

UC Berkeley

Breslauer Symposium

Title

Buckets, Bombs, and Bodies: Rights to the Japanese City & the Tokyo Air Raids

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0jz9k7fs>

Author

Karacas, Cary

Publication Date

2006-04-14

Cary Karacas
Ph.D. candidate
Department of Geography
University of California at Berkeley

Title: **Buckets, Bombs, and Bodies: Rights to the Japanese City & the Tokyo Air Raids.**

The right to be free of urban terror bombing and the right to memorialize urban catastrophe are examined through a focus on key moments that generated and were generated from the 1945 Tokyo air raids. The first part of my paper deals with Japanese government strategies employed in the early 1940s that obligated Tokyoites to give their lives if necessary to defend a city that had been made indefensible by technological advances in airplanes and incendiary weapons. I focus on two strategies of ideological and historical compulsion: the promotion of Tokyoites as loyal subjects inhabiting an urban space made holy by the emperor's presence, and the official remembering of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake that destroyed the capital. The second half of my paper examines a postwar citizens' movement that claimed the right to remember and memorialize the catastrophic loss suffered in the Tokyo air raids, and opposition that arose to the groups insistence that a memorial and museum dedicated to the firebombing victims also remember the victims of Japan's wars of aggression in Asian.

Fortress Tokyo

The Japanese government began to formulate national air defense policy 1931, following the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident and the Japanese Imperial Army first air raid against a Chinese city (Chinchou, northeast of Beijing), in September 1931. In response to a Home Ministry order, Tokyo City created a Tokyo Defense Brigade (*Tôkyô rengô bôgodan*) that carried out drills related to fire control, air alert readiness, and poison gas defense.¹ On September 1, 1932, the anniversary of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake that destroyed the capital and killed tens of thousands of people, the brigade held a series of drills, the first time that the city made an explicit connection between the 1923 event and air defense.² Associating the natural catastrophe with the need to guard Tokyo against a potential wartime disaster made sense

¹ Ishizuka and Narita, *Tôkyôto no Hyakunen*, 244. The groups included ward defense groups, local chapters of military associations, youth brigades, neighborhood associations, and women's groups.

² Tôkyô-to, *Senjika "Tochô" Kôhō Katsudô*, 93.

because the former still occupied a prominent place in the memory of most Tokyoites. Relating the need for a strong air defense to concerns that a similar catastrophe never be repeated would encourage people to embrace time-consuming drills more readily.

While the local government remembered the past as a way to prepare people for air raids, some people envisioned a Tokyo under assault as a way of encouraging people to imagine what the experience of an enemy attack might be like. As early as 1926, popular writers penned fictional accounts of a future war in which Tokyoites are subjected to air raids and poison gas bombings.³ And one writer in particular, Unno Jûza, created a sub-genre of the military novel called the “air-defense novel,” and wrote numerous stories about Tokyo being attacked from the sky.⁴

Beginning in the early 1930s, as Japan’s military involvement with China increasing and its relationship with the international community changing, Unno began to write military stories that posited a war with the United States. While fictional writings of America as military enemy date to the final years of the Meiji period, Unno’s focus on air raid attacks reflected a growing awareness that advances in aviation and military technology spelled doom for one of man’s greatest creations. The novels of H.G. Wells had a tremendous impact upon Unno’s work, and it is unlikely that Wells’ 1908 *The War in the Air* – one of the first works of fiction that imagined enemy aircraft attacking cities – escaped his attention. Additionally, the use of aerial bombing and poison gas in World War I, the subsequent development of long range aircraft and incendiary weapons, and the influence of Italian air power strategist Giulio Douhet’s ideas on military leaders all came together to convince Unno that Tokyo would eventually be attacked.⁵

In 1932, the same year that the Tokyo Defense Brigade conducted air defense drills, *Air Raid Requiem* (*Kûchû sôsô kyoku*), Unno’s first “air-defense novel,” was serialized over a five month period in the *Asahi* magazine. “Major explosions caused by airplanes flying overhead!”

³ Nagayama Yasuo, "Kaidai, 'Dai 1 Kan: Yuigonjô Hôsô'," in *Unno Jûza Zenshû, Dai 1 Kan: Yuigonjô Hôsô*, ed. Komatsu Sakyô and Kida Jun'ichirô (San'ichi Shobô, 1990). Nagata Mikihiro is author of *Daichi wa furû* (The Earth Shakes), which treats the 1923 Kanto Earthquake. Other notable works include Naoki Sanjûgo's 1931 *Taiheiyô Sensô* (The Pacific War) and Mizuno Hironiri's 1932 *Nichibeï Kôbô no Issen* (Battle between America and Japan).

⁴ While he is often referred to as the father of Japanese science fiction, Unno’s work traversed a number of genres, including fantasy, horror, and adventure stories.

⁵ After doing research for his first air raid novel and concluding that it was only a matter of time before Tokyo was destroyed by air raids, Unno felt the urge to flee to the countryside. Nagayama Yasuo, "Kaidai, 'Dai 1 Kan: Yuigonjô Hôsô'."

shouts out the preface. “This is the certain fear to be brought about by future wars. . . This isn’t simply fantasy.”⁶ *Air Raid Requiem* begins in Tokyo’s Asakusa district, at Japanese-clog shop where a family sits for an evening meal to celebrate the father’s fiftieth birthday. After receiving the unusual present of a gas mask from one of his sons, the father cannot tell if it is a legitimate gift, and asks if the masks are in fashion. The son, who works in a rubber manufacturing shop, tells him, “If an enemy’s bombers attack Tokyo and just five tons of bombs fall on the city, the place will burn to the ground just as it did during the great earthquake. Also, the enemy will definitely release poison gas.”⁷

The party is interrupted by a special radio bulletin announcing the murder of Japan’s consul general stationed in Shanghai, an event which leads to Japan declaring war on the United States. About a week into the war, the superintendent of Tokyo’s police forces delivers a speech to the Imperial subjects living in the city: “In all of our past wars, we didn’t permit even one enemy soldier to get to Japanese territory. Yet in this war with America, our colonies and even Tokyo, Osaka and other places in Japan may also become involved and be attacked by airplanes. The destiny of the Japanese empire is in the hands of the people, so give your all in this struggle.”⁸

Save for some underground bases built by and for the government, however, Unno’s Tokyo is not prepared in the least, made evident when the United States launches an air raid on the capital. Instead of any organized attempt to extinguish the fires, Unno describes panicked Tokyoites fleeing falling bombs, flames, and poison gas. A large thoroughfare running through Shinjuku becomes a living hell (*abikyôkan*) for the masses. Hundreds of the slow and the weak are trampled to death. Eyes pop out, bones break, skin and muscles split open, and a river of blood flows. This gruesome scene is followed by another in which people experience an excruciating death as they inhale poison gas.⁹

Unno cuts to a scene in which the commander of the United States Pacific Fleet orders 2,000 planes to attack Tokyo and deliver the death blow to the city. On their approach, however, the planes begin crash into the ocean, one by one. On the verge of annihilation, Tokyo is saved

⁶ Ibid., 433.

⁷ Unno Jûza, "Kûchû Sôsô Kyoku," in *Unno Jûza Zenshû, Dai I Kan: Yuigonjô Hôsô*. ed. Komatsu Sakyô and Kida Jun’ichirô (San’ichi Shobô, 1989), 325.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Unno Jûza, "Kûchû Sôsô Kyoku."

by a secret weapon – a magnetic ray that can disable the enemy’s planes – developed by a brilliant scientist. After accurately describing Tokyo’s lack of air defenses, Unno can only save the city through the trope of science fiction.

Official responses to Unno’s air-raid novels reveal underlying tensions within government circles about civil defense policy. The inclusion of a preface to *The Imperial Capital Under Air Raid Attack* by Shima Shôzô, Imperial Army major general and chief of staff for Tokyo’s defense headquarters, highlights this apprehension. Shima first distances himself from Unno’s portrayal of the United States as an enemy and Tokyoites as panicked, suffering masses. He then challenges Unno’s main theme that Tokyo is vulnerable by distinguishing it from all other capitals in the world. The imperial capital, Shima claimed, “from the beginning has resisted insult/invasion and maintained the pride of divine purity,” ostensibly because of the emperor’s presence. Though he claims that the military and its air defenses can protect the holy capital, he backtracks by admitting that the devastating war in Europe and technological developments begged the question as to how to guarantee Tokyo’s protection. In the end, Shima says that the fate of the city lies in the hands of its residents. Just as people are prepared for rain by having an umbrella, they “need to be prepared for a change in the skies” and the dropping of bombs.¹⁰

Through a brief examination of a few among the good handful of “air-defense novels” which Unno later wrote, we can get a sense of his evolving ideas about the subject. In 1933 he published his second novel, *Japan Under Air Raid Attack (Kûshûka no Nihon)*.¹¹ Stating that “the day of trembling draws near,” Unno informs the reader about Tokyo’s vulnerability via a conversation held between a salaryman and his wife at their house in a Tokyo suburb. The salaryman, who works for the main electric company in the city, has just returned from a meeting with military officials, at which they discussed how to respond to an air raid attack. He complains that to date not one air defense drill had been carried out in the greater Tokyo area.

The husband then explains the theory of air warfare to his ignorant wife. Even if a country has two or three defensive layers, he tells her, some of the enemy’s hundreds or

¹⁰ Shima’s preface is excerpted in Nagayama Yasuo, “Kaidai, ‘Dai 1 Kan: Yuigonjô Hôsô,’” 435.

¹¹ “Kûshûka no Nihon” first appeared under the title of “Kokunan kuru, Nihon wa dônaruka” as a supplement to the April 1933 issue of *Hinode* magazine. It was republished in book form in 1936 under the title *Ryûsen Kanchô* (Streamline Spy), and subsequently in Unno Jûza, “Kûshûka No Nihon,” in *Unno Jûza Zenshû, Dai 2 Kan: Shinya No Shichô*, ed. Komatsu Sakyô and Kida Jun’ichirô (San’ichi Shobô, 1988).

thousands of planes will be able to pierce even the strongest of defenses. And it takes but a handful to do significant damage. “Most fearsome of all,” he frets, “are the incendiary bombs. Upon exploding, they can get up to 3,000 degrees. Even if water is poured on them, it does nothing. If they fall on Tokyo’s wooden structures, we’ll have devastation comparable to 1923.”¹² Soon after he expresses this fear to his wife, a special radio broadcast announces the beginning of war, due this time to third country sending weapons to China.

Toward the end of the story, the sixth sense of a commander of an anti-aircraft artillery unit stationed in Ueno Park alerts him to an imminent air raid. When the incendiaries begin to fall this time, Unno, instead of representing Tokyoites as panicked masses, divides them into the prepared and unprepared. Those in the latter group act as everyone did in his first story, madly running for their lives as bombs fall on the Marunouchi business district. Some Tokyoites, though, act calmly and with bravery.

They extinguish nearby fires that might act as targets for enemy airplanes, and save a mother and infant felled by poison gas. He also shows how a family survives a poison gas bombing because they have sealed their house and taken other preventive measures, and a reservist who refuses to sell his gas mask to a rich man. Both of the above air raid novels convey Tokyo’s vulnerability and the technological superiority of the United States. In a significant shift, however, in Unno’s second novel it is not a secret technology that saves the city from destruction, but the preparedness of the people and Japan’s military strength. At the end of the story, a military official – dressed in plain clothes in order to catch spies who might try to create chaos during the raid – gives a speech in which he says,

As long as the people’s air defense practices are maintained, we don’t need to fear the enemy’s air raids. From this moment on, the strength of our Imperial air forces begins. America’s Pacific bombing fleet, the air force that attacked us, has been destroyed. With submarines, we destroyed their main ships. The people and the military worked together. . . . From a larger perspective this partial damage to the imperial capital is nothing.”¹³

¹² Ibid., 23.

¹³ Ibid., 39.

Even though Unno always prevented the enemy from inflicting large-scale damage in his stories, the fact that he continued to posit a scenario in which the capital could be attacked unsettled some military officers in the late 1930s, a time when the issue of air defense had become a pressing topic for urban planners, Home Ministry bureaucrats and military officials. Again, air raids taking place in the late 1930s may be a reason for the renewed discussion. A few months after Germany's bombing of Guernica in 1937, Japanese military planes took off from Nagasaki to bomb China's capital, Nanking. The bombers, writes Herbert Bix, "had recently been developed under the guidance of Adm. Yamamoto Isoroku for use in a future air war against the United States; Yamamoto was anxious to test them."¹⁴ Later, the walled city Chungking, to which Chiang Kai-shek had retreated, came under Japanese air attack on a regular basis, as did Yenan and a few dozen other Chinese cities between 1938 and 1941.¹⁵

As the Imperial Army prepared for its air raids on Nanking, Japan passed in April 1937 its first National Civilian Air Defense Law, which was meant to establish uniform procedures and regulations for civil defense. Also in the same year, a reorganized Home Ministry established a Planning Bureau meant to address the increasingly interconnected issues of urban planning and air defense.

In 1938, a fierce debate erupted among government officials over the issue of air defense. One camp that included urban planners, Home Ministry bureaucrats, and some military officials who argued that far-reaching air defense policies – including laying the groundwork for the possible evacuation of urban areas – needed to be implemented in order to protect Japan's cities and residents in the event of enemy attacks. To have a civilian air defense at all, others argued, would plant in people's minds the seed of suspicion that Japan might be vulnerable and could lose a war. Additionally, some believed the evacuation of cities to be nothing less than treason.¹⁶ In 1938, following the serialization of another of Unno Jûza's air-raid novel, *Tokyo Air Raids (Tôkyô Kûbaku)* in *Kingu* magazine, Hiraide Hideo, the chief of the Imperial Navy's information bureau, summoned Unno to his office and warned him never again to write about the

¹⁴ Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 324.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 240, 312, 347, 364. Japan conducted air raids against thirty-five cities in China. E. Bartlett Kerr, *Flames over Tokyo: The U.S. Army Air Forces' Incendiary Campaign against Japan 1944-1945*. (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1991).

¹⁶ Aoki Tetsuo, "Tôkyôto Shudan Gakudô Sokai Ni Miru Senjika No Tosei," *Jinmin no Rekishigaku* 9, no. 129 (1996): 3.

subject. When asked why, Hiraide responded by pounding his fist on the desk in front of him and yelling out that “Not one enemy plane will fly over the Imperial capital!”¹⁷ Unno did stop writing the stories, at least for a few years. Additionally, popular magazines and other forms of mass media rarely touched upon the subject of air defense in the late 1930s, which would contribute to a later lack of urgency on the part of the public regarding the issue.¹⁸

As mentioned above, urban planners, Home Ministry bureaucrats, and some military officials had reached a consensus that “air defense city planning” (*bôkû toshi keikaku*) ought to be the main goal of urban planning. To realize this shift in Tokyo, chiefs from all of the city’s bureaus joined with representatives from Tokyo Prefecture, the Metropolitan Police Board, the military, urban planners, and university professors to form the Defense of Tokyo Survey Group (*Tôkyôshi bôei shisetsu chôsa iinkai*) that would make recommendations to the government about how to create a “Fortress Tokyo.”¹⁹

The following year, Tokyo’s Civil Defense Department (*shimin dôinbu bôeika*) and Planning Department, stressing that “Wooden structures stand naked before incendiary bombs,” urged the government to enact a series of air-defense measures in order to create a “fire-resistant Tokyo.” This would be accomplished by fire-proofing its structures, dividing the city into an agglomeration of “fire defense blocks” bounded by wide streets, encircling the city with greenbelts, and strengthening water delivery systems. To make Tokyo a less desirable target, it also recommended that the government disperse factories and important institutions to new satellite cities.²⁰

In the winning argument that prevailed until late 1943, the government’s official civil defense policy did not include a contingency for the evacuation of civilians from Japan’s urban areas. In fact, a revised Air Defense Law passed in November 1941 explicitly *forbade* evacuation. The main emphasis of civil defense rested almost exclusively on depending upon

¹⁷ SNNZ 7:97.

¹⁸ Aoki Tetsuo, "Tôkyôto Shudan Gakudô Sokai Ni Miru Senjika No Tosei," 3.

¹⁹ Koshizawa Akira, *Tôkyô No Toshi Keikaku* (Iwanami Shoten: 1991), 173.

