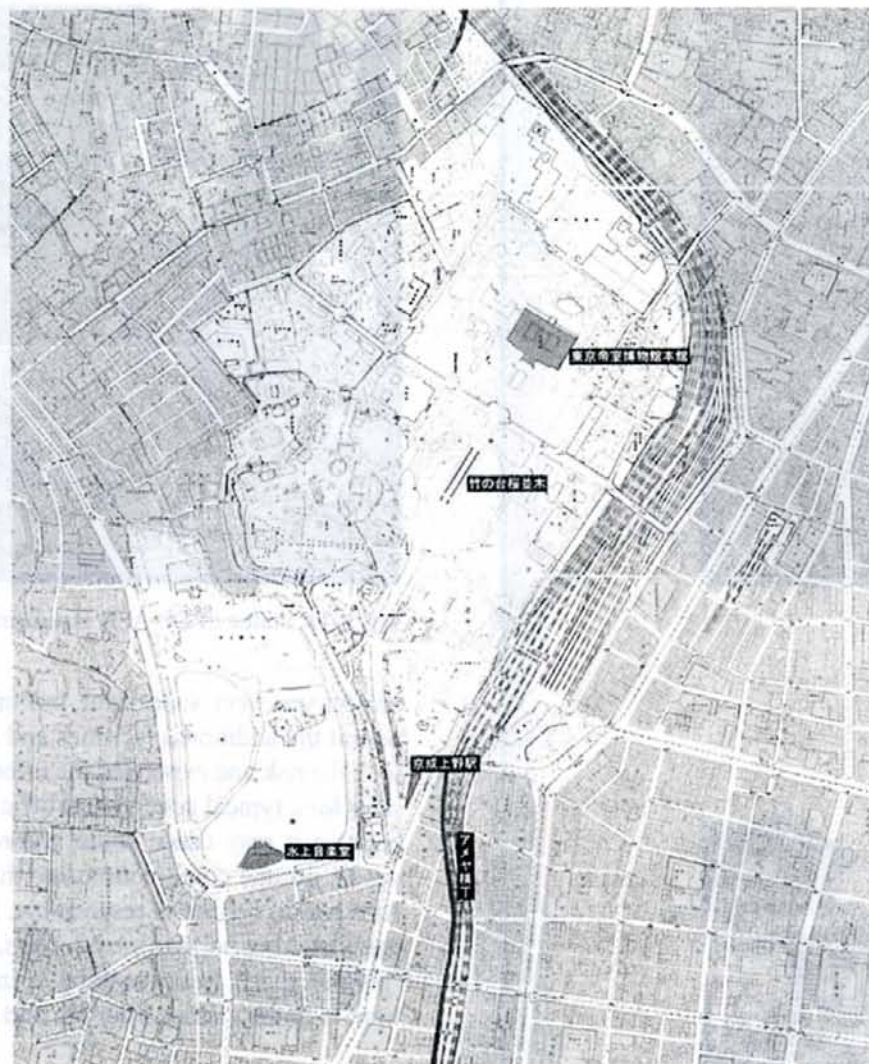


Fig. 3-8. Layout of the Park in 1953

Monorail in the Zoo. As of 1983, the main and secondary access from the station to the entrance of the Zoo formed a cross shape in the area.

3.2.5 An Experiment and What Was Learned from It

In the case of Ueno Park, for example, the main axis is the key to understanding the spatial structure of the site, which should be conserved. There

