

NISHIYAMA UZŌ

Leading Japanese Planner and Theorist

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Japanese planning emerged in the mid-19th century, at almost the same time as planning in Europe and America and in response to similar challenges. Yet the different groups of planners did not enter into a balanced exchange. Japanese practitioners and scholars observed foreign practices, commenting on them and occasionally integrating some aspects of them into their own work, while also carefully building on long-standing Japanese traditions of urban form, and testing their knowledge in colonial and post-colonial settings. In contrast, only a few foreign practitioners observed Japanese urban planning efforts, and most of them did so with the goal of proposing their own ideas for improvement—at least until after World War II. During the reconstruction period in the early 1950s, foreigners paid little attention to Japanese planning, whereas Japanese architects were part of the European and American modernist architectural scene, notably Tange Kenzo, who designed the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Centre and Park to commemorate the first atomic bombing of a city, and his immediate colleagues.¹

By the 1960s, scholars were starting to write the first histories of planning, in Europe and America and also in Japan. Tracing the global exchange of ideas, non-Japanese scholars connected European with American, colonial, and post-colonial places. In particular, they sought to identify new planning paradigms. Japanese practice became part of this canon through the works of Tange, who had by then become the leading architect in Japan, commissioned to design numerous iconic structures, including two consecutive Tokyo City Hall buildings, the gymnasium and swimming pool for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, and the master plan for the 1970 World Expo in Osaka.² Foreign historians mostly considered Japanese urban planning to be a practice and a tradition almost entirely separate from their own. Their limited engagement with Japanese practice, culture, and language meant that their histories focused on architectural and design questions that were in line with Western practices. This focus on commonalities overshadowed attempts to understand Japanese planning history in its own right or specific geographical, regional, cultural, and historical context. Their partial reading of Japanese planning history impeded later scholars from fully integrating Japanese work into global planning history.

Other major figures of Japanese urban planning, particularly those who had made their marks through writing, remained all but unknown outside the island nation. Among them is the architect-planner, historian-theorist, humanist and avowed Marxist Nishiyama Uzō (1911–1994), who had collaborated with Tange on the master plan for the 1970 Osaka World Expo (Figure 1). Nishiyama made his contribution mainly through his teaching and his many writings rather than his few architectural works.³ Though his writings and projects have only barely been studied either in Japan or outside of it, Nishiyama’s reading and interpretation of planning practices—historical and contemporary, in Japan and internationally—influenced Japanese urban planning theory and practice. Notably through his writings, he connected Japanese practitioners to global debates, and his analysis of traditional Japanese urban structures and housing as well as his design proposals helped shape post-World War II Japanese planning. Nishiyama was also a keen observer of the changing Japanese built environment, making an enormous number of sketches, drawings, and photos (Figure 2).

The following discussion briefly introduces Nishiyama’s life and work and then focuses on his urban ideas through the lens of the three articles and their translation that form the core of this book. These articles document Nishiyama’s



Figure 1 Nishiyama’s main concern was housing. This photograph shows him as a young man, writing the term Jutaku Mondai (“Housing Problem”) on a blackboard (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 2 Nishiyama carefully observed the changing Japanese environment and left a large number of photographs as well as sketches. Here he is depicted in traditional Japanese dress with a camera in 1935 in Osaka (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

particular approach to analysing planning history, international examples, and the specifics of the Japanese geography, topography, and urban form. This introduction places the three texts in the context of their time and examines them as a foundation of Nishiyama's later work, which is then discussed briefly. This introduction therewith takes a first step towards integrating his multiple contributions into Japanese and world urban planning history.

Nishiyama's first publications date to the 1930s, and his last ones appeared in the 1990s, spanning a period of enormous political and spatial changes. In the 1930s, when Nishiyama studied in Kyoto, Japan had its own approach to architecture and urbanism, no longer depending on direct interventions from foreigners. The country relied on its own architecture schools (the Imperial College of Engineering was founded in Tokyo in 1873) and developed expertise in urban planning. Professionals had been developing local planning practices at least since rebuilding after the 1923 Kanto earthquake. In particular, they established land readjustment (*kukakusei*), a technique creating continuous land parcels for development while sharing project costs among

landowners. This became the dominant Japanese planning technique, often called *the mother of Japanese planning*.⁴ In this period, Japanese architects and planners partnered with Western colleagues.⁵ For example, Ishikawa Hideaki, then an engineer in the Ministry of Home Affairs assigned to plan the town of Nagoya (and later the head planner of Tokyo before, during and after the war), consulted the British architect and town planner Raymond Unwin on his city's master plan during a 1923 trip to Europe. He went on to produce extensive writings that cited foreign thinkers.⁶

In the 1930s and 40s, Japanese planners continued to look to the West for inspiration, but they did not include any concept unconditionally. When Nishiyama graduated from the architecture department of Kyoto Imperial University in 1933, imperial practices guided urban planning on the mainland and in the Japanese colonies throughout Asia; occasionally Western plans found their way via Japanese planners into Manchuria and other Japanese colonies.⁷ By the time he earned his PhD in 1947, the majority of Japanese cities lay in ruins and the country had become a constitutional monarchy. In Germany, similarly devastated, planning principles were associated with political ideology, so planners discarded or at least disavowed them in the post-war period. But Nishiyama, who had studied European practices of urban and large-scale regional planning—including in fascist Germany and Italy—was able to detach projects from their politics and use them in the post-war period.⁸

As professor at Kyoto University from 1961 to 1974 (and vice president of the Architecture Institute of Japan in 1959), Nishiyama influenced a whole generation of Japanese urban planners and actively participated in developing Japanese architecture and cities (Figure 3). That period saw important urban



Figure 3 Nishiyama as a honorary professor after retirement from Kyoto University (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

changes: the reconstruction and high growth period of the 1950s and 1960s included urban extension and redevelopment; and the 1968 New City Planning Act rethought urban practice, aiming to direct rapid urban growth with control areas and promotion areas. His influence was particularly strong in Western Japan, the so-called Kansai area.⁹ At the height of his career, in the late 1960s, major shifts were occurring in Japan: new towns were built and comprehensive national plans established, both themes that Nishiyama had discussed throughout his career.¹⁰ This period coincided with the country's shift to community planning (*machizukuri*), in which he was an active player.

At this time, Nishiyama compiled his works into four volumes. The three articles translated here, originally published in the 1940s in professional magazines, were chapters 1, 9, and 10 of volume three of the compilation, entitled *Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space* [*Chiiki Kūkan Ron*]. Each text (as all the articles included in the compilations) was briefly introduced by Nishiyama himself, placing it in its context of writing, identifying where it was published, and describing how it fitted into the arc of his thinking—this volume also includes those introductions. These articles have been chosen as an introduction to the early planning-related works of this major figure, whose work helped shape Japanese housing and planning in the 20th century, though they cannot do justice to his extensive works. These pre- and early post-war texts provide a foundation for understanding his career as well as the context of Japanese planning history beyond well-known figures such as Tange. (These texts precede the extensive urban changes of the later 20th century.) In particular, the three texts provide insights into Nishiyama's activity as a theorist, commentator, and translator of foreign practices and also as a visionary whose concepts were based on a comprehensive and long-term understanding of Japanese society and history.