²⁰ Tôkyô-to, *Senjika "Tochô" Kôhô Katsudô*, 96. Koshiwaza Akira, *Tôkyô No Toshi Keikaku* (Iwanami Shinsho, 1991), 93-94.

the people to protect the city from fire, which was tantamount to a denial of the true vulnerability of Tokyo and the rest of Japan's cities.²¹

The government repeatedly emphasized that the responsibility for civil defense lay first and foremost with the individual and the neighborhood group.²² To create a "spirit of preparedness," in 1940 the Tokyo municipal government released its *Spiritual Aspects of Air Defense (Bôkû no Seishinteki Hômen ni Tsuite)*, which urged its people to be prepared daily for air defense.²³ The city also regularly reminded them of the 1923 disaster as motivation. In a 1941 special issue of Tokyo's *City Government Weekly (Shisei Shûhō)* devoted to the themes of the 1923 disaster and air defense, the city asked its citizens to recall the past as a way of preparing for the future: "Remembering the disaster, let's build an impenetrable air defense." It also wed the two themes by sponsoring an Earthquake Disaster Memorial and People's Air Defense Assembly (*shinsai kinen kokumin bôkû daikôen*), and hosting talks given by "heroes" who had protected their neighborhoods in 1923.²⁴

Encouraging people to prepare for air defense by reminding them of the earthquake was misleading to the extreme, as it belied the true lessons to be learned from the 1923 catastrophe. Tens of thousands of people died not because they were unprepared, but because much of the city's fabric was composed of closely packed, flammable structures, narrow streets, and little open space, which prevented people from taking refuge from fire. Rather than a commitment by Tokyoites that they fight erupting fires, many elements of fire prevention could be found in the largely unrealized post-1923 reconstruction plan, which emphasized exactly what urban planners still called for: fire-resistant construction materials, land readjustment, wide roads, open space, and a modernized firefighting service. The central government never heeded these actual lessons of 1923, evidenced most starkly in that it curtailed the original reconstruction plan by over 90 percent. And in those very areas that had been designated as fire breaks after the catastrophe, a majority of the 200,000 temporary wooden barracks that sprung up were still there, ready to act as kindling for the next conflagration.²⁵

²¹ According to Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, the head of the Military Press Corps, Yahagi Nakao, had unsuccessfully pressed for the evacuation of part of Tokyo's population. Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, *A Diary of Darkness: The Wartime Diary of Kiyosawa Kiyoshi*, 84.

²² Tôkyô-to, *Toshi Kiyô: Senjika "Tochô" No Kôhō Katsudô*, 96.

²³ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 100-02.

²⁵ Tokyo Municipal Office, *Tokyo Reconstruction Work*, 1930, 71.

The first air raid on Japan in April 1942 abruptly drained the spirit of invincibility that filled the streets and higher levels of government during the first months of the war. On April 18, 1942, sixteen B-25 bombers led by Colonel James Doolittle took off from a carrier in the Pacific and with relative ease attacked Tokyo, Nagoya and Kobe. Harm to Tokyo from the raid was slight, with thirty-nine deaths and a few hundred damaged houses.²⁶ Government reports emphasized that the enemy had indiscriminately targeted civilians, and praised the residents who had comported themselves in a calm and responsible manner.²⁷ In the *Shûkan Asahi* weekly magazine, Nishigori Kurako claimed that the air raid had filled her with confidence. As long as the people were prepared, the country would be safe even in the face of air attacks by a countless number of enemy planes. “If I were a man,” she closed, “I’d like to get in a plane and bomb New York.”²⁸

In addition to suggesting that a strike on the most populated city in the United States would be the ideal response to the attack on Tokyo, this propaganda minimized the real meaning of the raid. Contrary to government pronouncements and the belief that preparation alone constituted an appropriate air defense policy, Japanese cities were vulnerable to attack, and its citizens were far from prepared for one. As for military air defense, Japan proved unable to prevent enemy planes from breaching the capital’s air space. Civilian air defense also failed. The air-raid alert didn’t sound until 25 minutes after the attack commenced, and instead of taking cover, many Tokyoites ran out into the streets to catch a glimpse of the enemy planes.²⁹

The Doolittle Raid also compelled the government to consider, if not immediately implement, the need for policies regarding the evacuation of nonessential personnel and industrial facilities from its main cities. It still maintained the approach, though, that “The best air defense is fire prevention” and that “The Imperial capital will be defended by the hands of its citizens.”³⁰ A book released in conjunction with the creation of Tokyo Metropolis in 1943 shows how authorities encouraged Tokyoites to view themselves and their city in relation to the war and air defense. In it, governor-general Ôatsu claimed Tokyo was not just the capital of Japan

²⁶ Tôkyô-to, *Tôkyôto Sensai Shi* (1953).

²⁷ *TDKSS* 4:21-27.

²⁸ *TDKSS* 4:221.

²⁹ R. Guillain, *I Saw Tokyo Burning: An Eyewitness Narrative from Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*, trans. W. Bryon (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), 61-63.

³⁰ Tôkyô-to, *Shiryô: Tôkyôto No Gakudô Sokai*, 97.

but of Greater East Asia, and that the city was “holy land” venerated by all Japanese.³¹ The residents of the holy land of Tokyo – holier for the Japanese than Mecca was for Muslims – according to scholar Mori Kiyondo, who also contributed to the publication, had an obligation to maintain a steady veneration for the city. Mori’s interpretation of the capital may help explain why the government placed the obligation of air defense on the people and disregarded the fact that air raids were sure to produce catastrophic results. According to him, the emperor’s holy presence in Tokyo implied that the city was surrounded by an invisible, spiritually-charged rope (*shime nawa*) that prevented its inhabitants from acting in a harmful manner. As such, Tokyoites had the responsibility not to do anything that would bring injury to capital, and conversely must do everything to prevent harm from occurring to it. Mori’s prescribed method of action was that they maintain a steadfast position in the face of danger.³²

The specific form of danger was laid out by the Home Ministry in 1943 when it published and distributed a revised edition of its *Companion to Air Defense (Jikyoku Bôkû Hikkei)* to every household in Japan’s major cities. Outlining the government’s expectations of its citizens during an air raid, the pamphlet posited a frightful scenario reminiscent of Unno Jûza’s stories. Even before a warning siren is heard, cautioned the *Companion to Air Defense*, large numbers of enemy planes might shower their neighborhoods with countless incendiary bombs, high explosives, and even poison gas. In the face of such devastating attacks, fire prevention remained the primary responsibility of each person. “We are soldiers that protect the country,” stated the “victory through air defense” pledge contained in the booklet. “Throwing away our lives, we will protect our areas.”³³

“To be prepared is to have no regrets” (*sonae areba urei nashi*) constituted the refrain of the *Companion to Air Defense*. That preparation entailed storing water in available cisterns, bathtubs, rainwater tubs, and buckets, and having such firefighting instruments as sand or dirt, straw mats, and long sticks (*hitataki*) to battle flames. The moment an air-alert siren sounded, people were to change into their air raid clothing, check their water containers and all other firefighting equipment, place all flammables, sliding door partitions (*fusuma*) and other potential obstacles in a safe place, and prepare the air raid shelter for use. Within a minute after an

³¹ From Mainichi Shinbunsha Bunkabu, *Miyako No Rekishi to Bunka* (Hokkô Shobo, 1938), reprinted in Tôkyô Hyakunenshi Henshû Inkaï, *Tôkyô Hyakunenshi, Volume 5*, 906.

³² *Ibid.*, 5:906.

³³ The *Jikyoku Bôkû Hikkei* is reprinted in Jôhôji Asami, *Nihon Bôkûshi* (Hara Shobô, 1981), 422-34.

incendiary bomb hit the ground, instructed the manual, everyone in the vicinity should be a work distinguishing it.³⁴

The same year that the Home Ministry distributed the manual, Tokyo held an air-defense slogan competition. “Diligently protect the sky under which the Emperor lives” (*ôkimi no owasu kono sora kesshi de mamore*) was picked as a winning slogan among the eighteen thousand entries that the metropolitan government received.³⁵ Tokyoites would soon learn that protecting the sky was far beyond their ability.

The government did not address the need for air raid shelters until well after the war with America began. Although urban planners had called for such beginning in the late 1930s, it wasn't until June 1943 that the Home Ministry ordered local governments to begin building public air raid shelters and to have homeowners build their own. Part of the reason the government did not promote the construction of shelters until then was its fear that people would resort to using them before they fulfilled their assigned duty of fire prevention. Accordingly, after the government ordered that shelters be built, it issued reminders that people should never rush to an evacuation area at the start of an air raid. Provided that the safety of children had been assured, people's first obligation would be firefighting (Figure 1).

³⁴ Jôjôbi, *Nihon bôkûshi*, 424-426.

³⁵ Tôkyô-to, *Senjika "Tochô" Kôhô Katsudô*, 99.



Figure 1, Suzuki Makoto's 1943 "Air defense brigade protecting the emperor's land." The painting conveys what the government expected of its subjects: Mothers should ensure the safety of their children, and everyone else should extinguish fires. The absence of civilian men is noticeable.



Figure 2. Firefighting drills taking place at Meiji Jingû Stadium in 1943.

An increased emphasis on air defense filtered into every part of life, including school, work, clothing, and food. Tokyo reminded adults to carry their steel helmets and cotton air defense hoods at all times and initiated Air-Defense Clothing Days that required everyone to wear air-defense outfits. Civil defense units regularly assembled at schools and other open spaces to conduct combined calisthenics and firefighting drills. Women's magazines such as *Fujin Kurabu* featured articles on how to make air-defense pajamas and other related clothing, even enclosing patterns for baby outfits and a one piece for women that could easily be put on when the air raid siren sounded. Newspapers featured recipes for "The Complete Air Defense Meal" composed of brown rice, soybeans, and minced orange peels. And throughout the city, one saw posters shouting slogans like "Air raids are inevitable, so always wear your combat clothing" (*kûshû ha hisshi da, tsune ni sentô fukushû de*) and "Unexpected air raids, ceaseless drills" (*fujin no kûshû, fudan no kunren*).³⁶

In September 1943, the government acknowledged for the first time since the beginning of the war that the evacuation of Japan's largest cities might be required. During that month, a series of cabinet resolutions and another revision to the Air Defense Law laid the groundwork for carrying out compulsory evacuations if deemed necessary. Based on the September resolutions, in December 1943, the government adopted its "Outline for Carrying out Urban Evacuations" (*toshi sokai jisshi yôkô*), that addressed the evacuation of families, schoolchildren, and government and industrial facilities from Japan's twelve principle cities.³⁷

While it reserved the right to evacuate people compulsorily from the cities, the central government initially did little more than suggest that children, the elderly, and other groups leave via a "contact evacuation" (*enko sokai*), in which people would join relatives who lived outside of the city. Authorities considered this voluntary form of evacuation the ideal way to maintain the "familialism" (*kazokushugi*) upon which Japanese society was ostensibly based.³⁸

³⁶ Tôkyô-to, *Senjika "Tochô" Kôhō Katsudō*, 43, 104; *Fujin Kurabu*, Feb 1945; *SNNZ* 7:41; *SNNZ* 6:322.

³⁷ Tôkyô-to, *Shiryô: Tôkyôto no Gakudô Sokai*, 21, Tôkyô-to, *Tôkyôto Sensai Shi*, 167, Zenkoku Sokai Gakudo Renryaku Kyogikai, ed., *Gakudô Sokai no Kiroku, Zen Go Kan* (1994), volume 1, 65.

³⁸ Tôkyô-to, *Shiryô: Tôkyôto no Gakudô Sokai*, 21.

A number of issues kept people from voluntarily leaving or sending away their children or elderly relatives. Many people in the capital simply did not have family members in the countryside that could host them. Parents did not want to part from their children. Even with the government incentives, a chronic lack of trains and other forms of transport to carry evacuees and their belongings made people resistant to leave. The fear of living in the countryside for those who had been born and raised in the city far outweighed uncertainties of potential air raids. Finally, many people simply could not conceive of air raids actually taking place. “Until the very day the bombs were dropped over our heads,” wrote Katô Shûichi, “we never believed it could

In the summer of 1944, the United States effectively won the war when it wrested from Japan control of the Marianas Islands, consisting of Guam, Tinian, and Saipan. The islands’ proximity to the industrial heart of the country, with Saipan being less than thirteen hundred miles from Tokyo, brought every important Japanese city within range of America’s recently developed long range B-29 “Superfortress” bombers.³⁹ As soldiers fought a bloody battle trying to hold onto or capture the Marianas Islands, even Emperor Hirohito recognized the gravity of the situation, telling Tôjô Hideki, “If we ever lose Saipan, repeated air attacks on Tokyo will follow. No matter what it takes, we have to hold there.”⁴⁰ It was an impossible demand. “The shadow of pessimism is at long last apparent throughout society,” wrote Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, upon hearing the news of Saipan’s fall.⁴¹

The loss of the Marianas Islands brought a rapid and chaotic response, beginning with the forced evacuation of school children from Japan’s major cities. In the first compulsory evacuations since the beginning of the war, on June 30, 1944, a government resolution (*gakudô sokai sokushin yôkô*) called for the mandatory evacuation of fourth through sixth grade elementary school students. For those concerned that this would disrupt the family unit and “familialism,” the government attempted to liken the student dormitories in which the children

³⁹ Using bases in China, the United States Army’s XX Bomber Command had launched a number of high altitude “precision bombing” strikes against steelworks, aircraft factories, and urban areas in Kyushu throughout the summer of 1944.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 476.

⁴¹ Kiyosawa, *A Diary of Darkness*, 210.

were to live to a large family.⁴² In the span of just a few months, Japan sent 400,000 children from its main cities, with 225,000 coming from Tokyo.⁴³

Other than the student evacuation, the central government did little more than strongly encourage people considered nonessential to the war effort to leave Japan's cities. In December 1944, it passed another resolution that encouraged pregnant women, mothers with infants, all remaining primary school children, and people over sixty-five years of age to evacuate from urban areas. Again, however, with few resources and their disposal, few people were in a position to leave the capital without causing even more considerable hardship.

From the newly acquired bases in the Marianas Islands, at the end of November 1944, the United States Army Air Force's XXI Bomber Command initiated a series of air raids on Tokyo. While the city offered a number of military and industrial targets, some had advocated attacking the symbolic heart of the nation that lay at the center of the capital. The Chief of Staff of the Twentieth Air Force, for example, urged that large-scale raids on the Imperial Palace be carried on December 8, 1944, the third anniversary of Japan's surprise attack. "Not at this time," responded General H.H. Arnold, chief of the Army Air Corps. "Our position – bombing factories, docks, etc. – is sound. Later destroy the whole city."⁴⁴

Arnold principally targeted Nakajima Aircraft's Musashi factory, ten miles west of the city center. Estimating that the factory produced up to 40 percent of combat aircraft engines, the Army Air Corps, maintaining the approach it had originally taken toward Germany, attempted to destroy the factory complex through high altitude precision bombing.⁴⁵ Most of the raids conducted on the capital over the next few months focused on those factories in western Tokyo, and virtually all failed due to strong winds encountered at high altitude, persistent cloud cover obscuring the buildings, and targeting error.

⁴² Zenkoku Sokai Gakudo Renryaku Kyogikai, ed., *Gakudō Sokai No Kiroku, Zen Go Kan*, volume 1, 87.

⁴³ Aoki Tetsuo, "Tōkyōto Shudan Gakudō Sokai Ni Miru Senjika No Tosei," 1.; *SNNZ* 6:342. Some children, however, including Korean students, those with contagious diseases, and the physically handicapped, remained in the Tokyo. Ishizuka Hiromichi and Narita Ryūichi, *Tōkyōto No Hyaku Nen*, 281.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Kerr, *Flames Over Tokyo*, 103.

⁴⁵ Kerr, *Flames Over Tokyo*, 93. Given the importance of the factory in producing aircraft engines, the Japanese government had already relocated machine tools and mechanics to neighboring prefectures, built a 248,000 square meter underground manufacturing plant, and set up formidable firefighting units within the factory. Ishizuka and Narita. *Tōkyōto no Hyakunen*, 268-269.