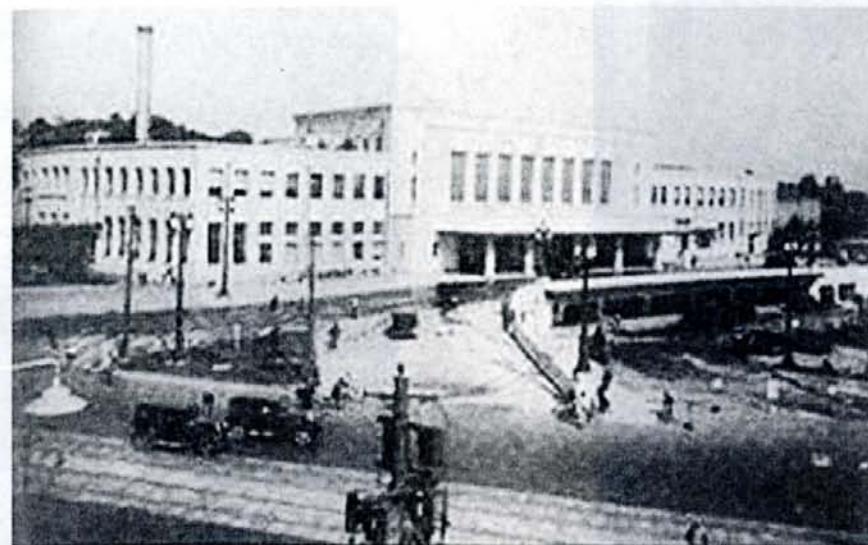


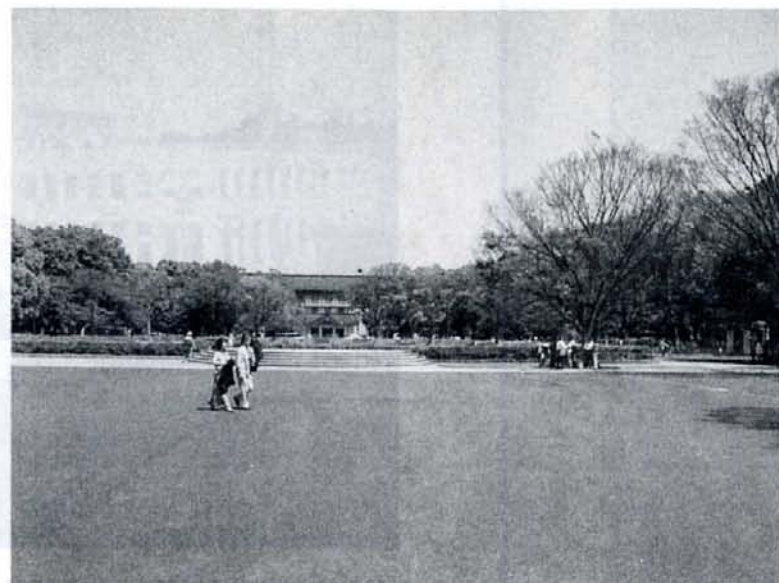
Fig. 3-9. Façade of the Ueno Station when it was reconstructed in 1932 after the 1923 Kanto Earthquake

is an outdated, huge spring designed in 1962, which is isolated from the people by a huge hedge. More interaction between the water and the people is needed here, so I strongly recommended redesigning this area in order to make an intimate open space for modern activity by reinforcing the main access to the Tokyo National Museum by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. However, first of all, the spatial structure has to be understood, and its importance.

In front of the Tokyo National Museum, which is the main focal point of the park, there is a vacant space. According to our evaluation, it is not good to have this kind of huge vacant land at the crossing center of the two axes. People need temporary resting places and kiosks or something removable, and also need information about the different museums, galleries, etc. These kinds of activities are strongly needed here.

Therefore, several years ago, we proposed an experimental kiosk and coffee shop on the axis in front of the National Museum where anonymous vacant space had been created. Fig. 3-10 shows the site before and in the middle of the experiment. It lasted for only three to four weeks, but it fostered good activities, and also made a good amount of money by the sales of beverages. The income can and should be returned to maintain the surroundings.

However, according to the general rules of the Japanese administration, it is usually difficult to make profits generated from the public space, because it is very difficult to decide who is responsible for the monetary activities. The



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b

Fig. 3-10. (a and b) Vacant 'public' space in front of the Tokyo National Museum (a) and experimental café and kiosk at that site (b)



Fig. 3-11. Statue of Dr. A. F. Baudwin in Ueno Park

project was very successful, but unfortunately the local government did not permit the additional facilities and activities any more, because no one really took the risk and expended the effort to continue this project. Regrettably, it is safer for a typical government official not to commit to any proposed changes because it may cause some unforeseen problems. And since it is a public venue, no one could contravene this common attitude of a common officer. As a result, no one is responsible, and public space does not become everyone's land but no-man's land. Thus, no lively activities can emerge from such "public" space, to say nothing of income generated there. We need to rethink what is 'public' stock after all, and who is responsible for this space.

3.2.6 Statute of Dr. A. F. Baudwin

Dr. A. F. Baudwin (Fig. 3-11), a Dutch medical doctor, proposed this area as a park in 1870, when he was invited to give some advice about the former temple compound. He thought that a park was much more suitable for this area than the hospital that had been originally proposed by the Meiji Government, because he could read the context of this spacious and sunny area. He suggested that hospitals could be created anywhere, but it was very difficult to obtain such a huge tract of land that was sunny, clean, and easily