The three texts are only a tiny section of one of the four thematic volumes, each of which was more than 600 pages long and included texts from the 1930s and several decades after. The four books speak to his core interests. He dedicated two volumes to themes in housing—housing planning (*Jūtaku keikaku*) and theory on housing (*Jūkyō ron*)—and one each to theories on urban, regional and national space (*Chiiki kūkan ron*) and architecture (*Kenchiku ron*).¹¹ As a compilation of original works, some of which were published in war-time architectural journals that are not readily available—sometimes even Nishiyama's own archives do not hold a copy—these books provide unique insight into his life achievement.

Before discussing the volume on urban, regional, and national space, and the articles chosen from it and translated in this volume, it is worthwhile to briefly describe the other volumes on housing and architecture. Throughout his life, Nishiyama maintained an abiding interest in the development of housing. Through abundant, detailed sketches of buildings and innovative analytical drawings and maps he created a careful analysis of Japan's changing housing types over the centuries.¹² His unique drawings offer detailed accounts

of neighborhoods, floorplans, sections, and construction details of traditional Japanese town houses, row houses, apartments, and mansions, in the large metropolises and villages alike. He also carefully examined changing lifestyles and everyday objects of traditional Japanese people from the earliest times of Japanese construction to post-war practices (Figures 4–7). As such, Nishiyama provided detailed and carefully documented insight into changing lifestyles, as through his drawings and photographs of traditional Japanese row houses, the *nagaya* (Figures 8–15).

Nishiyama also translated his findings from history into housing proposals for the future. Looking at the traditional separation of spaces in Japanese houses of hard surfaces (pounded earth) from those with soft ones (*tatami*), he argued for further dividing *tatami* rooms for sleeping from living/dining/kitchen areas (LDK) with wooden floors.¹³ The new organization of housing led to characteristic post-war housing projects: *n*LDK apartments, with *n* indicating the number of bedrooms added to the core of Living and Dining-Kitchen¹⁴ (Figure 16). Questions of aesthetics, the design and the scale of buildings, were also a key interest. But Nishiyama resisted the idea that architecture was an elitist medium and instead focused on its social aspects, particularly in the architectural magazine *DEZAM*. Humanist approaches were at the core of his practice, as is clear as early as a 1948 article, “The Architecture of Humanism.”¹⁵



Figure 4 Photograph taken by Nishiyama in 1939 of traditional thatched roof housing in Nara's Horenchō (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 5 Drawing by Nishiyama of the interior of a traditional *machiya* townhouse in Kyoto in 1936 showing the narrow and deep corridor used for multiple purposes including as kitchen, and providing access to the rooms (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

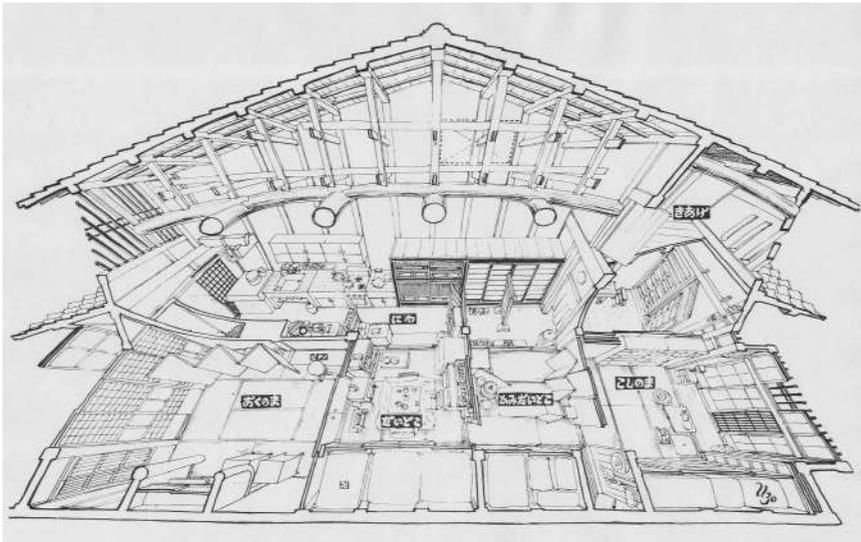


Figure 6 Nishiyama's innovative depiction of a traditional Japanese house from above, depicting both the architectural structure as well as the use of the various spaces. Transforming lifestyles are captured through the presence of a piano in the room at the lower left (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 9 Photo of a pre-war row house lane in Osaka (Higashi Noda) taken in 1936 by Nishiyama (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 10 Photo of then recently built row houses in Osaka's Sumiyoshi ward (Kagaya) taken in 1935 by Nishiyama (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 11 Photo taken in 1936 of the rear side of row house lanes (back alley) in Osaka's Nishikujo area by Nishiyama (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

The three texts translated here have been selected as bridges that provide insight into multiple topics, including Japanese knowledge and appropriation of foreign urban practice. These texts document continuity in urban theory without the ideological characteristics typical of German and other post-war reconstruction. They also reveal the famous post-war works of Tange Kenzo and his colleagues as only one element of the Japanese urban planning debate.

While Nishiyama's introductions to these pieces acknowledged the war and post-war context of these writings, he, surprisingly, did not address the war as a political issue. While personally he took a clear anti-capitalist stance, he also accepted the contemporary situation of uncontrolled urban development that contradicted his ideals and was ready to foreground a pragmatic attitude.

Text 1: Perspectives on Urban and Regional Planning Internationally: Chapter 1: The Base of Life

Nishiyama spoke several languages, including German and Russian. Like other Japanese planners, he carefully analysed and critiqued foreign ideas. This knowledge allowed him to engage with practices that were both within and outside the canon of Western planning. His observations on the applicability of these practices in Japan are of particular interest. In contrast to standard Western histories, which focused on aesthetic or stylistic principles such as modernism, Nishiyama classified foreign concepts along the lines of capitalist