Many Tokyoites had become so accustomed to the daily wail of sirens that they simply ignored them and stopped using their air raid shelters.⁴⁶ The month closed with another major turning point when, after cloud cover prevented an attack on the Nakajima Aircraft factory, some B-29s released their high explosives on Tokyo's Ginza-Yûrakuchô district on January 27, 1945. Killing hundreds and destroying much of the area, the raid dealt a profound blow to the psyche of Tokyo and Japan by providing the clearest possible evidence that the military could not protect the center of the capital. The inability of Japan to prevent enemy planes from flying freely over the country made many people pessimistic about the future, resulting in a surge of "defeatist rumors" collected by the wartime military police. Overheard or reported comments included "If enemy planes can attack the country, then there is no way that Japan can win the war," and "Not even one out of a thousand firings from the antiaircraft guns is hitting the planes." Other people were overheard discussing Tokyo's bleak situation: "It's going to be just like what happened in 1923."⁴⁷

Although U.S. policy until early 1945 was to focus on military targets, the United States had given serious consideration to destroying urban Japan since 1943. Raymond H. Ewell, a chemical engineer working with the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC), and an avid proponent of using the NDRC-designed napalm M-69 bomb against Japan, wrote in an April 1943 report that "anyone familiar with the M-69 and with the construction and layout of Japanese cities can make a few calculations and soon reach a tentative conclusion that even as small amounts as 10 tons of M-69's would have the possibility of wiping out major portions of any of the large Japanese cities."⁴⁸ In that same year, a U.S. Army communiqué, "Japan, Incendiary Attack Data," according to E. Bartlett Kerr, "advocated a wholly new target system – Japanese cities – and offered estimates of the bomb tonnages required to destroy them."⁴⁹ The detailed report considered how factors such as building density, bomb tonnage, seasonal wind patterns, and attack formation would contribute to the desired conflagrations of target cities.

As little public opposition came from either the incendiary air raid on Tokyo or Secretary of War Henry Stimson's recent statement that Dresden had been legitimate target for destruction

⁴⁶ Kiyosawa, *A Diary of Darkness*, 305.

⁴⁷ *TDKSS* 5:335-339; *THNS Bekkan*, 911.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Kerr, *Flames Over Tokyo*, 24.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

solely due to its position as a transportation hub, the United States was able to green light the plan developed in 1943 to destroy urban Japan.⁵⁰ Tokyo would be the first city to be demolished.

For the March 9-10 air raid, Curtis LeMay targeted Tokyo's most densely populated district, a twelve-square-mile area in which 1,300,000 people lived (see Figure 3). The first B-29s to arrive just after midnight on March 10 released incendiary bombs at four corners of the target area in order to create "pathfinder" fires that would guide other pilots to the site. Most of the planes each carried twenty-four 500 pound clusters, with every cluster containing forty-eight M-69 hexagonal projectiles holding jellied gasoline, or napalm.⁵¹ Upon entering the target area, the B-29 crewmembers released the clusters from the cargo bay. As they fell, a timing fuse opened each cluster between an altitude of 4,000 and 5,000 feet, upon which the tail ribbon of the incendiaries would automatically light as the projectiles scattered individually to earth. Upon impact the explosion sent the ignited jellied gasoline spraying thirty yards in each direction.⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., 145.

⁵¹ For a detailed account of the development of both napalm and strategies for its use in war, see Kerr, *Flames Over Tokyo*.

⁵² Jôhôji Asami, *Nihon Bôkûshi*.

TOKYO POPULATION DENSITY, 1940
AND TARGET AREA FOR
MARCH 9-10, 1945 AIR RAID

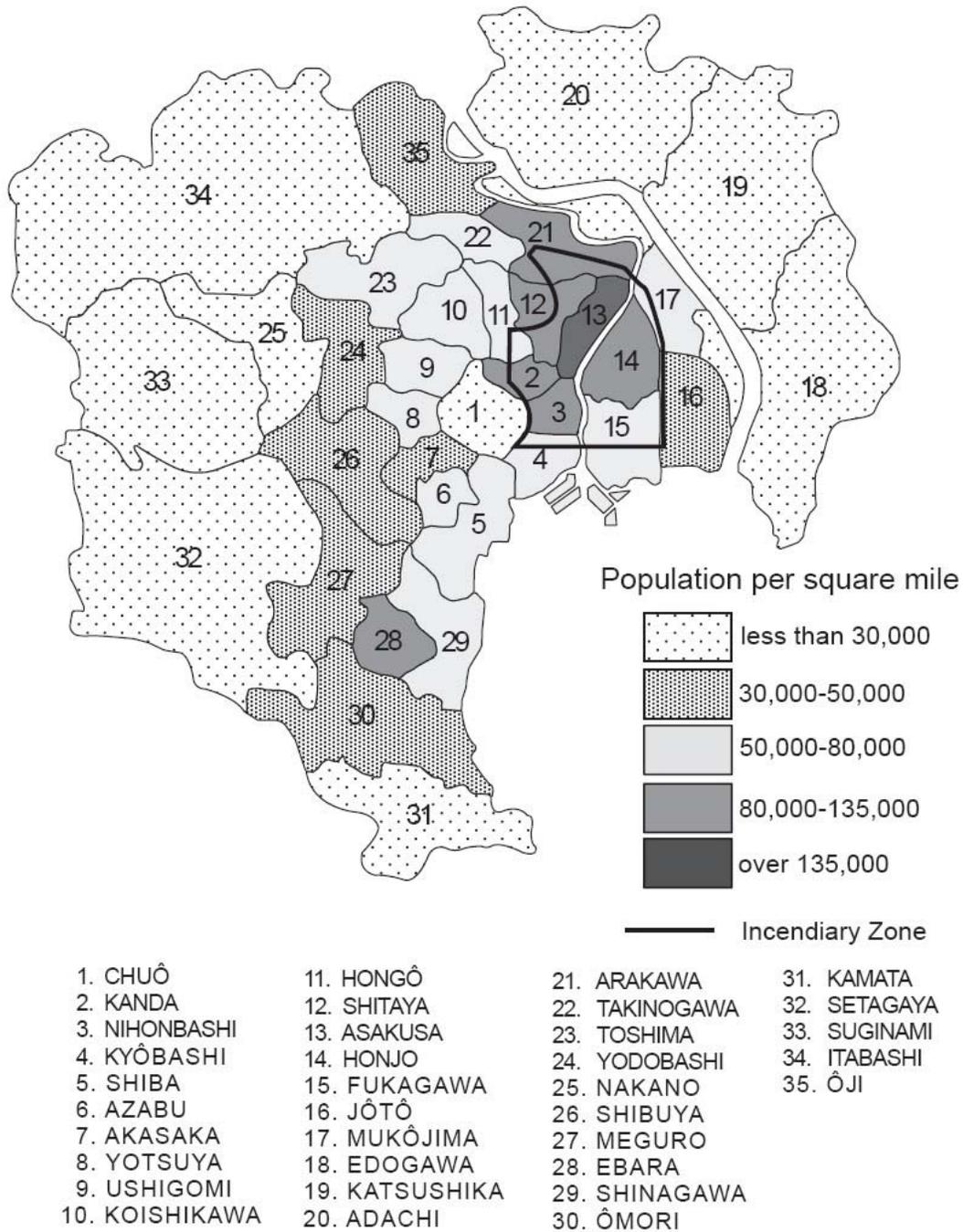


Figure 3. Tokyo population density and the March 9-10 air raid target area. Cartography by author, based on (EDO-TOKYO HAKUBUTSUKAN BOOK/GET TITLE)

As instructed in numerous drills over the last few years, neighborhood association defense units attempted to extinguish incendiaries and performed bucket relays to put out erupting fires. A half hour into the raid, though, the growing fires made the task impossible. The Metropolitan Police Department's firefighters fared no better after the conflagration's mounting appetite for oxygen shut down their water-pump engines. The growing fires then began to cause large pockets of rapidly heated air to suddenly rise, allowing colder air to rush in with enough force to generate hurricane-like gales that flailed people and their belongings into midair and prevented many from escaping the conflagration.⁵³ By the time Chester Marshall and his crew had reached Tokyo, "we looked upon a ghastly scene spread out before us Flames and debris were climbing several thousand feet and a dark cloud of smoke hurled upward to more than 20,000 feet."⁵⁴ After the crew released its own payload of incendiaries, the plane was hit by a wave of expanding air from below, sending it hurling 5,000 feet upward in matter of seconds. After Marshall regained control of the plane, he steered the B-29 in the direction of the Pacific Ocean. "It was a great relief for us to exit the smoke," he wrote the next day, "because the odor of burning flesh and debris was very nauseating."⁵⁵

Flames easily jumped over the area's many canals, burning wood bridges along the way and closing the possibility of escape for many. Women and their children fled to evacuation sites, only to be consumed by flame. People took refuge in public or private air raid shelters, and as the growing heat announced death's approach, they urinated on the futons they carried in the hope that it might act as a buffer. It worked on a few occasions. Thousands of people, though, died of asphyxiation inside of the shelters. And tens of thousands of people died in parks and other evacuation sites, in ferroconcrete apartments believed to be safe, in streets that had been created as fire breaks, in the middle of bridges as the blaze encroached on them from both sides, and in the Sumida river and many canals as they jumped from the flames, only to be overtaken cold temperature, strong current, or even the conflagration itself as it moved over the water.

By the time the air raid ended, two and a half hours after it had begun, the B-29s had showered over 541,000 incendiary bombs that collectively weighed 2,660 tons on the district.⁵⁶

⁵³ The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Bombing on Health and Medical Services in Japan, Reports, Pacific War, Number 12* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 148-49.

⁵⁴ Marshall, *Sky Giants over Japan: A Diary of a B-29 Combat Crew in WW II*, 146-47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁵⁶ Kerr, *Flames Over Tokyo*, 52; Jôjôbi, *Nihon Bôkûshi*, 236-237, 243.

The fires went far beyond the target area, affecting twenty-six of Tokyo's thirty-five wards. Fukagawa, Honjō, and Asakusa wards, however, were the most unlucky, with over 95 percent of each ward's area burning down.⁵⁷ U.S. reconnaissance photos taken on the afternoon of March 10 revealed that 15 square miles (24 square kilometers) of Tokyo had been completely destroyed.⁵⁸ According to the official history of the Army Air Force, "the physical destruction and loss of life at Tokyo exceeded that . . . of any of the great conflagrations of the western world No other air attack of the war, either in Japan or Europe, was so destructive of life and property."⁵⁹ Official death estimates ranged from 72,000 to 97,000, though it is certain that over 100,000 people died that night.⁶⁰ Many of the sixty thousand students who had just returned to Tokyo from the countryside to attend their graduation ceremonies bombings had either been killed or orphaned.⁶¹ A Home Ministry report listed just over 180,000 houses destroyed and 370,000 families displaced.⁶²

A few hours after the fires finally died out, the Imperial Headquarters announced that 130 B-29s, around two hundred fewer than the actual amount, had indiscriminately attacked the capital, that fires had erupted in all areas, and that the main stables of the Imperial Household had twice caught fire.⁶³ On the same day, with a large portion of Tokyo devastated, Governor Yoshizo made an impossible request: "We are calling upon the people of the capital to pledge themselves to be unafraid of the air raids, to strengthen their accord and unity with one another, and to steel themselves all the more to fulfill the great task of guarding the imperial capital."⁶⁴

⁵⁷ *TDKSS* 1:28-29

⁵⁸ Jōhōji Asami, *Nihon Bōkūshi*, 246.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume Five, the Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki June 1944 to August 1945* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), Volume 5, 617.

⁶⁰ Various estimates include those of the Metropolitan Police Fire Department (72,174 deaths), the Home Ministry's Air Defense Headquarters (76,056 deaths), the United States Strategic Bombing Survey Group (97,000 deaths), Jōhōji Asami, *Nihon Bōkūshi*, 80, 489. (*THNS Bekkan* 911: 93,000.) The Tōkyō-to Irei Kyōkai, the semi-governmental organization in charge of dealing with the remains of air raid victims, lists that it holds the remains of around 103,000 bodies from the March 9-10, 1945 firebombing. Tōkyō-to Irei Kyōkai, *Aa San Gatsu Tōka: Shōwa Taisensai Tōkyō Kūshū No Kiroku* (2002).

⁶¹ Tōkyō-to, *Shiryō: Tōkyōto no Gakudō Sokai*, 39.

⁶² United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *USSBS Reports, Pacific War, #11. Final Report Covering Air-Raid Protection and Allied Subjects in Japan*. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), Exhibit D, Ministry of Home Affairs report.

⁶³ Reprinted in Jōhōji Asami, *Nihon Bōkūshi*, 246.

⁶⁴ Tokyo Metropolitan Government Official Notice, March 10, 1945, translated and reprinted in United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *USSBS Reports, Pacific War, #11. Final Report Covering Air-Raid Protection and Allied Subjects in Japan*.

A week after much of the capital burned to the ground, the emperor took a tour of the ruins. He first appeared at Tomioka Hachimangû temple in Fukagawa ward, one of the hardest hit areas. The emperor stood before a table on which a map of the area had been placed while Ôtatsu Shigeo, who had since become Home Minister, explained the damage. No cameras were permitted at the scene except for the one held by police photographer Ishikawa Kôyô. The emperor posed for a photograph and then toured the immediate area for about twenty minutes.⁶⁵ He was not well received. According to one of the emperor's aides, the air raid victims were

digging through the rubble with empty expressions on their faces that became reproachful as the imperial motorcade went by. Although we did not make the usual prior announcement, I felt that they should have known that his was a 'blessed visitation' (gyôkô) just the same Were they resentful of the emperor because they had lost their relatives, their houses and their belongings? Or were they in a state of utter exhaustion and bewilderment (*kyodatsu jôtai*)? I sympathized with how his majesty must have felt upon approaching these unfortunate victims.⁶⁶

The firebombing undeniably caused a loss in the people's confidence in their government, and it destroyed any conviction that people could protect their neighborhoods, homes, and families from further air raids.⁶⁷ This loss in confidence in turn caused people to question when the war would end. "Everywhere one goes," wrote Kiyosawa Kiyoshi just before his own air raid baptism in April 1945, "the topic of conversation turns toward the point of asking when the war will probably end. One can infer from this that everyone has had enough war."⁶⁸

After seeing that the March 9-10 raids had destroyed an area of Tokyo larger than expected, Curtis LeMay thought that he could "knock out all of Japan's major industrial cities during the next ten nights."⁶⁹ He didn't realize that objective, but within one week he had

⁶⁵ Ishikawa Kôyô, *Tôkyô Daikûshû No Zenkiroku*, 98-99.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 491.

⁶⁷ Tôkyô-to. *Tosei no jûnenshi*, 1955, 136.

⁶⁸ Kiyosawa Kiyoshi, *A Diary of Darkness*, 350.

⁶⁹ Curtis E. LeMay, with MacKinlay Kantor, *Mission with Lemay: My Story* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 353. Postwar criticism of the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki compelled LeMay to offer his opinion: "But to worry about the morality of what we were doing – Nuts. A soldier has to fight. We fought. . . . There's nothing new about the massacre of civilian populations. In ancient times, when an army laid

destroyed Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe. Then in April and May, the B-29s returned to Tokyo to deliver four massive assaults. Air raids on April 14-15 destroyed the Keihin industrial belt in southern Tokyo and Kanagawa Prefecture, and then two raids back to back on May 24 and 25 destroyed almost 17 square miles of capital, including its administrative center and much of its residential suburbs. Altogether, while Tokyo was subjected to over 120 air raids, six raids alone destroyed 56.3 square miles, a little over half of the city.⁷⁰ Collectively, the raids destroyed 45 percent of all factories, over half of Tokyo's 511 hospitals and almost 75 percent of its clinics.⁷¹ Each large-scale raid sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from the city. By early June 1945, Tokyo had lost 62 percent of its February 1944 population of over 6.6 million residents.⁷²

siege to a city, everybody was in the fight. . . . Nothing new about death, nothing new about deaths caused militarily. We scorched and boiled and baked to death more people in Tokyo on that night of March 9-10 than went up in vapor at Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined." LeMay, *Mission with Lemay: My Story*, 383-84, 87.

⁷⁰ Kerr, *Flames over Tokyo*, 253.

⁷¹ The raids destroyed half of all machinery plants (*kinzoku kôgyô*), 25 percent of food production industry, and 57 percent of all printing facilities. Tôkyô-to, *Tôkyôto Sensai Shi*, 393-94. Tôkyô-to, *Tosei no Jûnenshi*, 1955, 130.

⁷² Forty-five percent of Tokyo's population in 1935 had come from rural prefectures, which explains in part the ability of so many to leave the capital so quickly and without much assistance from the government. Irene B. Tauber, *The Population of Japan* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1958), 161.