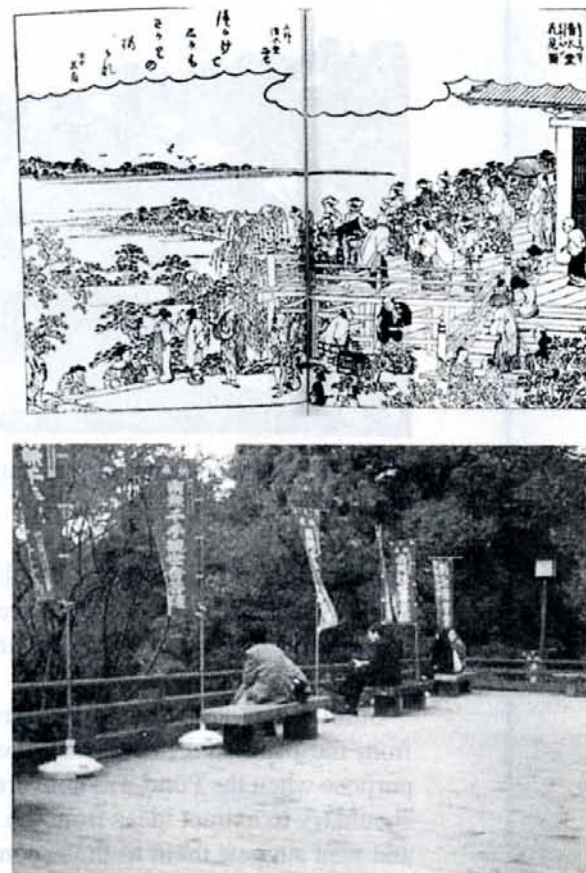


Fig. 3-12. (a and b) Viewing terrace of the Kiyomizu Temple in the early nineteenth century from the wood print (a) and current viewing terrace (b)

accessible for the general public. Thus, a modern park, Ueno Park, was born in 1873 for the first time in Japan's history. It was one of the five modern parks that were decreed at the same time by the central government.

Unfortunately, however, this important history seems to have been forgotten, and the statue of this important person is regrettably now in a very bad situation surrounded by the homeless. It is important to recreate a beautiful, small square as the focal point of the main access to memorialize his work.

3.2.7 Viewing Terrace of Kiyomizu Temple

As can be seen in the two pictures of the past (a) and present (b) (Fig. 3-12), there was once a viewing terrace here at Kiyomizu temple, designed for looking



Fig. 3-13. Hiroshige's drawing of the viewing terrace of the Kiyomizu Temple

out over the Shinobazu Pond and farther west. However, the view today is entirely blocked by cherry trees that were planted there after World War II.

Ando Hiroshige, the famous ukiyo-e artist of the early nineteenth century, depicted from this terrace the same view of the pond through a twisted pine tree (Fig. 3-13). Many artists drew pictures of this view, which was quite typical of this area.

Also, the Kiyomizu Temple has been designated as an important cultural property by the central government. Fig. 3-14 shows the current view of the terrace. Is this view acceptable with the historic vista blocked? Not at all. But when one negotiates with the proprietors, it is very difficult to convince them that the vista is more important than branches of cherry trees.

Moreover, almost half of the Pond now belongs to the Ueno Zoo, which has restricted access to the site, which means people cannot go around the Pond to make a circuit. But as can be seen from the historic drawings, the



Fig. 3-14. Cherry trees blocking the view from the terrace today



Fig. 3-15. Early nineteenth century drawing of the Shinobazu Pond

original idea of the Pond included to be a promenade where visitors could circumnavigate the whole Pond.

When one looks at these spectacular historical drawings (Fig. 3-15 and Fig. 3-16), one can realize how actively the promenade had been used in the past. For example, Fig. 3-16 shows horses racing around the Pond after a racetrack was introduced in 1884. This is one of the birthplaces of modern

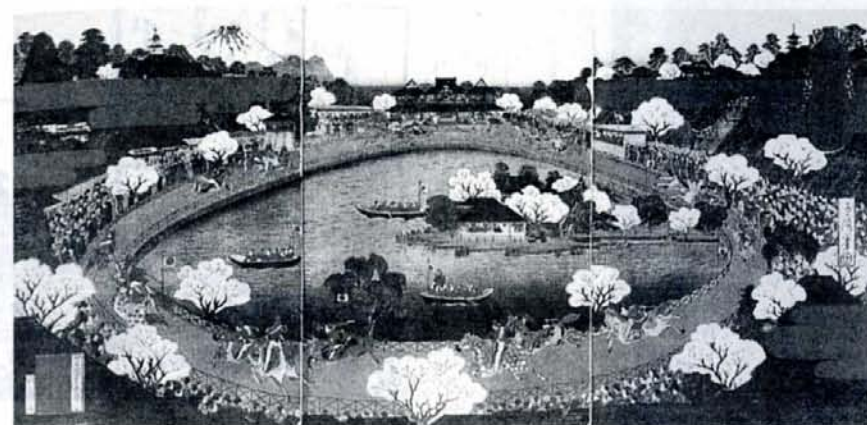


Fig. 3-16. Late nineteenth century drawings of the Shinobazu Pond, depicting the horse racing

horse racing in this country. All the audiences were then sitting along the Pond. On other occasions, this area had been converted into a temporary pavilion for exhibitions. One can imagine how closely interactive activities existed along the Pond.