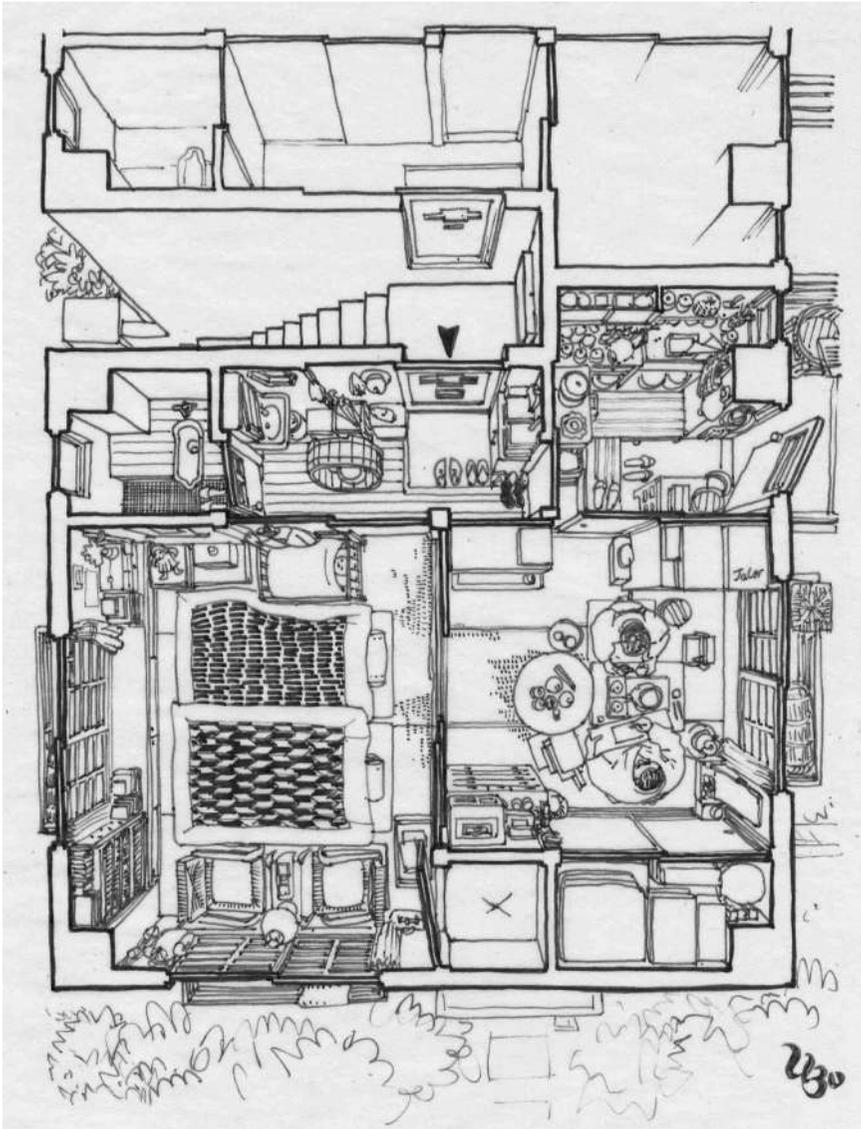


Figure 12 Floor plan of an apartment in the Daikanyama Dojunkai housing complex in Tokyo where Nishiyama's family lived in 1942. This housing complex was erected after the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake that destroyed large parts of Tokyo and Yokohama. (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 13 Drawing by Nishiyama of his cluttered architect's workspace in 1942 where he tried to design buildings, but an accident happened... (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 14 Photo of Nishiyama eating with his wife at a traditional Japanese low table (with coals) in 1941, at his apartment in the Daikanyama Dojunkai housing complex (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 15 Nishiyama's plans for mass produced housing couldn't be implemented; he left the housing corporation (Eidan) and returned to Kyoto University in 1942 (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

versus socialist. He introduced Japanese academics and practitioners to foreign ideas with these texts, and infused his own interpretations into the writing of planning history. These texts exemplify a distinctively Japanese perspective on European, American, and global developments and record Japanese planners' extensive knowledge of foreign practices.

The first text reprinted here, “Seikatsu kichi no kōzō”¹⁶ [The structure of the base of life],¹⁷ sets the foundation for Nishiyama's urban thinking and reflections and demonstrates the close relationships that he saw between society and housing and between housing and urban planning. When Nishiyama wrote the original text, he was examining the problem of the big city as a locale for a largescale, modern, concentrated workforce, trying to find a new organizational form for the Japanese city. The text explores the organization of cities through urban units that cater to specific needs of the population in terms of work, housing, education, culture, and transportation, hence the title “The Base of Life.”

Driven by his desire to connect work and life, Nishiyama argued that the structural elements of the city, conceptualized as life spheres or life units, should be organized around elementary schools and workplaces, as argued by many other planners. They needed to be carefully organized, separated by green areas, and connected by transportation. He thus affirmed the organization of cities in small units. The text originally appeared in *Kenchikugaku Kenkyū* [Research on Architecture] in 1942. Introducing the text in the 1968 compilation, Nishiyama acknowledged the original context of the text, to