AIR RAID DAMAGE TO TOKYO'S WARD AREA

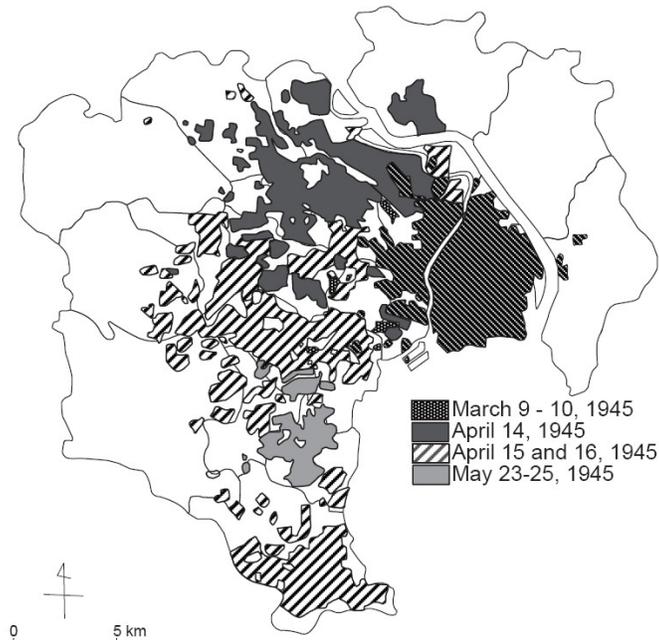


Figure 4. Air raid damage to Tokyo, showing destruction caused by major raids.

Let us return to science fiction and military novel writer Unno Jûza, who did not heed the admonishment to refrain from writing fictional accounts about air raids on the capital. His 1942 *Bôkû Toshi Mirai Ki* (A future record of the air defense city), the only air defense story to be published during the Pacific War, proves to be his darkest vision of Tokyo under attack.⁷³ The reader accompanies a radio announcer who time travels twenty years into the future to see how Tokyo has dealt with the question of air defense. By now, Unno has given up on the idea of Tokyo as a city that can be protected, and can only imagine a dystopian future in which the city has disappeared from the face of the earth.

The capital still exists, though. In order to escape the danger of air raids in what has become a perpetual war with the United States, Tokyo and its six million inhabitants have been

⁷³ The story first appeared in a March 1942 published collection of Unno's works titled *Angô Onban Jiken*, Taito Shobô, and is republished in Nagayama Yasuo, ed., *Unno Jûza Sensô Shôsetsu Kessaku Shû* (Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 2004), 216-31.

relocated underground. The area where the city once stood has been reclaimed by nature and now looks like the Musashino plain of hundreds of years ago. Everyone's lives now center on a subterranean defense in which technological developments allow them to filter the aboveground air of its poison in order to keep Tokyoites alive. Everybody wears the same clothing, is assigned a war-related task, and can go to an Asakusa-like area for entertainment, which is completely controlled by the government.

Japan has been put on the defensive to the point where it destroys Tokyo in order to save it. Moreover, the country is forced to get rid of its national symbol, Mount Fuji – done through many people shoveling away at it until it disappears – to deprive the American bombers of the marker pointing them in the direction of the capital. Even underground, however, they are not safe. Unmanned enemy planes fly overhead, dropping not just poison gas but bombs that can pierce the earth. While the time traveler expresses relief that Tokyoites have been able to formulate an adequate air defense, the reader is left with the overwhelming impression that the city has been permanently defined by the enemy.⁷⁴

Unno envisioned a perennial apocalyptic cityscape in which nature reclaims a main site of Japanese modernity and the enemy forces people to rebuild their homes not from the ground up but down into the ground. This fantastic imagining of Tokyo began to take actual shape. For hundreds of thousands of people remaining in Tokyo following the devastating air raids between March and May 1945, housing in caves, underground shelters, and makeshift housing units

⁷⁴ In early August 1945, despondent over Japan's inevitable defeat and possibly concerned about being held responsible for his support of the war (in addition to his war stories, Unno regularly gave speeches to members of the military and served as president of a writers' group that was connected with the Imperial Navy), Unno Jûza attempted to obtain potassium cyanide from a friend in order to kill himself and his family. While he went so far as to write a will, he couldn't bring himself to take his life. Just a week after Japan's surrender though, Unno ceased to exist: "Unno Jûza is dead," he wrote in his diary on August 23, 1945. "He cannot pick up a pen. He cannot speak. Ashamed and without excuse." From that day onward, he gave up his long held pen name and became Oka Kyûjûrô/Okajûrô. Unno Jûza, "Kôfuku Nikki," in *Unno Jûza Zenshû, Bekkan 2: Nikki, Shokan, Zassan: Jûhachiji No Ongakuyoku*, ed. Komatsu Sakyô and Kida Jun'ichirô (San'ichi Shobô, 1993).

became their only option. By May 1945, 69,000 families among 732,000 households lived in air raid shelters. A month later, 235,400 people, out of the two and a half million still in the capital, lived in some form of air raid shelter.⁷⁵

The promotion of underground housing, in fact, became official government policy. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government began to remove structures from the built-up areas around hills and plateaus in order to construct “living shelters” underground and in caves, and on June 19, 1945, the central government announced a summary outlining its emergency housing policy for its cities (*kinkyū jūtaku taisaku yōkō*), which proposed three different sizes of underground shelters. For those areas such as Tokyo’s eastern wards that had a high water table that prevented the building of underground structures, the plan allowed for above ground units to be combined with a shallow air raid shelter. Just two days later, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department released its *Guide to Life in Shelters (Gōsha Seikatsu Shishin)* that detailed specific underground housing designs as well as suggestions about how to build a shelter and adjust to living underground. The guide suggested that people find an area with dry soil, ensure that the floor was raised at least thirty-three centimeters from the ground, and only use the shelter for sleeping. The guide also treated the subjects of shelter humidity and toilet facilities, and the stressed the importance of cooking outside.⁷⁶

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government also began to make plans to build large, partially underground public structures that held common cooking areas, washing facilities, bathrooms, cafeterias, medical clinics, and air raid shelters.⁷⁷ This new experience of and approach to Tokyo, in which people out of fear for their lives live underneath a devastated landscape, would

⁷⁵ SNNZ 7:96-97.

⁷⁶ SNNZ 7:95-97.

⁷⁷ Koshizawa Akira, *Tōkyō No Toshi Keikaku*, 189-90. SNNZ 7:62.

have been unimaginable to most Tokyoites up until the moment the air raids began. Just a few years beforehand, Tokyo's administrators had been attempting to create an internationally renowned capital. They now found themselves, in the summer of 1945, offering courses on "How to eat weeds" and publishing books such as *Gôsha no Tsukurikata (How to Build Shelter Housing)*.⁷⁸

Following the government's acceptance of the terms of surrender established in the Potsdam Declaration, the plans to move Tokyo underground could be abandoned. In early September of 1945, 462 B-29s, the largest amassing of the bombers to date, made another trip to Tokyo. Flying over the USS Missouri stationed in Tokyo Bay while representatives of the Japanese government signed the instruments of surrender, the roaring, low-flying planes served as a reminder of the men and machines that had brought such magnificent destruction to the capital and the rest of urban Japan.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ 22 July 1945 *Kyôdô Shimbun*; SNNZ 7:102.

⁷⁹ LeMay, *Mission with Lemay: My Story*, 390.

Forgetful Tokyo

Robert Pogue Harrison writes that “humans bury not simply to achieve closure and effect a separation from the dead but also and above all to humanize the ground on which they build their worlds and found their histories.”¹ How were the Tokyo firebombing victims buried and remembered, and whether or not Tokyo’s ground as a social space has been humanized in the process? In early 1944, when the Japanese government became aware that air raids on Tokyo and other cities were certain if the war continued, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government began to prepare for post-raid casualties. In May 1944, the governor-general asked the chief of Tokyo’s Park Division, Inoshita Kiyoshi, to prepare a set of procedures for dealing with the dead following an air raid. Inoshita’s “Outline for Managing Corpses” (*Shitai Shori Keikaku no Gaiyô*), detailed the various measures that relevant city and ward agencies needed to take to deal with fatalities. The procedures included identification of the dead, family notification, autopsies, cremation, and storage of belongings. All unidentifiable and unclaimed bodies, according to the report, would be cremated and placed in a metropolitan charnel house. ²

Inoshita estimated that ten thousand civilian deaths over a one-year period would occur in Tokyo once the air raids began. He based the estimate on a military officer’s information that twenty thousand had Berliners perished in air raids on Germany’s capital throughout the war, which raises the question as to why Inoshita did not take into account the difference between Tokyo and Berlin’s material composition. He secured around ten thousand caskets and designated the facilities that would cremate the bodies. Inoshita’s estimates conformed to reality during the first few months after the raids on the capital started. The few dozen raids on Tokyo between late November 1944 and early March killed around 2,300 Tokyoites died resulted from that took place between. In each instance, the city easily carried out the established procedures for dealing with the dead.³

The March 9-10 raid, though, with preliminary fatality estimates exceeding 70,000 people, made a mockery of Inoshita’s casualty projections. The magnitude of death, the complete destruction of an entire region of the city, and widespread chaos absolved the government of its

¹ Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), xi.

² Reprinted in Tôkyô Daikûshû Sensaishi Henshû Inkaï, ed., *Tôkyô Daikûshû Sensaishi, Volume 5* (Tôkyô Daikûshû o Kiroku Suru Kai, 1973-75), 595.

³ Tôkyô-to Irei Kyôkai, *Sensai Ôshisha Kaisô Jigyô Shimatsuki* (Tôkyô-to Irei Kyôkai Hen, 1985), 36-37.

obligations to the corpses, precluding almost all possibility of dealing with body identification, notification of next-of-kin, autopsies, caskets, and cremations. The central government and local authorities simply buried the bodies as quickly as possible. A few factors motivated the urgency that precluded dealing with the bodies in the manner established by Inoshita. Another devastating firebombing raid could happen at any moment. The sight of a corpse-littered Tokyo would further dent the people's resolve to endure a hopeless situation. Heat had ravaged many of the corpses to the point where all identifiable characteristics, together with clothing and documentation, had vanished. Finally, Tokyo simply did not have enough fuel to cremate the bodies.

Instead, city employees, military personnel, temporarily released prisoners, and young boys quickly gathered the majority of bodies for burial in mass graves. Authorities retrieved from the corpses all valuables (many people had fled with their precious jewelry and life savings), which became the property of Tokyo and the central government. After a period of a few days in which people had an opportunity to examine the bodies as they sought missing family members, the corpses, some in groups of two to three thousand, were buried in city parks, school grounds, temple and shrine precincts, and on military and private property.⁴

Early postwar uncertainties, lack of finances, and the demands made by the military occupation all conspired to keep the bodies in their temporary graves longer than anyone expected. The city, well aware of the Herculean task of exhuming over one hundred thousand corpses and finding a permanent resting place for them, opted to let matters lie for months. As a result, some of the city's parks used as burial sites began to take on the appearance of cemeteries. Bereaved relatives independently set up memorial tablets and elaborate private gravestones at park locations that they suspected held relatives. Priests conducted unauthorized memorial services at the parks. Simultaneously, people reported the appearance of ghosts of the air raid victims near the mass graves. Even police assigned to the Ueno Park claimed to see the ghosts, causing them to refuse to patrol the area.⁵

⁴ Tôkyô Daikûshû Sensaishi Henshû Iinkai, ed., *Tôkyô Daikûshû Sensaishi, Volume 5*, 576-79, Tôkyô-to Irei Kyôkai, *Sensai Ôshisha Kaisô Jigyô Shimatsuki*.

⁵ Yamamoto Tadahito, "'Tôkyôto Ireidô' No Genzai," *Rekishi Hyôron*, no. 616 (2001).

Following Vico's explanation that burying the deceased in one of humanity's "universal institutions," it is no surprise that bereaved wanted a permanent resting place for their dead.⁶ Their regular appeals, together with those of property owners whose land had been used for makeshift gravesites, moved Tokyo to establish a semi-governmental body called the Tokyo Memorial Association (*Tôkyôto Irei Kyôkai*) in August of 1946. Inoshita Kiyoshi, retired from the Planning Department's Park Division, became the association's first director. Inoshita's proposal for dealing with the bodies – that a metropolitan charnel house for the air raid victims be constructed on city-owned land that already hosted another charnel house for Tokyo's military dead – drew immediate opposition. In 1937, the Imperial Army had donated the city of Tokyo a portion of land in Koishikawa Ward, immediately north of the Kôrakuen gardens, on which an industrial artillery school had been located, in order for the city to build a memorial tower (*chûreitô*) to honor Tokyoites killed in battle. While the building of the tower was delayed, in 1941, the city constructed a charnel house on the site that by the end of the war held the cremated remains of over five thousand soldiers.

The Tokyo Association of Bereaved Families (*Tôkyôto Senbotsusha Izokukai*), representing relatives of Tokyo's military war dead, adamantly opposed Inoshita's plan on the grounds that a distinction needed to be maintained between the civilian and military dead.⁷ After two years of unsuccessful attempts to negotiate the issue, Inoshita met on several occasions throughout 1948 with the person invested with the authority to make a decision, lieutenant commander William Bunce, chief of the Religions Division in the Civil Information and Education Section of the Occupation's General Headquarters. Bunce, while sympathizing with the need to honor those killed in the air raids, deemed the proposed site inappropriate due to its current use as a memorial space dedicated to deceased military personnel. He directed that Tokyo instead use another metropolitan charnel house, Earthquake Memorial Hall (*Shinsai Kinendô*), as the location in which to store the remains of air raid victims.⁸

⁶ Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, 21.

⁷ Yamamoto Tadahito, "'Tôkyôto Ireidô' No Genzai."

⁸ Maejima Yasuhiko, *Inoshita Kiyoshi Sensei Gyôsekiroku*, quoted in *Ibid.*: 47. William Bunce also wrote the "Shinto directive," which banned the practice of State-sponsored Shinto. For information on him and his role in the issue of religions in occupied Japan, see Takemae Eiji, "Religious Reform under the Occupation of Japan: Interview with Dr. W. K. Bunce by Prof. E. Takemae," *The Journal of Tokyo Keizai University*, no. 150 (1987). In the course of my research, I did not come across any materials indicating how relatives of the firebombing victims and other interested parties responded to Bunce's decision. It is also important to note that, while Bunce had the

It is important to consider the origins of Earthquake Memorial Hall given that it subsequently played a central role in how the Tokyo air raids have been memorialized. During the Great Kanto Earthquake and Fire of September 1, 1923, one and a half million Tokyoites evacuated to the city's public parks and plazas.⁹ Many residents of the densely populated, industrial Honjo Ward sought refuge at a former army-clothing depot (*rikugun hifukujō atochi*), which was being converted into a municipal park at the time. Haven turned into horror, though, as a firestorm swept upon them from all sides. Among the ninety thousand people in Tokyo killed by fires that consumed much of the city that day, up to forty-four thousand died at this site alone. The extreme temperatures were such the sex of the victims could be determined for just five thousand bodies.¹⁰

Given the tragic nature of the immense loss of life that occurred here, municipal authorities abandoned their original plans for a sports-oriented layout for the park. They instead decided to turn the space into a memorial site, the central feature of which would be a charnel house to holding the cremated remains of Tokyo's 58,000 unidentified and unclaimed victims of the fires (see Figure 5).¹¹ On September 1, 1930 – the seventh anniversary of the catastrophe and the day the city celebrated its reconstruction – Tokyoites poured into Yokoami Park, site of the newly built Earthquake Memorial Hall, to inaugurate the structure and the park. Even Emperor Hirohito made an official visit to the memorial as one of the six stops he made during his tour of the city in March 1930. From that year forward, an annual memorial service has been held at the park on the anniversary of the earthquake. In addition to Earthquake Memorial Hall, by far the most prominent feature in the two-hectare park (see Figure 6), the space became the site of

authority to order where to inter the bodies, there is certainly a chance that the idea to use the charnel house attached to Earthquake Memorial Hall came from Inoshita himself or from someone else involved in the matter. A potential avenue of research, then, would be to investigate the particulars of this situation, together with the more general question of how the Occupation dealt with issues related to the large scale civilian deaths caused by the United States' firebombing campaign.

⁹ Nihon Kōen Hyakunen Shi Kankōkai, *Nihon Kōen Hyakunen Shi, Sōron, Kakuron* (1973), 188.

¹⁰ Official estimates of those killed at the former army clothing depot vary from 32,000 to 44,000 people. Yoshihara Kenichirō and Ōhama Tetsuya, *Edo Tōkyō Nenpyō*. Yamamoto, S. Sumidaku no rekishi (Tokyo, Tokyo ni furusato o tsukurukai, 1978).