Similar activities should be introduced to revitalize these lively scenes from the past—not necessarily the exact same things. This was the main purpose when the Pond was converted into a part of the Ueno Park. Planners should try to extract ideas from the past for current possibilities or activities and then suggest them to those concerned.

3.2.8 Access to the Pond

These pictures (Fig. 3-17) show the promenade of the Pond, a part of which has been closed by the zoo, resulting in no activities because of no entrance. There is no reason for going there, so it is difficult to recall or recognize what the place is like. There are no activities, nothing to do, with only some homeless people are staying around the promenade.

From the historical pictures, one can interpret the possibility or the potential of this area to reintroduce and rearrange much closer interaction with the Pond. One can visualize the future possibilities of the site by appreciating the historical activities.

As seen in Fig. 3-18, these kinds of high-rise buildings unsympathetic to their surroundings are being built today. They should be stopped. However, our Building Codes are somehow inadequate to control this kind of con-



a



b

Fig. 3-17. (a and b) Promenade of the Shinobazu Pond today, frequently used by the public in the southern part (a) and shuttered by the exit gate of the Ueno Zoo in the northern part (b)

struction because it is controlled by the width of the adjacent road. If there is an open space just close to the construction site, then one can design higher buildings, because no one is living in the adjacent open space.

This is ridiculous because everyone using the Park and the Pond enjoys views from the Park. High rise flats along the Pond damage the panoramic view of the Park. Therefore, it is necessary to change this kind of incentive planning system, which creates extra pressures on public spaces. We should



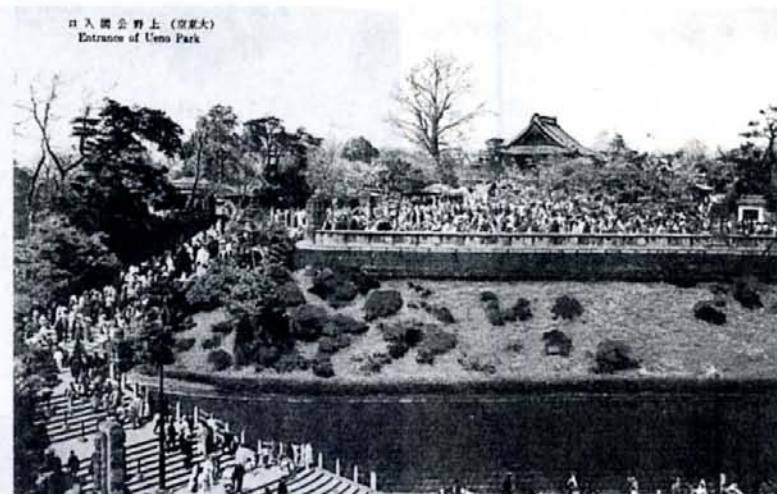
Fig. 3-18. High-rise buildings unsympathetic to the surrounding environment are being built around the Shinobazu Pond

seriously contemplate what “public” is, what the use of “public” means, and what is good for the general “public.”

3.2.9 Conclusion: On the Ueno Slope

Fig. 3-19a shows another main entrance to Ueno Park, on the southeastern side. It was beautifully designed in the late 1920s after the Great Kanto earthquake in 1923. Thanks to the finely landscaped garden, the Park attracted a large number of people as depicted in the postcard (Fig. 3-19a).

Shamefully, the place today is quite ugly, as seen in Fig. 3-19b. The famous Saigo Takamori's statue has been visually damaged after World War II because of the huge squat of small shops that had been created after the war. Tokyo Metropolitan Government tried to remove the squatters, but usually it cannot be done without just compensation, and if the squatters settled for a certain period of time, they eventually acquired the right to claim the compensation no matter how the ownership is. Finding it difficult to make additional space where the squatters could engage in retail activities, and faced with soaring land prices, the government finally decided to make a huge hall at the foot of this slope to accommodate these illegal squatters.



a



b

Fig. 3-19. (a and b) Prewar postcard depicting the large crowds in the Park (a) and the same site today (b)

This seemed to be the easiest solution to the problem. Now when one look at the Shinobazu entrance to Ueno Station, one cannot fail to find this unsightly building that cannot be recovered even today.

Therefore, the mission of architects and planners is very clear. In this case, it is obvious that we should recover the original grand slope of the Park. The façade of the Slope site should be public.

This kind of idea is important to restore or reuse historic infrastructures as well as historical street patterns. From what has been seen from the examples close to our campus, we should consider what we should do for the public, what the main clue for a future vision is, how to maintain and renovate our urban stock, and how to conserve our heritage for future generations.

As a planner dedicated to urban conservation, this is what I am planning and proposing better urban spaces through appreciating the past for the benefit of the general public of today and tomorrow.