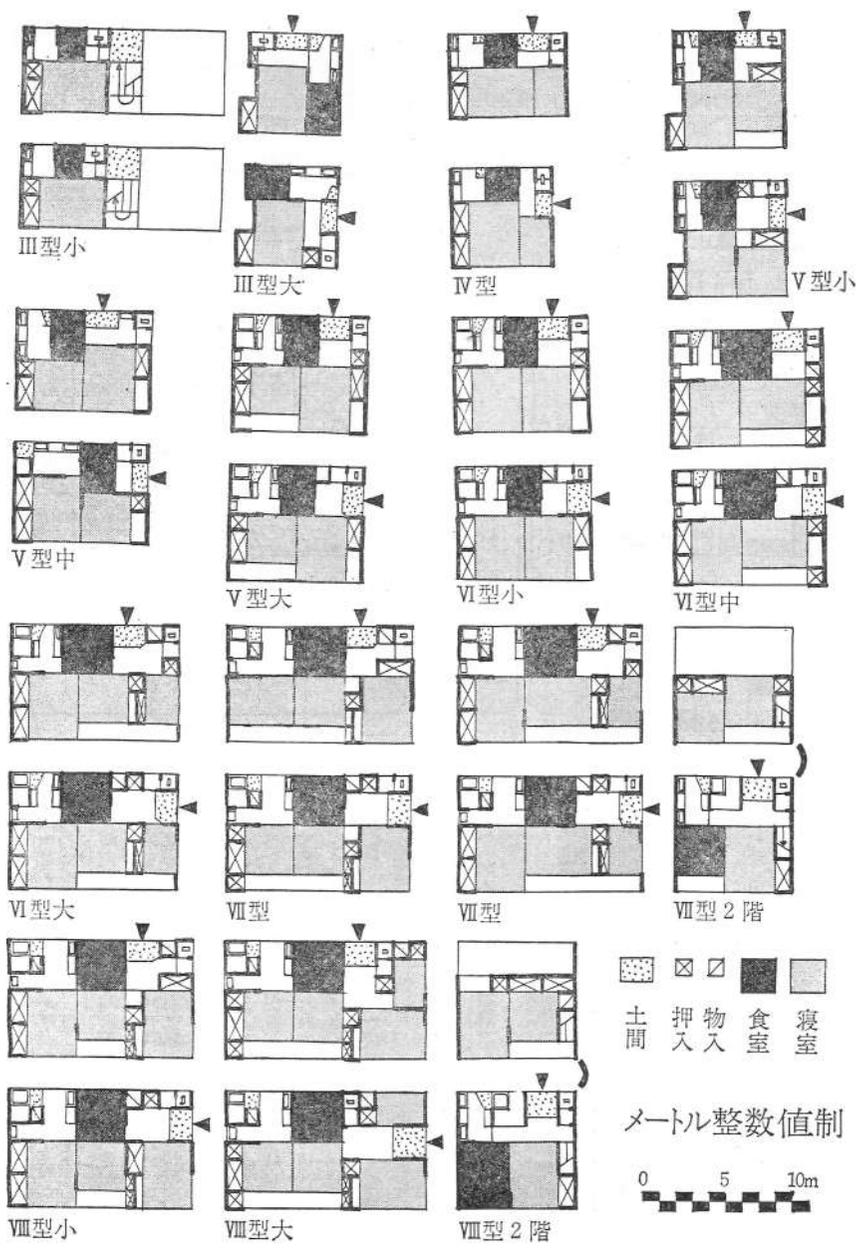


Figure 16 Apartment floor plans for mass-produced housing with depiction of tatami rooms and other spaces, drawing by Nishiyama (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

explain the then-typical references to Japanese aspirations of leadership in Asia, and assessments of the needs of wartime defense. But Nishiyama did not either reference the politics of Imperial Japan, or distance himself from it; instead, he focused primarily on cities and society as a modern challenge.

The article speaks to the ways in which Nishiyama served as an interpreter of foreign concepts for Japanese practice. It also demonstrates his critical distance from foreign practices. Nishiyama's goal was a qualitative reform of cities for an industrialized society, with a new social life. He rejected what he perceived as purely aesthetic or economic choices and social concerns and instead argued for rethinking the modern metropolis and its capitalist and chaotic form. This approach and his own political affiliation could have led him to embrace urban planning ideas applied in the Soviet Union. But while Nishiyama explored and discussed those ideas throughout the article, he chose yet another perspective: taking up the contemporary idea of a necessary, legally proscribed space that provides all the functions of daily life, he proposed a *life space*, the life units mentioned above, and argued that it would engage traditional Japanese practices (*samsara*, meaning "the circle of life") and leading ideas of contemporary urban planning.

Nishiyama also presented and critiqued plans by Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier and Ludwig Hilberseimer in capitalist Britain, France, and Germany, discarding them for simply reorganizing the city without solving the density problem and for merely transposing capitalist American cities into Europe, more on aesthetic grounds than in response to social needs. Plans by the Soviet planner Milyutin for a linear city, in contrast, appeared to him conceptually as an attempt to build a "comprehensive whole," but he did not agree with its separation of work and home. Nishiyama remained unsatisfied with many foreign proposals, and instead searched for a way to make city life meaningful as a whole in both new and existing cities. He thus promoted proposals by the Nazi-era planner Gottfried Feder. His book *The New City (Die Neue Stadt)* was published in 1939 and six months later was already on the shelves of the administrative library of Tokyo, showing the rapidity of intellectual exchange at the time.¹⁸

Feder's book was based on a lengthy survey of cities, including Anglo-Saxon concepts. His suggestion of urban units for 20,000 inhabitants, divided in nine autonomous units and surrounded by agricultural areas, appealed particularly to Nishiyama. He built upon this concept and translated it to the Japanese national scale, proposing units of medium-sized cities of 100,000 (or between 50 and 100,000 people), an idea he developed further in his essay on national structure—the second article here. Nishiyama was attempting to build upon traditional urban form and to develop a theory that was more applicable and more organized than Ebenezer Howard's proposal for garden cities. Ignoring the political context and Nazi ideology of Feder's original introduction, he saw it as a manual for making cities. Since many of the other planners did not read the original texts, the analysis of international examples made by Nishiyama, and a handful of other scholars, was essential. Many other planners drew on his history of urban form and planning as a tool for teaching planning as a discipline and

training future planners. Rejected in post-war Germany for the author's association with the Nazi Party, Feder's urban concepts would become a standard reference in textbooks on planning history for decades to come in Japan.¹⁹

Text 2: Reflections on the Urbanization of Postwar Japan: Chapter 9: An Essay on the National Structure

Nishiyama's proposal for planned urban space accompanied a concept for national urbanization that he published after the war, in June 1946, when Japanese cities were still in ruins. Originally entitled "Atarashiki kokudo kensetsu" [The new national construction], it appeared in June 1946 in *Shin Kenchiku* as the second in a series of three commentaries. Nishiyama believed that national planning ought to create the foundation for controlled development with an eye to long-term viability. Other colleagues agreed; their opinions differed as to how this should be done. In "Constructing the City for the Empire" [*Kōkoku toshi no kensetsu*], his colleague, Ishikawa, the head of Tokyo capital city planning, proposed a decentralization of the capital. In contrast to Ishikawa, Nishiyama did not criticize the big city itself. Engaging Ishikawa's argument for decentralization, Nishiyama argued that his approach was not feasible given the limited Japanese buildable space, notably in the Kanto area (the Eastern part of the Honshu island around Tokyo). Nishiyama also argued that a decentralization of capital city functions, discussed in Japan over decades, would not work, as corporations and other functions would follow them into their new spaces.

Continuing his point from Chapter 1, reprinted here, Nishiyama argued for maintaining mega-cities. Moreover, he proposed that such cities be planned rather than left to capitalist development. Specifically, he built upon historical practices of Japanese cities and contemporary urban theory, including the ideas of the German geographer Walter Christaller, to propose an organized distribution of cities throughout the Japanese mainland. Christaller, whose writings were first introduced in Japan in the 1930s, analysed urban services in regional contexts. He developed a theory about the distribution, number, size, and location of specific urban functions (such as housing, working, education, leisure) that planners could use in locating and planning new cities. Such an organization of cities into basic life units was in line with the historic development of Tokyo, or Edo as the city used to be called. One of the largest cities in history, Edo had historically housed up to 1 million inhabitants, traditionally organized in different neighborhoods and wards.²⁰

In Chapter 9, the second article presented here, Nishiyama outlined an organization close to Western concepts of zoning: most of the city would be a network of small monofunctional urban units (industrial, cultural, and harbor facilities) located along major lines of transportation, principally railway lines, and separated from other urban areas by green strips. Exclusively residential districts were located at a larger distance, themselves centers for surrounding villages. Nishiyama's plan reserved the city center for administrative, economic, financial and commercial central functions. According to him, cities and particularly megacities had to have

a working city center. (This is a surprising statement, as Japanese cities did not traditionally have a center—in Tokyo, the center was the shogunal palace that was not accessible to the public—and also the idea of the center was an aspect that Western modernists had largely ignored in the pre-war era.)