¹¹ The Tokyo Earthquake Memorial Project Association (Tōkyō Shinsai Kinen Jigyō Kyōkai), headed by architect Itō Chūta, collected donations and fielded design submissions for the structure. In the end, the city chose Itō's own design. Itō Chūta, one of Japan's first architectural historians, also designed the post-earthquake Tsukiji Honganji temple.

numerous memorials and Reconstruction Commemoration Hall (*Fukkô Kinenkan*), which housed exhibitions related to the disaster and the city's reconstruction.¹²

Via these structures, monuments, and annual memorial services, Yokoami Park became the commemorative and ritual space at which the city remembered the Great Kanto Earthquake and memorialized those killed in it. It is important to note, though, that authorities were selective about who would be publicly remembered. The thousands of Koreans murdered by mobs and the labor activists and anarchists murdered by Tokyo police in the chaotic aftermath of the earthquake were not included, and the Koreans would have to wait until 1975 to have a memorial dedicated to their memory added in Yokoami Park. From 1930 onward, Tokyoites invested the space with a sacredness that limited most activities in it to those that remembered the catastrophe and its victims. This exclusive identification of the site is evidenced by the fact that people did not consider Yokoami Park, one of the few open spaces in the area, a potential emergency evacuation site if the community should once again have to escape a fire. The “mistake” of taking shelter there, local residents believed, should not be repeated. Tragically, the park, avoided by all but a handful of nearby residents attempting to flee the fires of March 10, 1945 was one of the few areas in the region left unscathed.

In 1948, after William Bunce decided that the remains of the firebombing victims should be stored in Earthquake Memorial Hall, the disagreeable task of locating and exhuming the bodies began. Between 1948 and 1950, the Tokyo Metropolitan Park Division, operating with funds supplied by the national government, exhumed over one hundred thousand bodies from 144 locations.¹³

¹² Other memorials included a bell (*chôreijô*) and bell tower (*shôrô*) donated by China; a “Sorrowful Group” bronze statue (*kanashimi no gunzô shinsai sônan jidô chôkon*) remembering the children who died in the fires; and stone monuments commemorating people who died in the vicinity.

¹³ Tôkyô-to Irei Kyôkai, *Sensai Ôshisha Kaisô Jigyô Shimatsuki*.



Figure 5. Tokyo Earthquake Memorial Hall upon its completion in 1930 (source : *Hifukujôato: Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai jigyo hôkoku, Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai, 1932*).

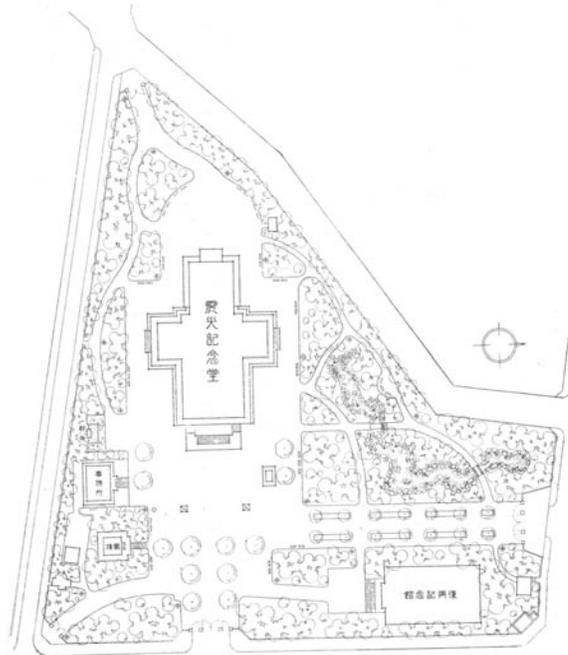


Figure 6. 1931 drawing of Yokoami Park, showing Earthquake Memorial Hall dominating the center and Reconstruction Commemoration Hall on the lower right. Source: *Hifukujôato: Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai jigyo hôkoku, Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai, 1932, 108*.

A number of factors complicated the exhumation process. The passing of over three years and the fact that most of the bodies had been buried in an area of Tokyo that is no higher than sea level worked together to allow the earth to begin its duty of reabsorbing the bodies back into itself. As expressed by park managers recalling the experience, many of the corpses had decomposed to the extent that they looked and handled like corned beef. Accordingly, the exhumations were staggered out over three consecutive winter seasons between 1948 and 1950 so the cold weather would prevent further decomposition, as well as somewhat stifle the attendant odor that sank into workers' clothes and skin, stubbornly refusing to leave. Even during the winter months the bodies were very difficult to manage, physically and psychologically. While extra rations of the alcoholic drink *shôchû* and the provision of incense helped them perform the grueling job – which usually took place at night so as not to draw too much attention – workers heatedly complained that there should be a special allowance for the task.¹⁴

In many cases the city had a difficult time locating the corpses. While Tokyo residents and city officials were quite aware about the mass graves in the city's parks, other gravesites literally lost their prominence. Given that the park division's method of marking burial sites containing individuals and small groups of people was via rounded dirt mounds, the passage of months and then years leveled the ground, resulting in instances in which homeless Tokyoites constructed makeshift housing over the graves. As a result, a number of bodies were not exhumed until they were inadvertently discovered, some as late as the 1970s.¹⁵

Relatives claimed seven thousand of the exhumed bodies that authorities managed to identify. The city, removing their gold teeth and fillings removed, cremated the rest of the corpses. 450 large porcelain urns, similar to the urns which held the remains of the victims of the 1923 disaster, each accommodated a few hundred sets of remains. Officials placed the urns

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Asahi Shimbum*, 5 March 1975, “30 nen buri haha no ikotsu.”

containing the ashes of 105,400 air raid victims alongside those holding the remains of people killed in 1923 in an annex at the rear of Earthquake Memorial Hall.¹⁶

On September 1, 1951, the anniversary of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, the Tokyo Memorial Association sponsored the first Buddhist memorial service for the victims of both the 1923 and the 1945 disasters at Earthquake Memorial Hall, officially renamed Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall (*Tôkyô-to Ireidô*). Since then, the Tokyo Memorial Association has hosted biannual Buddhist memorial services, held on March 10 and September 1, in memory of both groups. On these two days, the door leading to the charnel house is opened in order for people to glimpse the urns while offering offer prayers and incense to the deceased (see Figure 7 and Figure 8). It is important to note that Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall officially remembers *civilians* killed in the air raids.

¹⁶ Tôkyô-to Irei Kyôkai, *Aa San Gatsu Tôka: Shôwa Taisensai Tôkyô Kûshû No Kiroku*. The city placed the ashes of 3,930 identified yet unclaimed bodies in individual urns for storage in the structure, in case family members should seek to retrieve them. By 1998, just 217 sets of remains had been claimed by family members. *Asahi Shimbun*, 6 March 1998.



Figure 7. 10 March 2004, Yokoami Park. People in line at the entrance of the chanel house portion of Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall, waiting to offer incense and prayers to the victims of the 1923 catastrophe and/or the 1945 catastrophe. Photograph taken by the author.



Figure 8. View of the interior of the chanel house which holds the cremated remains of the victims of the 1923 fires and the civilian victims of the 1945 air raids.

Photograph taken in 2004 by the author.

Remembering the Tokyo Air Raids

Historian John Dower has written about how, due largely to censorship during the American occupation of Japan, memories of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were “reconstructed after an abnormal interlude of silence.”¹⁷ In similar fashion and for a number of important reasons, for almost a quarter century little public discussion or practices of remembrance of the Tokyo air raids occurred. This period of silence interestingly coincides with the remembering of the enormous civilian losses suffered during the Battle of Okinawa.¹⁸

In *On the Natural History of Destruction*, William Sebald explains why Germans did not publicly remember and question the destruction of their cities in World War II. A defeated nation, he wrote, “could hardly call on the victorious power to explain the military and political logic that dictated the destruction of the German cities. Quite a number of those affected by the air raids...regarded the great firestorms as a just punishment, even as act of retribution on the part of a higher power with which there could be no dispute.”¹⁹ Japan appears to have taken a different path of remembering, quickly seizing upon the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to claim a position of unique suffering that simultaneously allowed a general forgetting of the suffering it had caused throughout Asia.²⁰ One unexamined aspect of this selective memory is that any sustained attention given to the firebombing of urban Japan would have threatened the positioning of Japan as victim, as it had embraced the aerial bombing of many Chinese cities. Social geography certainly played a role in public forgetting that the Tokyo air raids occurred, as the human devastation wrought by the March 1945 firebombing was confined to a working class and artisan section of the city. Surely if similar levels of destruction to life had occurred in the Yamanote, middle-class district of the city, reflections would have soon flowed from more than a few pens of writers and other intellectuals.

There was not complete silence of course, and the public inscribing of Tokyo air raid memories did take place. In that quarter-century interim that I mentioned, public memory as

¹⁷ John Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁸ According to Ishihara Masaie, a quarter century passed before Okinawans began to publicly remember their own catastrophic experience of the war. Masaie Ishihara, "Memories of War and Okinawa," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, ed. T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ W.G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (New York: Random House, 2003), 12.

²⁰ Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory.", Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

related to the fire bombings and the incredible toll they exacted, in addition to the ritual practices of the biannual Buddhist services at Yokoami Park, happened at the scale of the neighborhood scale via the establishment of dozens of modest, icons and tablets. They usually took the form of stone images of the divinity Jizô, meant to ease the suffering of the children who died in the fires, bronze images of Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, and stone memorial tablets (*ireihi*). Individuals, neighborhood groups, and temples established and maintained these memorials in dozens of locations throughout the wards devastated by the March 9-10, 1945 air raid. They are usually found at or near areas where a large number of people perished, such as the corners of intersections, school and park grounds, and near bridges spanning the Sumida River or one of the many canals in the area.

In effect, residents maintained Tokyo air raid memories at the scale of the neighborhood. For almost a quarter century, however, public actions related to remembering the raids did not break beyond that scale to expand to that of the city and nation. There was no citywide initiative or movement taken by individuals, citizen's groups, or metropolitan authorities to memorialize the raids. The silence also permeated to written accounts. With the notable exception of Sakaguchi Ango's popular essay *Darakuron (On Decadence)* and his short stories such as *Hakuchi (Idiocy)*, no one wrote about the experience of the Tokyo air raids and their aftermath in any detail; nothing reached a significant audience during the early postwar period. This is due in part to the fact that, similar to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Occupation authorities prohibited published writings about the Tokyo air raids. In remarkable contrast to the experience of those two cities, however, even after the end of the Occupation, hardly anyone wrote about the Tokyo air raids, and none of the few pieces written generated any widespread or sustained interest.²¹

²¹ In addition to a handful of personal accounts published either privately or by a small press, two publications released in 1953 are the most noteworthy. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government's Tôkyô-to, *Tôkyôto Sensai Shi*. The other publication, Takeuchi Toshizô, *Tôkyô Daikûshû Hiroku Shashinshu* (Ondorisha, 1953). released soon after the Occupation came to a close, made available for the first time photographs of the devastation, to the city and to the body, wrought by the air raids. The book featured the invaluable, searing images captured by police photographer Ichikawa Kôyô, one of the few people to visually record the devastation and disturbing scenes of death in the immediate aftermath of the raids. While Ichikawa's photographs eventually became a fundamental part of the record on the Tokyo air raids (similar in certain respects to the reception of Yamahata Yosuke's photographs of Nagasaki following the atomic bombing of that city), at the time of their original publication, little public discussion ensued from them. As recounted by Ishikawa, occupation authorities were unsuccessful in their

In the late 1960s, a few key events and actions for particular individuals initiated a process of a public recovery of memories of the raids. The protest movement in Japan against the United States' war in Vietnam – and the Japanese government's support for the war – was at its height; regular marches and large demonstrations took place throughout Tokyo, and a number of people drew attention to some parallels between Vietnamese suffering caused by napalm fire bombings and their own air raid experiences.²² Political changes at the local level also had a decisive impact on how the city remembered the air raids. Initiating an era of reformist government in the capital, in 1967 Tokyoites elected as Governor Minobe Ryôkichi, a self-described “flexible utopian Socialist” who had campaigned on the promise to improve the social welfare of Tokyo's citizens and preserve “peace and democratic rights.”²³

While the above situations coalesced to allow for the recuperation of memories about the Tokyo air raids, we may locate individuals – air raid survivors, peace activists, and intellectuals – who played a central role in that recovery. Writer Saotome Katsumoto was a combination of all three. At the time of the Great Tokyo Air Raid, Saotome, then twelve years old, lived with his family in Mukôjima ward (now a part of Sumida ward) and worked in a factory that produced hand grenade parts. A self-described Romanticist who had no formal education beyond primary school, Saotome's experiences of the raid embedded within him a deep pacifism that informed the course of his life and career. Although he had written about his own experiences in the air raids, a few experiences that he had in the late 1960s compelled him to take a more active approach in ensuring that Tokyo did not forget what had happened to the city in 1945.

Saotome received a visit in 1967 from journalist and magazine editor Matsuura Sôzô, and who had begun to research the connection between Occupation censorship and the general forgetting of the Tokyo air raids. The two discussed the possibility of collaborating on a large

attempts to confiscate these photographs and their negatives. For his explanation of these events, as well as his experiences in photographing the air raids and their aftermath, see Ishikawa Kôyô, *Tôkyô Daikûshû No Zenkiroku* (Iwanami Shoten, 1992).

²² For a thorough treatment of Japan in relation to the Vietnam War, see Thomas R.H. Havens, *Fire across the Sea: The Vietnam War and Japan, 1965-1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

²³ For a description of Tokyo Governor Minobe Ryôkichi's policies, see Alan G. Rix, "Political Change in Tokyo and the 1973 Metropolitan Assembly Elections," *Pacific Affairs* 47, no. 1 (1974).

project, after which Saotome began to write his own book about the air raids and also initiate a public dialogue about people's experiences of the Tokyo fire bombings.²⁴

On March 10, 1970, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Great Tokyo Air Raid, the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan's largest daily newspapers, led off its *Koe (Voices)* Letters to the Editor section with a letter from Saotome. While it isn't surprising if the date carries no meaning for most people, he states, it is one that he can never forget. He describes the harrowing experience of escaping the bombs raining around him, and closes with an appeal: "Those of us who have experienced the raids, at least on this day, just for one day, shouldn't we speak of the actual conditions of war? And shouldn't we also think about the bombs indiscriminately falling on Vietnam?"²⁵

Up until that moment, the Tokyo air raids had received negligible treatment by the media. Even the *Asahi Shimbun*, considered the most liberal of the major newspapers, had featured but a few articles – mostly in reference to the memorial service at Yokoami Park, and carried only in its Tokyo edition – related to air raids throughout the entirety of the postwar period.²⁶ Answering Saotome's plea, many readers sent to the *Asahi Shimbun* written accounts of their experiences. In order to accommodate the responses, the Tokyo edition of the newspaper featured a special daily column called *Tokyo Hibaku Ki*, or "A Chronicle of Tokyo's Bombings" containing the recollections of air raid survivors. The editors' decision to run the personal accounts was certainly connected to the quarter-century anniversary of the war's end, and suggests an evolution in how people reflected on the suffering experienced in the war. The very title, *Tokyo Hibaku Ki*, used for the special series is instructive in this regard. The term *hibaku*, which means "damage by bombing," usually had been reserved to refer to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The column ran from the beginning of July through the middle of August 1970, each day featuring a brief first-person account of the air raids. The testimonies are humble in comparison to the excited coverage given to Tokyo's high school baseball teams vying with one another for

²⁴ Matsuura is known in part for his path breaking book *Senryōka no genron danatsu (Press Censorship Under the Occupation)*. An account of the first meeting between Matsuura and Saotome, in addition to the creation of their group, may be found in Saotome Saotome Kastumoto, *Heiwa O Ikiru: Watashi No Shiten, Tōkyō Daikūshū* (Sōdo Bunka, 1982).

²⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, 10 March 1970.

²⁶ Matsuura Sōzō, "Kakarezaru Tōkyō Daikūshū," *Bungei Shunjū* (1968).

the privilege of representing the metropolis at the nationwide Kôshien tournament, and almost escape attention under photos of go-go dancers featured at department store rooftop beer gardens. Yet, over a forty-day period the accounts appeared, each sharing one telling moment of the horror experienced during the air raids.