Nishiyama calculated distances between the different units in temporal terms, not the spatial terms that Ishikawa used. Distances between large cities of between 100 and 500 kilometers could be traveled by high speed trains and planes, whereas highways and trains connected smaller cities over distances of between 30 and 50 kilometers for the same length of time. Ordinary streets and trains led to villages, and it took a person about an hour to travel 20 kilometers. Even the villages, however, should be at a maximum traveling time of three hours from the capital.

Nishiyama also allocated room for recreational leisure and vacations (fig. 73), a universal demand in an urbanized world. The notion of day-trips gets a new meaning here. What was originally conceived as a way to organize trips to work, now provided structures to facilitate times on and off work. Nishiyama argued that, with the possibility of day trips anywhere in Japan, the capital should expand rather than remain small, while the urban units separated by green belts, the life units, would ensure that nature would be embedded in the metropolis. (For Nishiyama, the green zones were furthermore an important element in guaranteeing the urban food supply.) The idea of day trips from the capital to any place in the country is virtually a reality today. It has effectively led to further concentration, even though some had argued it could help to promote decentralization.²¹

Nishiyama thus tried to maintain the multifunctionality of big cities while making them more liveable. He stressed the need for balanced growth with an appropriate number of workplaces, welfare facilities, and the like, in order to prevent sprawl.²² Nishiyama was keenly aware that cities would not be able to grow endlessly. He essentially proposed to urbanize national space, and to structure the various scales of settlements, from rural populations in hamlets to regional hubs to mega-cities. He imagined mega-cities of 7.5 million with appropriate green spaces, or 18.7 million at 100 people per hectare.²³ Nishiyama correctly assessed the fact that the Tokyo area would grow, although he under-estimated its population growth and over-estimated the density: In 2016, the Tokyo Metropolis was about 13.6 million people with a density 6,158 people per square kilometer, while the larger metropolitan area stood at approximately 37 million inhabitants and 2,662 people per square kilometer (thus approximately 62 or 26 per hectare).²⁴ His predictions were based on a peak population of about 122 million, which is close to Japan's population of 126 million today.²⁵

Nishiyama acknowledges (in his introduction) that some of the key features of his plan, particularly the organization of life units, were not realized after the war, mostly due to what he identified as capitalist tendencies for agglomeration that did not necessarily acknowledge the everyday needs of citizens.²⁶ He knew that his plans had become outdated, but insisted that the need for planning remained.

Nishiyama's arguments are today of renewed importance. While his experience was intimately related to the food deficiency of post-World War II, his argument also relates to ongoing debates on sustainability, autonomous cities, and circular economies, demonstrating the importance of reflecting on the past for future practice.

Text 3: Visionary Planning: Chapter 10: Mountain Cities

Nishiyama took a very pragmatic approach to urban change. From the beginning, his reading of the past was oriented towards the future of the city and its design at all scales. He was also one of the rare Japanese planners to reflect on the term *vision*. In his text “Bijon kara kōsō keikaku e” (From vision to conceptual plan), he pointed out that the Japanese word for vision, *bijon*, has often been used as a catch phrase and needs to be analysed with care.²⁷ A beautiful presentation called a vision, aimed at making people dream, he wrote, was often based on lies or inaccuracies and even sought to hide the real intentions of its authors or the negative impacts of a project. Futuristic visions lacked concrete directions for realization and a basic set of human values to orient them. Nishiyama cited the “vision” of motorization that brought cars to Japan, which did not separate traffic functions or have an appropriate street network, and where people simply used traditional roads that before had been also a place for community activities. Streets were another room to play and to meet, like an extension of the home. But no one discussed the negative effects of car traffic: noise, air pollution, the need for parking spaces, etc. In spite of this negative take on the word *bijon*, Nishiyama strongly recommended that planners develop a vision mapping out basic principles and giving an overall aim to individual initiatives.

Nishiyama's ideas overlapped but also differed from those of Tange Kenzo. Both architect planners were from the same generation, with Tange being only two years younger than Nishiyama. Their careers coincided on several occasions. In 1942, Nishiyama, like Tange, entered the competition for a monument for the Japanese imperialist area of control, the so-called Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The remit of the competition gave participants four sites to choose from. In contrast to Tange, whose project for a location close to Mount Fuji is better known, Nishiyama situated his proposal in Asuka, in Nara Prefecture in Western Japan, where he was based. Nishiyama's approach to this topic differed from that of the other competitors. Whereas the competition title seemed to call for a monument, Nishiyama proposed a new city closely connected with a nearby village. He created a kind of permanent Olympic village, sketching out a meeting and festival capital offering cultural and sports facilities for all the different people who had come under Japanese authority. Nishiyama's proposal thus already hinted at the urban organization he was proposing. The proposal may also have reflected his simultaneous study of plazas of ancient Greece and Rome.²⁸ The design he proposed for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere combined

monumental and modern elements, with a compact infrastructure connected by green routes, an organization that connects to that of the life units he proposed.²⁹

In later years, both Tange and Nishiyama aimed to solve the same problem: overpopulation on the limited land of Japan. Nishiyama addressed the problem through strategic planning, Tange through technology. In 1946, reacting to the real and the planned increase in inhabitants as well as the hardship and the need for food after World War II, and based on the idea of self-reliance in food production, Nishiyama argued that further land was needed for cultivation. At a time when people were barely surviving, he raised the question of the relationship between population and land availability. Conscious of the need for space, Nishiyama argued for a careful use of arable land, which, notably during the war, had been used for defensive and other military purposes. Specifically, he proposed building cities on mountainsides (which comprised $\frac{3}{4}$ of Japanese territory), keeping the plains free for agriculture.³⁰

Nishiyama's proposal, "*Sangaku toshi*" or "Mountain Cities," reprinted here, built on the preceding concept of the organization of national space. It emerged out of a radio contribution, "Broadcast on 'Our Words'"—*Watashitachi no kotoba*—on the morning of December 9, 1945. Nishiyama had earlier called for large-scale national land reform, which was partly attempted after the war but not in the direction that Nishiyama considered.³¹ Nishiyama argued that some 20 new cities for 50,000 inhabitants could be created each year. After demonstrating that inclined skyscrapers allow for better insulation of neighboring houses, he proposed erecting high-rise buildings on south-facing slopes. Nishiyama thought that landscape preservation was less important than feeding people. For all their problematic elements, these proposals are an important example of individual ideas made public for discussion and thus starting points for reimagining Japanese cities.

Again, Nishiyama's writings are relevant to current debates on sustainability and circular energy. He wrote: "In other words, we must manage our residential sphere on the surface of the earth where the land meets the sky, but transform this contact area into a three-dimensional, optimally rich environment; without wastage, use all the blessings provided from the sky (especially the emission of solar energy) and natural resources from the ground; and create the best residential configuration on the earth's surface."³²

Nishiyama and Post-war Development in Japan

In the post-war period Nishiyama continued to observe changes in housing and urban space. He also added his own voice and observations to changing modern living, from the post-war temporary living in old train cars to low- and high-rise modern housing. His observations on tatami living and the need to separate different functions within the house—already spelled out in 1942—are yet another indication of the continuity of his thinking since the 1940s and the impact of his work on Japanese housing. The projects for high-rise housing with tatami equipped apartments illustrate the changing Japanese lifestyle (Figures 17–22).



Figure 17 Photo of war-destroyed Kobe taken by Nishiyama in 1945 (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 18 Emergency post-war housing in former railway carriages (so-called streetcar housing) for fatherless families in Fushimi, Kyoto (1957) in a picture taken by Nishiyama (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 19 Rows of newly built low-rise public postwar housing on the site of a former military base in North Himeji in 1955 (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 20 Municipal apartment housing in Osaka in 1956 (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)



Figure 21 Drawing of a post-war apartment high-rise in Tokyo by Nishiyama in 1971 and published in his three-volume series on housing in Japan (*Nihon no Sumai*) (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

The 1960s were a crucial period, when Japan became a key player on the global stage in general and in urban planning in particular. Major international events—the 1964 Olympics and the 1970 Osaka World Expo—were firsts in Asia, and they played a major role in putting Japan on the world stage of planning and architecture. Indeed, these texts set the stage for debates in the post-war years. The close connection between Nishiyama’s theories, reflections, and historical studies of the pre-war/war period and the plans and visions of the 1960s is visible in the publication of the material after the war. The principles that he developed in these early years—on national planning, spatial distribution, careful organization of cities, control of sprawl/spread—would become the foundation for his proposals in the 1960s and 70s. Conceptual references to urban structure in separate units that cater to everyday demands, surrounded by green areas that also serve for food production or the

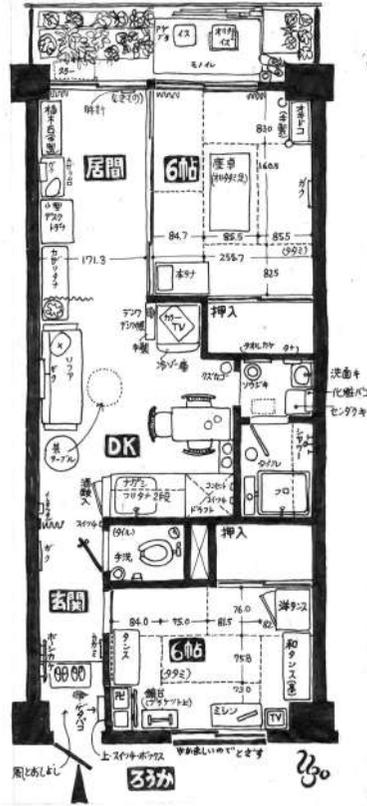


Figure 22 Drawing of the floor plan of a post-war high-rise apartment (47m²) that belonged to Nishiyama's friend K in 1967, featuring two tatami rooms and the use of each space, published in his series on housing in Japan (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

development of urban cores, were largely already defined in the 1940s and continued to shape his work in the 1960s. This continuity is also visible in his terminology. The term “kombinaato,” an industrial complex, appears in his writings of the 1940s and then again in his plans for Osaka Expo '70.

The 1960s were an important decade for Nishiyama. He was involved as an advisor in national projects, including since 1963 in the master planning for the Osaka Expo '70; his urban design project for Kyoto, featuring a high-rise axis through the center of the ancient city, published in 1965, created a lot of controversy.³³ Nishiyama continued to work on visionary proposals, following up on his theoretical analysis. He continued to argue for a specifically Japanese approach that took into account the particularities of hilly geography and population increase. Together with his students he therefore launched the

concept of “Image Planning” (*Kōsō Keikaku*) and suggested a model core of a future city at the Tokyo World Design Conference in 1960.³⁴ His goal in these visionary proposals was to show the contradictions in urban living space, including potentially negative features or what he termed “inferno.”³⁵ In his desire to respond to the particular needs of the Japanese cities, he also proposed “*Iepolis*” (Home City),³⁶ a city limited to pedestrian traffic and mechanized public transportation. The car had to stay on the outskirts, reflecting Nishiyama’s way of meeting modern needs while maintaining housing traditions, such as the practice of inhabitants and visitors removing their shoes on entering from outside.

Both proposals, Image Planning and Home City, thus build upon the traditional structure of Japanese cities, and on the concept of a network of compact cities with central cores and market places. Both concepts were at the heart of his 1965 integrated plan for Kyoto, consisting of an analysis of the current conditions of the former Japanese capital and a proposal for an extension (Figure 23).³⁷ Land control, including the division of land into autonomous units and the construction of a central plaza, as he had proposed in the 1940s, was another key feature of his plans. He suggested a skyscraper axis in the ancient city that



Figure 23 Nishiyama with members from his research group discussing a model of the Kyoto axis plan (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

strangely echoes Le Corbusier's proposal for a city of 3 million inhabitants, the Cité Voisin, to be built over the center of Paris, destroying a central North-South area of the existing urban structure. As such, it surprisingly contrasted with Nishiyama's earlier negative assessment of Le Corbusier's work and other aspects of his own writings while also incorporating his notion of displaying "inferno" to the masses.³⁸ The Kyoto plan perhaps also showed that Nishiyama's strength lay more in planning and analysis than architectural design.

Both Nishiyama and Tange aimed to translate their assessment and solutions for Japan's urban growth problems into architectural and urban designs, and Nishiyama's project was specifically set up as a counterpart to Tange's Tokyo Bay plan. Nishiyama had anticipated the transformations that would occur if motorized traffic entered the city. His proposal is thus a consequent continuation of both the opportunities and dangers of motorization. Nishiyama's vision appears more destructive than Tange's as it involved the oldest and most traditional city and one of the very few ones that was not destroyed in the war, and it received extensive critiques. Tange's vision for Tokyo, which had seen major destruction twice in the 20th century, first through the 1923 earthquake and then again through the bombings of 1945, had projected his internationally known 1960 megastructure onto the water of Tokyo Bay without touching the remnants of Tokyo, and as such continued to inspire visionaries worldwide.