While the *Asahi Shimbun* featured the testimonies, Saotome seized upon the momentum generated by the public discussion and brought together a dozen intellectuals and air raid survivors to form the Society for Recording the Tokyo Air Raids (*Tôkyô Kûshû o Kiroku Suru Kai*).²⁷ In a letter to Governor Minobe Ryôkichi, the group stated that while Tokyo's expressways and skyscrapers continued to increase in number, reminders of the raids that destroyed the city and killed so many people were few. In contrast to the numerous reports, recollections, and surveys regarding the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, argued the group, little effort had been made by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government or any organization to collect, publish, and preserve official accounts, survivors' testimonies, and physical artifacts related to the Tokyo air raids. With the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's financial backing, the group proposed a project to gather the above materials publish a comprehensive account of the raids.²⁸

Representatives of the group met with Governor Minobe on August 5, 1970, and found a very sympathetic ear. After recounting his own experiences of the firebombing of Hachiôji City in western Tokyo, Minobe offered the city's financial support for the proposal.²⁹ This commitment, coming on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and the end of the war, represents the first time that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government assumed a commitment to support an extensive recording of the history of the air raids. And importantly, it illustrates the considerable discretionary power that Tokyo's governor exercises, and how that authority can translate particular convictions and visions into reality and play a fundamental role in how the city's past is represented.

²⁷ The group included Matsuura Sôzô, photographer Ishikawa Kôyô, air raid survivor Hashimoto Yoshiko, writer Arima Yorichika, poet Fukao Sumako, and critic Kabuto Kôji.

²⁸ Letter reprinted in Saotome Kastumoto, *Heiwa O Ikiru: Watashi No Shiten, Tôkyô Daikûshû*, 74. The group deemed the 1953 Tôkyôto Sensai Shi insufficient for two reasons. Much of the information included within it contradicted other sources, and it did not contain any written accounts about and by the people who experienced the air raids.

²⁹ *Asahi Shimbun*, 6 August 1970.

Following the 1971 publication of Saotome's bestselling *Tôkyô Daikûshû* (*The Great Tokyo Air Raid*), between 1973 and 1974 the Society for Recording the Tokyo Air Raids published its five-volume *Tôkyô Daikûshû Sensai Shi* (*Record of the Great Tokyo Air Raids and War Damages*).³⁰ While no one account can be authoritative, the *Record* covers major ground in providing detailed personal accounts, as well as government and media documentation, of the air raids and related matters.³¹ Both of the publications played a significant role in recovering air raid memories and compelling further action.

Other forms of remembrance in the early 1970s included a number of testimonial practices, many taking place in the areas of Tokyo where the loss of life had been the greatest. Teachers belonging to the Kôtô ward branch of the Tokyo Teachers' Union, after a survey revealed that the ward's elementary students had a greater awareness of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima than the complete destruction of their own neighborhoods, had school children ask their parents or other relatives to recount the experience of the air raids.³² Survivors shared their experiences at public meeting hall events. A theater troupe, the *Shitamachi Gekidan Geijutsu Gekijô*, performed a play based on the raids at a number of venues.

People also organized belated primary school graduations: many children returned to Tokyo from their countryside evacuation sites on March 9, 1945 in order to attend graduation ceremonies; just hours after being reunited with their families, the air raids began. A major department store agreed to host the first air raid exhibit, featuring related artifacts and photographs, as well as talks by Matsuura, Saotome, and others. A few dozen people swam the span of the Sumida River, associated by most Tokyoites with firework festivals, to remind the

³⁰ Stylistically similar to John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, Saotome's *Tôkyô Daikûshû* (published by Iwanami Shoten Press) featured narrative accounts of a handful of individual's experiences before, during, and after the raids, as well as a general description of the event. The book became an immediate best seller, and played a role in generating nationwide interest in the recording of individuals, groups, and city's experiences and losses from air raids. It was also during the early 1970s that a large number of publications and memoirs about the Tokyo air raids began to appear.

³¹ The first two volumes primarily consist of written testimony, grouped geographically according to "town" and ward, of 859 survivors; the first volume focuses on the 10 March 1945 air raid, and the second volume on the other one hundred twenty raids directed against Tokyo during the war. The remaining volumes include related reports of Japanese government agencies and American military agencies; newspapers and magazines articles, as well as radio announcements, from both during and after the war; and excerpts from diaries and published writings of literary figures and critics. The collection concludes with official documents related to the everyday lives of Tokyo's residents during the war, including information inscribed on the *tonarigumi kairanban*, the official notices that were circulated among residences, and reports on such issues as ration controls, housing regulations, evacuation procedures.

³² SOURCE

city of another feature of the river: as the site in which the lives of ten thousand people were extinguished by drowning, hypothermia, or fire.³³

The Tokyo Peace Museum

The Society for Recording the Tokyo Air Raids served as a catalyst and model for the creation of similar groups throughout Japan. By 1971 citizen's groups in forty cities founded similar associations in order to write the histories of their own city's air raids.³⁴ In August of that year, the first meeting of the nationwide Society for Recording Air Raids and War Damages (*Kûshû, Sensai o Kiroku Suru Kai Zenkoku Renkakukai*) took place in Tokyo. At the group's third annual meeting in 1973, the association agreed to work toward building air raid and war damage resource centers in each of their respective cities. The group wanted to create both a location for archival storage of collected documents and a space featuring permanent exhibits conveying the experience of the raids and civilian life during the war.

In Tokyo, members of Society for Recording the Tokyo Air Raids established the Society to Build an Air Raid and War Damage Memorial (*Kûshû Sensai Kinenkan o Tsukuru Kai*) and again solicited the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's support to build both a center to exhibit air-raid related materials and a monument dedicated to those killed in the fire bombings.³⁵ While Governor Minobe favored the proposal, Tokyo's fiscal crisis at the time prevented him from committing the money to secure a site and build the structure. He did, however, provide the group funds for materials acquisition, and promised to commit Tokyo to the construction of the facility once the city's financial situation improved.³⁶

A decade of strong local government support ended with Suzuki Shun'ichi's election as governor in 1979. While running for the post, Suzuki voiced his enthusiasm for what some now called the Tokyo Metropolitan Peace Memorial Museum (*Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan*, and below

³³ *Asahi Shimbun*, sources

³⁴ Saitô Hideo, "Kûshû, Sensai Kiroku Undô No 10 Nen," *Rekishigaku Kenkyû*, no. 483 (1980). As a result, the 1970s witnessed the publication of dozens of books chronicling individual instances in the destruction of urban Japan. The great majority of these books were local publications, hence difficult for people in other areas to access. In 1978, Matsuura Sôzô, Saotome Katsumoto, and Imai Seiichi, working with the local air raid recording societies, began a two-year project to write a region specific history of the air raids, which culminated in the ten-volume Saotome Katsumoto Matsuura Sôzô, and Imai Seiichi, ed., *Nihon No Kûshû* (Sanseido, 1980). For an explanation, see Matsuura Sôzô, "Kûshû, Sensai Kinenkan Sôsetsu Undô," *Toshokan Zasshi* 74, no. 8 (1980).

³⁵ *Asahi Shimbun*, 7 May 1974. "Takamaru kûshû, sensai kinenkan tsukuri."

³⁶ The Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education provided the group twenty million yen between 1974 and 1975. Interview with Saotome Katsumoto, 04 April 2003.

referred to as the Tokyo Peace Museum). Tokyo, stated candidate Suzuki, like Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa, all of which had facilities to “convey the horrors of war and to honor those who died,” ought to have its own symbol of peace.³⁷ After assuming office, however, Suzuki proved to be decidedly less enthusiastic than Minobe about committing the city’s resources to the construction of the museum. Throughout the 1980s, the Society to Build an Air Raid and War Damage Memorial persistently lobbied Suzuki to honor his campaign promise, asserting that Tokyo had a responsibility to pass the memory of the air raids on to succeeding generations, and that the associated costs of the project prevented a citizen’s group from accomplishing the task alone.³⁸

When Tokyo’s fiscal situation improved to the point that the city embraced numerous large-scale development projects, Governor Suzuki, reelected to the position three times and serving until 1995, attempted to placate the demands of what he considered the antiwar/peace camp without committing himself to the construction of the Tokyo Peace Museum. This included supporting the establishment of March 10th as Tokyo Peace Day, promulgated by the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly in 1990. Meant to “confirm the significance of peace and to promote peace-consciousness,” the ordinance obliged the city to support annual commemorative events that would include concerts, film festivals, peace parades, and Tokyo air raid-related exhibitions. Throughout the rest of Suzuki’s tenure in office, the city provided generous funding that averaged 250 million yen annually.³⁹

Suzuki also offered to give greater emphasis to the air raids in a “War Damage and Reconstruction Corner” (*Sensai Fukkô Kônâ*) exhibit within the Edo-Tokyo Museum scheduled to open in 1993. Saotome Katsumoto (who himself provided both information and display contents for the exhibit) and others, though, considered it an unacceptable substitution for the proposed Tokyo Peace Museum. The story of the Tokyo air raids shouldn’t only be squeezed into two hundred square meters, or 1/40 of the Edo-Tokyo Museum’s entire display area, reducing it to a short chapter that precedes the reconstruction and early postwar narrative which

³⁷ Suzuki’s letter is reprinted in Futatabi Yurusuna Tôkyô Daikûshû! Hansen Heiwa no Tsudoi Jikkô Iinkai, *Rojiura Heiwa No Nettowaku* (1985).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 58. Matsuura Sôzô, "Kûshû, Sensai Kinenkan Sôsetsu Undô."

³⁹ Reference. Metropolitan financial support for Tokyo Peace Day decreased by half toward the end of Aoshima Yukio’s one term as governor in the late 1990s, and plummeted to just over ten percent of the original amount when Ishihara Shintarô assumed office in 1999. *ibid.*

brings the museum's presentation of a centuries-long history of Edo-Tokyo to a conclusion. The nature and purpose of the proposed Tokyo Peace Museum, according to Saotome, differed completely from the Edo-Tokyo Museum's intent.⁴⁰

Changes in the local political landscape of the early 1990s created an atmosphere in which Suzuki finally became amenable to demands that Tokyo build the peace museum. His fourth and final election to the post in 1991 found the governor's political power significantly weakened. The long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party had opposed his reelection bid, and offered at best lukewarm support. Also, a new coalition that included the Socialist Party now controlled the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly. Facing demands from the coalition that Tokyo build the structure, in January 1992, thirteen years after voicing his support for the idea, Suzuki announced the directive to plan the Tokyo Peace Museum.⁴¹

Stating his intent to complete the design phase of the project by March 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Tokyo Air Raid, Suzuki appointed a sixteen-member advisory committee (composed of Tokyo Metropolitan Government assemblymen and bureau managers, professors and writers, architects and designers) to conduct the initial planning. In addition to designing the structure and investigating potential locations for it, the Tokyo Peace Memorial Museum Planning Discussion Group (*Tokyo-to Heiwa Kinenkan Kihon Kôsô Kondankai*), considered the philosophy of the museum and how that philosophy ought to be conveyed via its permanent exhibits. First convening in September 1992, the group met six times over the course of one year, during which it also visited other peace museums throughout the country, including ones located in Osaka, Hiroshima, and Okinawa.

The group's final report, issued in 1993, stated that the peace museum, "Tokyo's twenty-first century symbol of peace," had two purposes. First, the structure ought to serve as a memorial for Tokyoites killed in the air raids. Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall in Yokoami Park would continue to hold the ashes of the air raid victims and remain the site of the Buddhist

⁴⁰ Interview with Saotome Katsumoto, 13 May 2003. Saotome makes the observation that, similar to a Japanese history textbook which may treat a two-thousand year period in one volume, with the school year often ending before students arrive at the twentieth century, many visitors will all too quickly pass through, if at all, the "War Damage and Reconstruction Corner" at the Edo-Tokyo Museum. For an examination of the Edo-Tokyo Museum, see Sand, "Monumentalizing the Everyday: The Edo-Tokyo Museum."

⁴¹ Suzuki attributed his change of position to the persistence of the "peace-antiwar groups" and a desire to respect the demands of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly. *Asahi Shimbun*, 17 January 1992, 'Heiwa kinenkan' no kensetsu, Tôkyôto ga kettei."

memorial services. The committee, while it could not meet the demands for a new charnel house, stated that the Tokyo Peace Museum ought to have the appearance of a memorial space, and that a monument dedicated to the air raid victims accompany the museum. Secondly, the museum should convey the experience of the Tokyo air raids via permanent exhibitions featuring photographs, artifacts, and narrative accounts.⁴²

The raids, though, should not be the sole focus of museum, according to the report. The museum needed to go beyond the scale of Tokyo and even Japan by including exhibits that discussed the wartime suffering of people in other Asian countries. Similar to the recently opened Osaka International Peace Center (or Peace Osaka) and Ritsumeikan University's Kyoto Museum for World Peace, the committee believed that the Tokyo Peace Museum ought to feature permanent exhibits detailing how "Japan brought suffering to people in Asia and the Pacific."⁴³ Potential exhibits included a focus on Japan's own air raids in China, a discussion of Japan's "wars of invasion" (*shinryaku sensō*), and discussion of the fact that Korean conscripts had also died in the Tokyo air raids. The accompanying monument was also to convey a conciliatory tone by mourning and remembering both the victims of the Tokyo air raids and the "worldwide victims of the war."⁴⁴

The Tokyo Peace Museum, concluded the report, ought to be significant not only in the meaning of its exhibit contents and the accompanying monument. Given the status of Tokyo as a global city, and the fact that the structure would be Tokyo's symbol of peace for the twenty-first century, the museum needed to be a major structure. Similar in scale to Peace Osaka in Osaka Castle Park, Tokyo's peace memorial should be between 4,500 – 5,000 square meters, and have, in addition to the exhibit space which would encompass one half of the structure, a reference library, meeting rooms, a five hundred seat lecture and concert hall, and a museum shop.

The fact that Tokyo did not begin planning until the early 1990s imbued the project within the exceptional and exceptionally short political and cultural climate of the period. The emphasis of the Tokyo Peace Museum as promoted by the discussion committee was largely

⁴² Tōkyō-to, "Tōkyō-to Heiwa Kinenkan Kihon Kōsō Kondankai Hōkoku," (1993). (Report of the committee to establish the general framework of the Tokyo Metropolitan Peace Memorial Museum).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. For a brief description of the Osaka- and Kyoto-based "war museums" see Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1994).

influenced by the liberal Society to Build Peace Museums (*Heiwa Hakubutsukan o Tsukuru Kai*), whose central tenant was that Japan's aggressions in Asia and its war responsibility must play a key role in any museum that is going to promote "peace consciousness."⁴⁵ By taking this position, the society attempted to counter Japan's dominant narrative of the war, which focused explicitly on remembering the suffering of the Japanese and in so doing created what some have called a "national victimology."

In 1993, the same year that the Tokyo Peace Memorial Museum Planning Discussion Group released the above report, an important conversation and battle about war responsibility and how to remember the war from the perspective of Japan's actions in Asia took place. At issue was the planning of a national peace museum (first referred to as the *Senbotsusha Tsuitô Heiwa Kinenkan* and eventually named *Shôwa Kan*, or Shôwa Hall) being planned by Japan's Ministry of Health and Welfare. Protestors criticized the proposed exhibits for only focusing on the wartime suffering of Japanese civilians. To focus exclusively on the deaths of three million Japanese and suffering of the Japanese civilian population during the war precluded a legitimate appeal for peace because they ignored Japan's role in the deaths of tens of millions of people in Asia. The critics demanded – but did not get – that a more democratic, collaborative discussion of the exhibit content take place and that its designers take into account the concerns of neighboring countries.⁴⁶

As for the Tokyo Peace Memorial, it is important to note that the 1993 report and the committee's position that the Tokyo air raids ought to be contextualized within wartime Japan's relationship to Asia arouse no noticeable opposition. Also, no outcry erupted from the group's conciliatory gesture of committing a monument to both victims of the Tokyo air raids and

⁴⁵ For a summary of the philosophy and evolution of the movement, see Yamabe Masahiko, "Nihon No Heiwa Hakubutsukan No Doutachi to Hatasubeki Kadai," in *Heiwa Hakubutsukan, Sensou Shiryoukan Gaido Bukku*, ed. Rekishi Kyouikusha Kyougikai Hen (Aoki Shoten, 1995).

⁴⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, 30 June 1993, page 30. For analyses of Shôwa Hall, see Ellen H. Hammond, "Commemoration Controversies: The War, the Peace, and Democracy in Japan," in *Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age*, ed. Laura Elizabeth Hein and Mark Selden (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997). Kerry Smith, "The Showa Hall: Memorializing Japan's War at Home," *The Public Historian* 24, no. 4 (2002). To visit the completed Shôwa Hall is to see that the government chose to concentrate only the civilian experience of war in Japan, and to do so in a way that fails to intimate the true suffering incurred by the government's refusal to surrender after it became apparent that it had lost the war. In one of the more disturbing aspects of the museum, children are encouraged to put on a copy of the cotton air-defense hoods that women wore during air raids, and to see how they look in a wall-mounted mirror. This effectively reduces the object to a plaything, stripping away its true meaning: when confronted by the face of modern war and incendiary weapons, the hoods proved countereffective, literally catching on fire by the super-heated air.