Nishiyama continued to focus on the development of urban centers, the topic that also led to Tange's post-war fame. In the 1960s, as Japan aimed to bring international events to its homeland, opportunities arose for large scale planning. The Tokyo Olympics brought the country a lot of attention, and also public funding for the capital. The Osaka area, a long-time second in receiving funding, pleaded for the second big event, the Expo. Osaka '70 was a unique opportunity for intellectuals from the Kansai area to engage the public sector and to counter the prominence of the Tokyo group (Figure 24). As Andrea Urushima has shown, Nishiyama proposed to make the Osaka site a model city core, and suggested erecting buildings that could be used after the event as the heart of a new city area.³⁹ This was a unique opportunity to invest public money into urban construction as Nishiyama had been advocating, and the ultimate confirmation of the ideas he had elaborated in the 1940s. Nonetheless, the final exhibition project was built by Tange Kenzo. Instead of Nishiyama's organized construction, the country saw urban sprawl of a haphazard nature, and the large-scale projects that he could have led were largely assigned to and identified with the work of Tange.⁴⁰

Nishiyama's intervention in favor of the neighborhood, *machi*, was not a direct reaction to wartime destruction; it transcended this period and had a strong influence on *machizukuri*, the movement for neighborhood or community planning, which includes social as much as physical aspects. As Nishiyama had pointed out earlier, there is a special quality to the neighborhood, its social and functional diversity, and its meaning for the Japanese in terms of identity that is distinctive of the traditional *machi*. *Machizukuri*, as local participation in

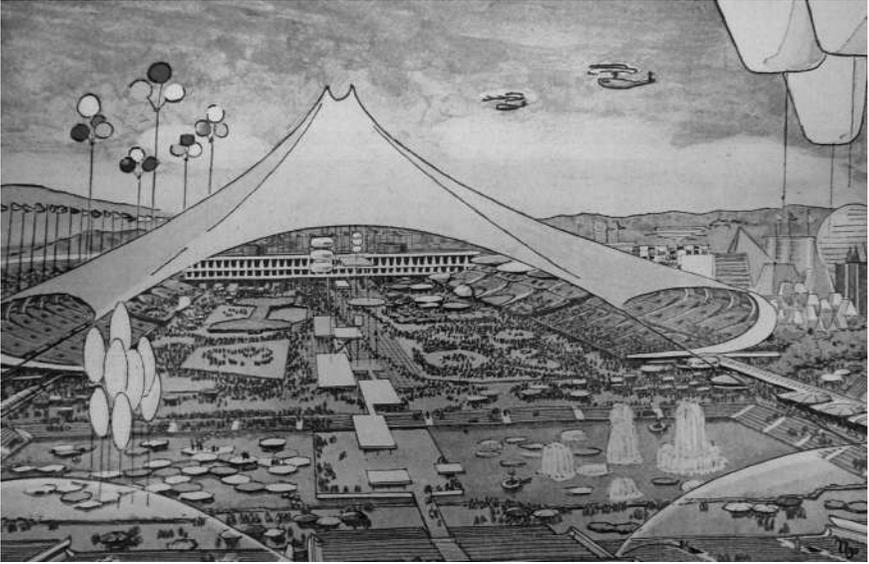


Figure 24 Nishiyama's proposal for the festival square (Omatsuri Hiroba) for the 1970 Osaka World Expo published in the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* on 1.1. 1967 Showa 42 (Source: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library)

decision-making or small-scale urban amelioration programs, was a first step towards a more humanized planning. It does not, however, replace Nishiyama's central project: a comprehensive vision based not only on economic concepts but on a set of social and political ideas for a balanced society.

In later years, Nishiyama remained engaged with planning practice and pragmatically adapted his writing, shifting from a top-down planning approach focused on national policies to a more bottom-up one. His disappointment with urban planning practice characterized by proximity between government officials and the construction sector led him to support grass-roots initiatives. Over time, he came to support movements against high-rise construction and expressways and for the preservation of traditional houses in both urban and rural contexts. As Nakabayashi Hiroshi has emphasized, Nishiyama's reflections on urban and regional planning were published in 1968, but he continued to work into the 1990s and that period needs further research.⁴¹ In particular, his role in pushing for the preservation of historic Japanese cities through the *Santo Shimin* Forum (Nara, Kyoto, and Kamakura residents planning movement) deserves further investigation.

The three texts translated and reproduced here are evidence of transnational and cross-cultural exchanges in conjunction with local practices and the potential role of an individual in such dialogues.⁴² They demonstrate how ideas can cross a border and stay there, even if conditions in its original home change. Thus, while ideas were exchanged in the Nazi period, when the two

countries fought on the same side, only one interlocutor, the Germans, discarded these approaches after the war. They also show how global history can be written in very different ways, depending on the viewpoint of the author: Nishiyama compiled and analysed different practices from the US to the Soviet Union, Europe, and Japan. Furthermore, these texts call scholarly attention to the writing of a global planning history and the need to assess the role of major characters not only through the lens of originally translated publications—such as those of Tange—but also with an eye to the translation of works in the local language, in this case in Japanese. These three early works of Nishiyama thus invite the reader to engage with a major figure in planning who is largely unknown outside Japan; to reconsider Japanese planning history; and to work towards a truly global planning history.

Notes

- 1 Carola Hein, “Idioms of Japanese Planning Historiography,” in *Planning History Handbook*, ed. Carola Hein (New York, London: Routledge, 2017).
- 2 Tange Kenzo and Udo Kultermann, *Kenzo Tange, 1946–1969; Architecture and Urban Design* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); Seng Kuan and Yukio Lippit, eds., *Kenzo Tange. Architecture for the World* (Lars Müller Publishers, 2012); Zhongjie Lin, *Kenzo Tange and the Metabolist Movement: Urban Utopias of Modern Japan* (London, New York: Routledge, 2010).
- 3 The Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library holds the archives of Nishiyama. For an overview see: Uzō Nishiyama Memorial Library, ed. *Nishiyama Uzō to Sono Jidai* [Uzō–Nishiyama and His Time] (2000). For reflections on his work see: Shōji Sumita and Nishiyama Uzō Kinen Sumai Machizukuri Bunko, eds., *Nishiyama Uzō no jūtaku, toshiron: sono gendaiteki kenshō* [Nishiyama Uzō’s Reflections on Housing and Cities: A contemporary verification] (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2008).
- 4 Yasuo Nishiyama, *Japanese Town Planning in a Comparative Perspective: Land Readjustment Is the Mother of Town Planning in Japan* (1988). Shun-ichi Watanabe and Kensetsushō Kenchiku Kenkyūjo (Japan), *Planning History in Japan: A State of the Art Survey*, vol. B R I research paper, no 86, Planning History in Japan: A State of the Art Survey (Tokyo: Building Research Institute, Ministry of Construction, 1980). Shun-ichi Watanabe, *Toshikeikaku no tanjo: Kokusai hikaku kara mita nihon kindai toshi keikaku* [The Birth of Urban Planning: Japan’s Urban Planning in International Comparison] (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobo, 1993).
- 5 As Kazuto Kasahara has pointed out, the *International Architectural Association of Japan*, founded in 1927 in Kyoto, had close contacts with foreign designers, including members from The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France and America (notably Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut, G. Th. Rietveld, J.J.P. Oud, Andre Lurçat and Richard Neutra).
- 6 Sumie Shoji, “The Life of Hideaki Ishikawa,” *Toshikeikaku/City Planning Review (special issue)*, no. 182 (1993).
- 7 Carola Hein, “Imperial Visions and City Planning: Visions for Datong in the 1930s,” in *Cartographic Japan: A History in Maps*, ed. Kären Wigen, Sugimoto Fumiko, and Cary Karacas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Eika Takayama, “Datong toshikeikakuan” [The Datong Town] *Gendai Kenchiku* 8 (1940).
- 8 Uzō Nishiyama, *Sensō to jūtaku* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1983); Shōji Sumita, “Ch. 1: Nishiyama Jūtaku–Gaku Ronkō,” in *Nishiyama Uzō no jūtaku, toshiron: sono gendaiteki kenshō* [Nishiyama Uzō’s Reflections on Housing and Cities: A contemporary verification], ed. Shōji Sumita and Nishiyama Uzō Kinen Sumai Machizukuri Bunko (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2008).