“overseas victims” of the war. This may be explained in part to a period in which there was a greater willingness by some political leaders and government officials to address Japan’s actions during the war in Asia. The most cited examples of this shift include, during the brief hiatus in the decades-long rule of Liberal Democratic Party, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro’s statement in 1993 that Japan had indeed fought wars of aggression, and the approval by Japan’s Ministry of Education of school textbooks that included mention of the large-scale killing of noncombatants in Nanking, China, by Japanese Imperial Army troops and the sexual enslavement of “comfort women” in Asia. Also during the early 1990s, a number of cities in Japan had inaugurated peace museums, including those in Osaka and Kyoto mentioned above, other larger museums included Kawasaki City’s *Heiwa Kan* and Saitama Prefecture’s *Heiwa Shiryōkan*.

The Confusion of Tragedies

Instead of acting on the advisory committee’s recommendations, governor Suzuki, scheduled to finish his fourth and final term the following year, chose to let his successor, Aoshima Yukio, inherit the city’s commitment to build the Tokyo Peace Museum. In April 1996 Governor Aoshima created another advisory group, the Tokyo Metropolitan Peace Memorial Museum Construction Committee (*Tōkyōto Heiwa Kinenkan Kensetsu Iinkai*), to finalize the plans for the structure and its exhibit contents.⁴⁷

Controversy erupted at the committee’s first meeting the following month, when representatives from the governor’s office explained that, due to the city’s deteriorating fiscal situation, the original site for the museum was now out of consideration, leaving only one city-owned location available: Yokoami Park. Due to the park’s two-hectare size and the lack of open space within it, the scale of the peace memorial needed to be reduced significantly. Plans for the five hundred seat auditorium would be eliminated, and the exhibit space cut from two thousand square meters to nine hundred.

Even with this reduction, space constraints within the park required the demolition of most of Reconstruction Commemoration Hall, the structure that held exhibits relating to the 1923

⁴⁷ The construction committee consisted of twenty-one members, eleven affiliated with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (five bureau heads and six metropolitan assembly members), six academics and professionals, and five citizens – including two air raid survivors – chosen by the governor from a list of applicants.

Great Kanto Earthquake. According to the governor's office, only two outer walls and the lobby of the hall would remain. These remnants, together with the building's exhibits, would be joined with the new peace museum. Dismayed, some people decried Tokyo for attempting to repeat a mistake made long ago when the city interred the remains of air raid victims with those of the 1923 catastrophe.

At the next meeting the following month, a majority of the construction committee members voted to build the Tokyo Peace Museum in Yokoami Park. Proponents of the decision claimed that the park was an appropriate site given both its location in Shitamachi, where the great majority of deaths took place, and the fact the park's Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall held the remains of the majority of people killed in the raids. On practical grounds, the popular Edo-Tokyo Museum, as well as stops for a major train line and soon-to-be completed subway line, was in the immediate vicinity, which would create greater foot traffic and allow for easy accessibility. And, as one member stated, given that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government had abandoned its originally proposed site, the committee needed to be realistic and work creatively with the one choice that they had been given.⁴⁸ At the group's third meeting in November 1996, a majority vote approved the plan to tear down Restoration Commemoration Hall.

Considerable opposition – by dissenting committee members, air raid survivors, bereaved families, local residents, and architects – resulted from the sudden change of course. Some protested that building the peace memorial in the park and anchoring Tokyo air raid memories there would further infringe upon the park's significance as a commemoration space honoring those killed in the 1923 disaster. Given the scale of suffering experienced on the site in 1923, claimed committee member Hashimoto Yoshiko, there is no room to represent another tragedy of completely different origin. The structures and memorial in the park, according to Hashimoto, collectively make the area “a sacred space for the victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake.”⁴⁹

To claim Yokoami Park as an appropriate site for the peace memorial because the air raid victims' remains are housed within the park's charnel house, continued the critique, is to demonstrate a lack of sympathy for the people who lost family members in the air raids. Bereaved relatives such as Hashimoto herself, whose parents and sister died in the Great Tokyo Air Raid, are forced to go to the park to remember the dead because that is where their remains

⁴⁸ Tōkyō-to, "Tōkyō-to Heiwa Kinenkan Kensetsu Inkaï Hōkoku," (1998), 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 36.

are located (temporarily – *karizumai* – she emphasized in an interview). This is the result of an improper decision, though, and should not be compounded by building the Tokyo Peace Museum in the same park. To concentrate on the victims of one event is to ignore the victims of the other. To mix the bodies and memorials of a natural disaster and wartime disaster is to confuse their histories and meanings.⁵⁰

Architects and building preservationists also opposed the plan. As a unique example of an early Showa era ferroconcrete building, they argued that Reconstruction Commemoration Hall's historic value required the structure be preserved in its entirety.⁵¹ In early 1997, the president of the Japan Architectural Society made a personal appeal to Governor Aoshima to preserve the building, and that he consider another location for the Tokyo Peace Museum in order to maintain the architectural integrity of the park.⁵² A few months later, architects and air raid survivors formed the Citizen's Group for the Preservation of Tokyo Reconstruction Commemoration Hall (*Tôkyôto Fukkô Kinenkan no Hozon o Motomeru Shimin no Kai*) to lobby Tokyo not to build the museum in Yokoami Park.

Resistance to the plan to tear down Reconstruction Commemoration Hall proved somewhat effective. Success, however, did not follow opposition to the museum being built in Yokoami Park. In June 1997, the governor's office announced at a meeting of the construction committee that the Tokyo Peace Museum would be built *underground* in Yokoami Park, adjacent to and partially adjoining Reconstruction Commemoration Hall, so as to preserve that building (see Figure 9). The hall would house some of its original exhibits along with new ones created for the peace museum.

⁵⁰ Ibid; interview with Hashimoto Yoshiko, 7 July 2003.

⁵¹ *Asahi Shimbun*, 25 April 1997, "Fukkô kinenkan, heiwa kinenkan gôdô kenchiku 'sensai to jinsai no kondô ikan.'"

⁵² *Asahi Shimbun*, 25 March 1997, "Fukkô kinenkan o 'kawasanai de': Nihon kenchiku gakkai, To ni yôbô."

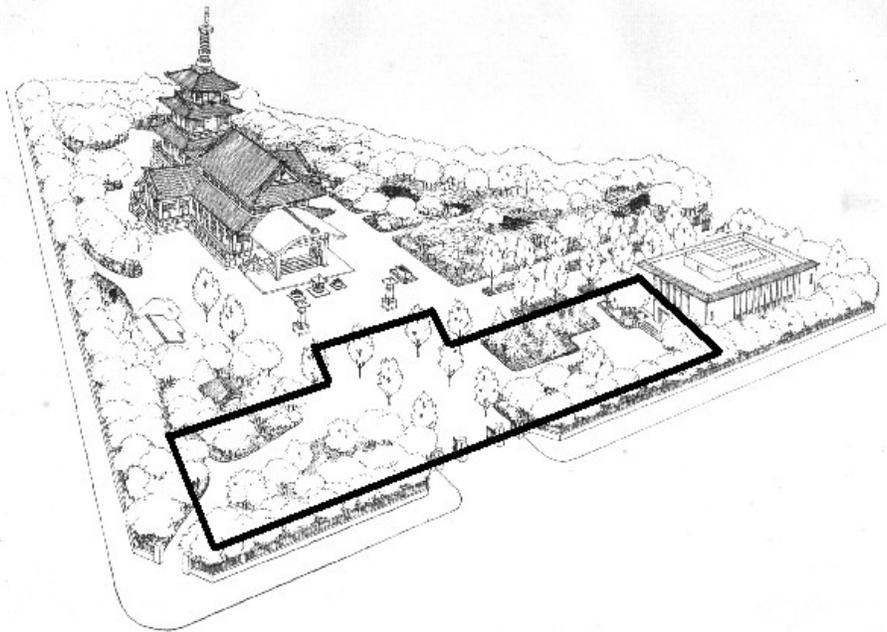


Figure 9. Drawing of Yokoami Park with an outline of the proposed area for the underground Tokyo Peace Memorial. Source: *Hifukujôato: Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai jigyo hôkoku, Tokyo shinsai kinen jigyo kyôkai, 1932.*

This proposal, agreed to by majority vote at the committee's next meeting in August 1997, did not placate those calling for the complete preservation of Reconstruction Commemoration Hall, and only deepened the opposition among those who had labored to build the peace museum. To place the structure underground, they charged, was certainly not fitting for Tokyo's twenty-first century symbol of peace.⁵³ While many individuals such as Hashimoto Yoshiko had worked for over two decades to build the memorial, they now found themselves in the position of coming together in October 1997 to form a group – led mainly by women who had experienced the Great Tokyo Air Raid and/or lost family members in it – calling upon Tokyo to reconsider its plan to build the peace memorial. Over the course of the next two years the group conducted signature drives, held public meetings, and regularly petitioned the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to secure a more appropriate location for the peace memorial. Part of their lobbying efforts included demands that Tokyo give serious consideration to constructing the

Tokyo Peace Museum either Kiba Park or Sarue Park, two metropolitan parks in Kôtô Ward far larger than Yokoami Park. The group went even further, though, demanding that Tokyo build a separate charnel house for the remains of the air raid victims.⁵⁴

As protests against the planned construction of the peace museum in Yokoami Park continued, another form of opposition against a different confusion of tragedies in the planned exhibits arose. Two individuals, Fujioka Nobukatsu and Tsuchiya Takayuki, led the charge. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Fujioka, a professor of education at Tokyo University, came to prominence in his role as a founder of and the most visible public intellectual involved in the Advancement of a Liberal View of History Study Group (*Jiyûshugi Shikan Kenkyûkai*). Fujioka and others formed the group in part as a reaction against some history textbooks that they believed to promote a “masochistic historical perspective” (*jigyakuteki shikan*) by including descriptions of atrocities committed during the country’s military engagements in Asia.⁵⁵

Fujioka’s battle was not only over textbooks. Acutely aware of the role of museums in transmitting history, he had taken a strong position against the “masochistic” message that Japan’s new peace museums offered. Tsuchiya Takayuki, recently elected as an assemblyman to the Tokyo metropolitan government, attended a meeting of Fujioka’s group, and afterward gave him a copy of the Tokyo Peace Memorial Museum Planning Discussion Group’s 1993 report which emphasized the need to have exhibits that considered the suffering Japan had brought to Asians during the war. Fujioka thereafter took a deep interest in the project. While he had to limit his actions against some of Japan’s peace museums to a critique of their contents, he recognized that his effect on the Tokyo Peace Museum, still in the planning phase, could be much greater.

At the invitation of Tsuchiya, in November 1997 Fujioka went to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government building and outlined the reasons for his opposition to the proposed exhibits to some members of the Metropolitan Assembly. Thereafter, Tsuchiya and other assemblymen

⁵⁴ The group was called the Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan Kensetsu no Saikô o Motomeru Kai, and later renamed the Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan ‘Heiwa no Hiroba’ Tsukurkai. A summary of its actions and a transcript of a heated discussion on the Tokyo Peace Museum between members of the group and the chief of Tokyo’s Construction Bureau may be found in Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan ‘Heiwa no Hiroba’ Tsukuru Kai, ed., *Heiwa No Hiroba O Motomete: Kioku, Keishô, Soshite Tsuitô* (2001).

⁵⁵ For a description of movement, of which Fujioka played a central role, to introduce a textbook that did not have a “masochistic historical perspective,” see John Nelson, “Tempest in a Textbook: A Report on the New Middle-School History Textbook in Japan,” *Critical Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2003).

created an informal committee that would work to generate opposition to the exhibits within the assembly. Fujioka then played a lead role in forming Citizens Concerned about Peace in Tokyo (*Tôkyô no Heiwa o Kangaeru Shimin no Kai*), which then carried out protests at Yokoami Park, where the city was conducting preliminary measures for the construction of the Tokyo Peace Museum. Fujioka also voiced his opposition to the proposed exhibit content through a series of public lectures and opinion pieces that appeared in a variety of conservative media outlets including *Shokun!*, *Seiron*, and the *Sankei Shimbun* newspaper.⁵⁶

Fujioka's critique of the proposed exhibits mirrored those that he leveled against the history textbooks: they were "anti-Japanese" and "self-masochistic" in their historical viewpoint.⁵⁷ He aimed most of his fire at an exhibit proposal tentatively titled "Tokyo, the Militarized City" (*Gunji Toshi Tôkyô*). To emphasize the role and locations of military installations in Tokyo, according to Fujioka, would give visitors the impression that the United States had a right to target Tokyo and its citizens for destruction. The proposed exhibit had been discussed at subsequent meetings and dropped from consideration even before it became the main example repeatedly used by Fujinobu. As committee member Kawakatsu Heita noted, Tokyo as a capital had many perspectives (economic, cultural, political) in addition to its military one, thus making it inconsistent that one should be emphasized over all others.⁵⁸ Additionally, the absence of any plans to criticize the United States for its indiscriminate bombing of Tokyo, coupled with exhibits discussing Japan's aggression toward other countries, would lead visitors to conclude that the Tokyo air raids resulted from Japan's activities in Asia. The exhibits and the museum as a whole thus become an argument to accept the air raids, and would accordingly "trample on the hearts of children and exert mind-control over them."⁵⁹

An important aspect of Fujioka's strategy in building opposition to the exhibits involved his adeptness in appropriating key concerns of air raids survivors and bereaved families. One

⁵⁶ See, for example, *Sankei Shimbun*, 3 January 1998, "'Heiwa kinenkan' no oroka o tadasu," and *Sankei Shimbun*, 10 March 1998, "Karimono no kiben o abaku."
⁵⁷ *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 November 1997, 17 December 1997, 3 January 1998, 10 March 1998.

⁵⁸ *Asahi Shimbun*, 7 May 1998, "Aru hi 3.10 kûshû ga atta, 'heiwa kinenkan' o kangaeru."

⁵⁹ *Sankei Shimbun*, 3 January 1998. It is important to note that the liberal Society to Build Peace Museums (*Heiwa Hakubutsukan o Tsukuru Kai*) also criticized the planned exhibits, stating that they did not go far enough in examining Japan's conduct in Asia, as well as arguing that an exhibit needed to give fuller consideration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, especially considering that around ten percent of atom bomb survivors lived in the Tokyo metropolitan area. *Reference*.

example involves his public call for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government to construct a memorial for air victims and a separate charnel house for their remains outside Yokoami Park. In this regard, Fujioka made liberal use of survivors' air raid experiences and their desire for a memorial and charnel house, stating that the city should focus on building those structures without delay. While Tokyo constructs the memorial and charnel house, Fujioka argued, citizens could debate the contents of the Tokyo Peace Museum's proposed exhibits. By and large, though, the air raid survivors actively opposing the construction of the museum in Yokoami Park also believed it essential to have exhibits that discussed Japan's aggression in Asia. When Hashimoto Yoshiko and other air raid survivors and bereaved family members, at the invitation of assemblyman Tsuchiya, arrived at a meeting hall to discuss their air raid experiences, they were surprised to find Fujioka Nobukatsu at Tsuchiya's side, and proceeded to argue with Fujioka about their "different historical perspectives."⁶⁰

In his capacity as assemblyman, Tsuchiya Takayuki also committed himself to preventing the planned exhibits, and then the Tokyo Peace Museum altogether, from being realized. At an October 1997 meeting of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly's Education Committee, Tsuchiya charged that Communist and Socialist party assemblymen had stacked the governor's advisory committee that planned the exhibits with members who shared their political ideology. He then raised a formal objection to the more controversial exhibit proposal, offering a litany of reasons including his belief that Japan had fought for the liberation of Asia, and that many Japanese had been massacred on that continent.

By March 1998, Tsuchiya managed to pass a resolution through the general assembly that required the full assembly's approval of the exhibits before construction on the Tokyo Peace Museum could begin. A year later, on March 11, 1999, the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly passed another resolution stating that, because of both the controversy surrounding the exhibits and Tokyo's difficult financial situation, the construction of the museum now required its approval. The resolution also declared that the monument for Tokyo's air raid victims henceforth should be considered *separately* from the peace museum, and that it be built as quickly as possible in Yokoami Park. Contrary to the original plan, however, the monument was

⁶⁰ *reference for Fujioka newspaper article/appeal that TMG build separate charnel house*; interview with Hashimoto Yoshiko, 7 July 2003. The meeting with Fujioka is recounted in Tōkyōto Heiwa Kinenkan 'Heiwa no Hiroba' Tsukuru Kai, ed., *Heiwa No Hiroba O Motomete: Kioku, Keishō, Soshite Tsuitō*.

not to mention anything about “worldwide victims of the war.” According to the assembly resolution, the monument’s inscription could refer only to the air raid victims (*kûshû giseisha*), mourning (*tsuitô*), and peace (*heiwa*).⁶¹

What would the emphasis of the memorial be, though? The resolution specified that the memorial be designed to store a list of the names of air raid victims. Although Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa all had composed a *meibo*, or (partial) lists of those killed in each of their respective catastrophes, Tokyo had taken no efforts to do the same. In the early 1990s, a citizen’s group led by air raid survivor Hoshino Hiroshi began a grass roots effort to begin assembling such a list. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government initially balked at the group’s appeals that it take over the project in order to ensure that the list become as comprehensive as possible. The government first responded by saying that the passage of time since the air raids, the deaths of entire families and destruction of family registrations maintained at ward offices that burned in the raids, and the dispersal of survivors throughout the country made the task too formidable. However, with the controversy over the exhibit contents of the Tokyo Peace Museum showing no signs of abatement, Governor Aoshima decided to adopt the project of creating an official *meibo* of the dead.⁶²

The “Dwelling of Remembrance” Monument

In what became the death knell for the peace museum, in August 1999 the assembly passed a resolution that “froze” (*tôketsu*) its construction and reiterated the call for the immediate building of the monument.⁶³ Newly elected governor Ishihara Shintarô, a maverick conservative who had refused to pledge his support for the construction of the peace museum when running for election, agreed to honor the wishes of the assembly and moved forward with the development of the monument by soliciting design proposals.

Artist Tsuchiya Kimio, whose entry was selected and whose work addresses the intersections of irretrievable loss and memory, felt compelled to enter the juried competition for the monument design. He read the literature on the Tokyo air raids, visited Yokoami Park daily,

⁶¹ Tôkyô Togikai (Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly), *Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan (Kashô) Mondai Ni Kansuru Togikai Teireikai De No Futai Ketsugi Nado*, 11 March 1999.

⁶² For a summary of the citizen groups efforts to create the list of Tokyo air raid victims, see Hoshino Hiroshi, "Tôkyô Kûshû, Kiroku Undô No Genzai," *Rekishi Hyôron*, no. 616 (2001).

⁶³ Tôkyô Togikai (Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly), *1999 Nen Hachi Gatsu Yôka No Togikai Bunkyo Inkai Ni Togawa Kara Shimesareta Monyumento Kensetsu Ni Kan Suru Hôshin*, 8 August 1999.

and created a design that adhered both to his sensibilities and to the restrictions on the size, height, and location of the monument due to the park's small area, limited open space, and centrality of Tokyo Memorial Hall.⁶⁴ The finished product, titled "Dwelling of Remembrance" (*Kioku no Basho*), is a direct extension of a particular body of Tsuchiya's previous installation pieces. Somewhat reminiscent of artist Andrew Goldsworthy's work (yet more controlled, symmetrical, and urban), a body of Tsuchiya's art involves circular structures composed of piled concrete debris, inlaid with closely bunched flowerpots containing begonias, petunias, or marigolds. The centers of the installations are just large enough for one individual to enter via a path leading through a single opening. Tsuchiya's intention is to turn the viewer into a participant who, upon entering the structure and becoming incorporated within the space, beholds both the debris produced by particular events and the associated memories/life generated from the rubble.

Tsuchiya modified this concept for the design of the air raid monument, the construction of which started in late 2000. While seasonal flowers remained a fundamental aspect of the project, he replaced the rubble with slabs of white granite, and reduced the structure to a sixty degree arc. The latter modification allowed for the rest of the circle to be given over to a series of arced, gently descending steps that create the impression of a communal gathering place. A small path at the center of the steps leading to the structure's interior is met by a small pool of water and then abruptly ends in front of a locked bronze door with latticework shaped in the design of a ginkgo leaf, the symbol of Tokyo (see Figure 10).

While the memorial is intended to honor the dead, according to Tsuchiya the Tokyo Metropolitan Government also wanted to create a space that the general public would see as inviting and bright, a space at which people would be comfortable to sit down at while having lunch in front of some colorful flowers. At the same time, though, Tsuchiya intended the flowers to symbolize the air raid victims and to allude to one of the main purposes of the monument, as a repository for the names of the victims, just under the flower bed and behind the locked door.⁶⁵

The monument's interior space is visually stunning. Forty thick books, their covers made of the fine-patterned dyeing technique called *Tôkyô some komon*, contain the names of tens of thousands of civilians killed in the Tokyo air raids. The books are set behind curved partitions of

⁶⁴ Interview with Tsuchiya Kimio, 29 November 2003.

⁶⁵ Interview with Tsuchiya Kimio, 29 November 2003.

glass inset in steel and illuminated by overhead lights. The glass separation, the granite wall, and the closed tomes on display combine to create the appearance of a cold and inaccessible memorial space that is simultaneously museum-like and otherworldly.

On 2 March 2001, Governor Ishihara Shintarô presided over the dedication ceremony at Yokoami Park of what the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, following the conditions of the assembly resolution mentioned above, officially designated as the “Monument mourning the Tokyo air raid victims and praying for peace” (*Tôkyô kûshû giseisha tsuitô, heiwa o kinen suru hi/monyumento*). The ceremony closed with representatives of bereaved families carrying *meibo* that held the names of 68,072 air raid victims into the monument and depositing them within (see Figure 11).

Responses to the structure varied. Some bereaved relatives were certainly pleased that, after more than a half century, both a list containing the names of their killed family members and a monument to mourn them finally had been created.⁶⁶ Others were less impressed, believing that the monument – built without the memorial museum, and built in this location – fails to adequately pay tribute to the dead and that it is not a legitimate appeal to peace. Other criticisms included the size of the structure, which seemed too small, especially when compared to the nearby towering memorial built for the victims of the 1923 earthquake. Some bereaved family members wondered why the names of the air raid victims were hidden from public view, stating that they would have preferred a memorial comparable to Okinawa’s Cornerstone of Peace, in which the names of the victims are inscribed in stone for everyone to see.

⁶⁶ *Asahi Shimbun*, 3 March 2001, “Tuitô no hi, kansei: giseisha meibo 6 man 8072 nin.”



Figure 10. “Dwelling of Remembrance” monument in Yokoami Park, Sumida Ward, dedicated to victims of the Tokyo air raids. Photograph taken in 2003 by the author.

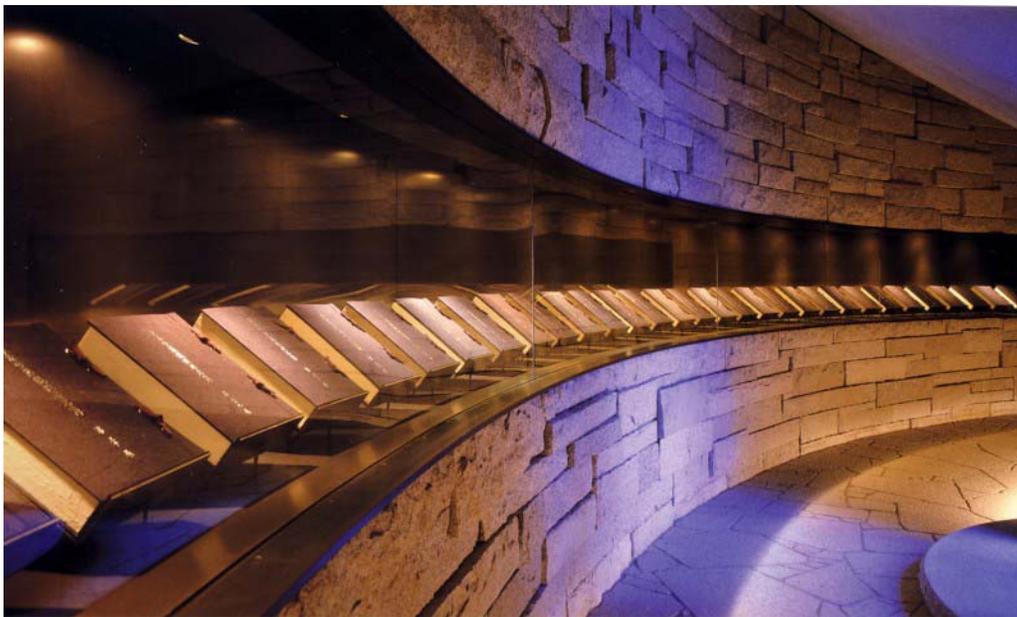


Figure 11. The interior of Tsuchiya Kimio’s “Dwelling of Remembrance” monument in Yokoami Park, showing books containing the names of many of the victims of the Tokyo air raids.

Photograph reproduced courtesy of Bijutsu Shuppan Press.

One of the more striking and revealing comments came from a woman who exclaimed, “It’s as if they’ve once again been forced into an awful air raid shelter.”⁶⁷ Indeed, the monument does conjure up images of such a wartime space and compels one to consider whether Tsuchiya Kimio has unwittingly designed a metaphoric air raid shelter. As discussed in chapter one, most of the shelters dotting Tokyo’s landscape were hastily made and ineffective in the face of firebombing. Likewise, Tokyo rushed to build the monument, largely in order to both cut off debate about the Tokyo Peace Museum and give the impression that the city has lived up to its responsibility in memorializing the air raids. The hurriedness in building the monument, though, should give one pause about how effective its proposed aim of mourning the dead and preserving peace will be.

In addition, the interior space is literally inaccessible. Tsuchiya Kimio designed the monument with the understanding that the entrance would be unlocked every March 10 in order to give bereaved family members, many of whom travel from other parts of the country to participate in the annual Buddhist memorial service, the opportunity to view the books of the dead. The city, however, upon realizing that the monument’s small interior meant that more than a day would be required to allow all those interested to enter the structure, decided to open it only to a few chosen representatives of bereaved families. Upon receiving protests about that plan, the city found a reason that would allow it to keep the passage permanently locked: given that the structure lacked an emergency exit, the city could not allow people to enter it (see Figure 12). Does the long movement to memorialize the Tokyo air raids end with the violation of a building code?

⁶⁷ Quoted in Kaneda Mari, *Tôkyô Daikûshu to Sensô Koji: Inbeisareta Shinjitsu O Otte* (Kage Shobô, 2002), 141-42.



Figure 12. March 10, 2004. People line up in an attempt to view the interior of the monument, whose door remains locked, even on March 10. Photograph taken by the author.

With the construction of the “Dwelling of Remembrance” monument, Tokyo has portrayed Yokoami Park as a commemorative space capable of accommodating the memorialization of two separate catastrophes. It has gone a step further by attempting to shift the weight of memory contained within the park and remap its history. Although most of the structures and memorials contained within speak to the 1923 disaster, Tokyo seeks to represent the park as a space associated with the Tokyo air raids. Thus, a Tokyo Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs pamphlet about the new monument mistakenly professes that Yokoami Park has been known as “war damage memorial park” (*sensai no memoriaru pâku*) since the early postwar period.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Tôkyô-to, “Tôkyô Kûshû Giseisha O Tsuitô Shi Heiwa O Kinen Suru Hi,” (2001), 6. Tellingly, the pamphlet wrongly states that the cremated remains of the air raid victims were deposited in the charnel house in 1946.

Yet, as Kenneth Foote writes, “Once consecrated, sites do not always give way to revision.”⁶⁹ This certainly seems to be the case for Yokoami Park, as the memorial space is still primarily associated with the 1923 disaster. Local residents and the occasional city map still refer to Tokyo Metropolitan Memorial Hall as Earthquake Memorial Hall. A 2003 brochure produced by the food market chain Tokyo Coop suggesting sites to visit for Tokyo Peace Day describes the charnel house as the structure that holds the ashes of the victims of the 1923 catastrophe, failing to mention the other 100,000 sets of remains. And among the plethora of Tokyo guide books, descriptions of Yokoami Park will mention the site in connection to the air raid victims as, at best, an afterthought, a minor addition to the actual symbolic meaning of the park as related to 1923.

Those unfamiliar with the above controversy who read the dedication plaque, written in very small type in both Japanese and English and located just next to the monument, would probably develop the impression that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has honored the over one hundred thousand civilians killed in Tokyo in 1945. On one level, though, the controversy over the how to remember the Tokyo air raids and cancellation of the building of the Tokyo Peace Museum has been buried the very monument that supposedly remembers the victims. According to some air raid survivors, the processes by which the monument was created and the museum was abandoned, as well as where the monument is located, prevents the monument from ever being able to express the misery and grief experienced in Tokyo. In this sense, a well-known line from Robert Lowell’s poem “For the Union Dead” may be applied to this memorial space:

Their monument sticks like
a fishbone
in the city’s throat.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscape of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 294.

⁷⁰ Robert Lowell, *For the Union Dead* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1964).

The Great Tokyo Air Raid and War Damages Resource Center, opened in 2002, is difficult to find. It isn't close to a train or subway station, and is tucked into an area of Kôtô Ward that is dominated by car repair shops and public housing apartment complexes. The center, a small, nondescript three-story structure built with private contributions on land donated by an air raid survivor, is not meant as a replacement for the Tokyo Metropolitan Peace Memorial, but because its director Saotome Katsumoto and others know that the effort to build a peace museum in Tokyo will continue for some time. The center is how they will preserve the experience and memory of the air raids until that moment.

While the private resource center was being planned, Saotome and other activists formed the Committee to Advance the Construction of the Tokyo Metropolitan Peace Memorial (*Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan Kensetsu o Susumeru Kai*). In a 14 August 2002 statement, the group issued its opinion of events that led to the Tokyo Peace Museum not being built. "We have lost this one battle," the group claimed, due to "those who affirmed and glorified Japan's war of aggressions." It also issued the longstanding position of its members: That people in Tokyo suffered indescribably under the air raids; that Japan brought much suffering to Asia during the war; and that Tokyo Metropolitan Government should build the peace museum.⁷¹

In December of 2005, sixty years after the end of a war which culminated in incendiary air raids and atomic attacks that destroyed urban Japan, the nation began to prepare for another enemy strike. Warning that the threat could reveal itself in the form of ballistic missiles, terrorist assaults, or even a land invasion, Japan's central government stated its intent to draw up an evacuation manual outlining municipal civilian defense policies to prepare for an attack. A draft plan released at the same time provided general advice to citizens. In case of a missile strike, one ought to seek shelter underground or inside of a concrete, reinforced building. If poison gas is released, people should seek windward, higher elevations. And if a land invasion and large-scale casualties followed, the central government would coordinate relief measures while municipalities collected and distributed information regarding the well-being of residents.⁷²

⁷¹ "Tokyo Heiwa Kinenkan (Kashô)" Kensetsu o Susumeru Kai, *Ichinichi Mo Hayaku "Tôkyôto Heiwa Kinenkan (Kashô)" Kensetsu O! Yasukuni, Kyôkasho Kara Sensô No Rekishi O Kangaeru* (2002).

⁷² "Misairu Kôgekiji Wa Chika Ni: Kokumin Hogo Moderu Keikaku No Soan Hanmei," *Asahi Shimbun*, 26 December 2005.

For Japan's septuagenarians and octogenarians who may have heard the government's plan when reported in the national *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper and on NHK public radio news, this approach to civil defense must have struck an eerily familiar chord, as the instructions mirrored the orders they had received from the Imperial government during the Asia Pacific War. Those elderly citizens may have been reminded of their own experiences of government-mandated civil defense measures when they were children, adolescents, and young adults. As school students, they often ran in orderly fashion toward an underground shelter dug in the middle of the schoolyard during repeated air raid drills. As teenagers and young adults they passed buckets filled with water and swatted flames with a bamboo implement during firefighting exercises. As instructed, they carried air-defense hoods and helmets at all times. And then they experienced the face of modern war, which in a life-changing instant laid bare the utter futility of the drills and preparations.

And thus we come full circle, to the beginning of this story. We remember the 100,000 civilians killed in a few hours as they fought the fires or ran for shelters as their government instructed. But does Tokyo need to remember? Sociologists of disaster point out that the victims of a catastrophe often forget to apply their experiences to averting or preparing for a future event.⁷³ The city may not live by remembering, but forgetting may consign it to the most undesirable of fates.

⁷³ E.L. Quarantelli, "Basic Themes Derived from Survey Findings on Human Behavior in the Mexico City Earthquake," *International Sociology* 11 (1996).