- 9 Carola Hein, “Nishiyama Uzō and the Spread of Western Concepts in Japan,” *10+1*, no. 20 (2000); Andrea Yuri Flores Urushima, “Genesis and Culmination of Uzō Nishiyama’s Proposal of a ‘Model Core of a Future City’ for the Expo 70 Site (1960–73),” *Planning Perspectives* 22, no. 4 (2007); Andrea Yuri Flores Urushima, “The 1970 Osaka Expo: Local Planners, National Planning Processes and Mega Events,” *Planning Perspectives* 26, no. 4 (2011); Carola Hein, “Machi: Neighborhood and Small Town—the Foundation for Urban Transformation in Japan,” *Journal of Urban History* 35, no. 1 (2008); “The Transformation of Planning Ideas in Japan and Its Colonies,” in *Urbanism – Imported or Exported? Foreign Plans and Native Aspirations*, ed. Joe Nasr and Mercedes Volait (Chichester: Wiley, 2003).
- 10 Kosei Hatsuda, *Toshi no Sengo* [Post-War City] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Publisher, 2011).
- 11 Uzō Nishiyama, *Chiiki Kūkan Ron* [Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1968); *Jūtaku Keikaku* [Housing Planning] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1967); *Kenchikuron* [Theories on Architecture] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1967); Nishiyama Uzō, ed. *Jūkyoron* [Theories on Housing] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1968).
- 12 Uzō Nishiyama, *Nihon no sumai* [Housing in Japan] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1987).
- 13 Uzō Nishiyama, “Jūkyō kūkan no yōto kōsei ni okeru shinshoku bunriron [Theory of Separation of Bedding in the Usage Structure of the Residential Space],” *Kenchiku gakkai ronbunshū* 25 (1942).
- 14 Carola Hein (2016) Tatami: Floor Cover, Building Block and Lifestyle, Het Nieuwe Instituut, <http://platform.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/en/tatami-floor-cover-building-block-and-lifestyle-carola-hein>
- 15 Uzō Nishiyama, “Hyumanizumu no kenchiku [The Architecture of Humanism],” in Uzō Nishiyama, ed., *Kenchikuron* [Theories on Architecture]. (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1967).
- 16 *Chiiki Kūkan Ron* [Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space] (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1968).
- 17 In earlier writings I have translated it as “The structure of life-units.”
- 18 Gottfried Feder, *Die Neue Stadt, Versuch der Begründung einer neuen Stadtplanungskunst aus der Sozialen Struktur der Bevölkerung* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1939); Gottfried Feder and Fritz Rechenberg, “Shintoshi no kensetsu,” [The Construction of New Towns] *Tōkyō Shōkō kaigisho* 5 (1942).
- 19 Hein, “Machi: Neighborhood and Small Town—the Foundation for Urban Transformation in Japan.”
- 20 Nishiyama references the size of the Tokyo wards, Ch. 9, p. 243.
- 21 Carola Hein and Philippe Pelletier, *Cities, Autonomy and Decentralization in Japan* (London, New York: Routledge, 2006/2009).
- 22 Uzō Nishiyama, *Toshikeikaku to Machizukuri* [Urban Planning and Community Design], vol. 2 (Tōkyō and Kyōto: Chōbunsha, 1971).
- 23 Ch. 9, p. 252.
- 24 Tokyo Metropolitan Government: About Our City: Tokyo’s History, Geography and Population <http://www.metro.tokyo.jp/ENGLISH/ABOUT/HISTORY/history03.htm> (accessed 28 December 2016); Tokyo 2020 東京都の人口（推計）[Population of Tokyo estimated] 22.12.2016 <http://www.toukei.metro.tokyo.jp/jsuikei/2016/js16cf0000.pdf>; World Population Review, Tokyo Population 2016 <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/tokyo-population/> (accessed 28 December 2016).
- 25 Ch. 9, p. 244.
- 26 Ch. 1, p. 23.
- 27 Nishiyama Uzō, “Bijon kara kōsō keikaku e,” in *Machizukuri no kōsō* [The Structure of Community Building], ed. Uzō Nishiyama (Toshi Bunkasha, 1990), p. 41–146.
- 28 Uzō Nishiyama, “Atarashii Hiroba [New Squares],” in *Chiiki Kūkan Ron* [Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space], ed. Uzō Nishiyama (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1968).

- 29 Uzō Nishiyama, “Dai tōa kensetsu kinen zōei butsu,” *Shin Kenchiku* 1/1943 [Construction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere memorial place]; “Dai tōa kensetsu kinen eizō keikaku,” *Kenchiku Zasshi* 12/1942 [Design for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere memorial place]; Uzō Nishiyama, “Dai tōa seichi shukusai toshi keikaku an oboe-gaki [A plan for a holy and festival place for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere],” *Shin Kenchiku* 1/1943; Terunobu Fujimori, *Architecture et Design de 1910 à 1945*, in: *Le Japon des Avant-Gardes 1910–1970*, Centre Pompidou 1986.
- 30 Uzō Nishiyama, “Sangaku toshi [Cities on Mountain Slopes],” in *Chiiki Kūkan Ron* [Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space], ed. Uzō Nishiyama, S. 267–259 (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1978), Original: *Atarashiki kokudo kensetsu, dai 3 hen, sankaku toshi ron*, *Shin Kenchiku* 1946/6
- 31 Carola Hein, “Rebuilding Japanese Cities after 1945,” in *Rebuilding Urban Japan after 1945*, ed. Carola Hein, Jeffrey Diefendorf, and Yorifusa Ishida (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- 32 Ch. 10, p. 286.
- 33 Uzō Nishiyama, “A Plan for Kyoto,” *Japan Architect* 105, no. Feb. (1965).
- 34 The World Design Conference Organization, *World Design Conference 1960 in Tokyo* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1961).
- 35 Thanks to Professor Nakabayashi Hiroshi for pointing to the notion of “inferno.” Andrea Yuri Flores Urushima has also addressed this theme: “Everyday unavoidable modernization and the image of hell: visual planning in the writings of Nishiyama Uzō,” in *Alternative Visions of Postwar Reconstruction: Creating the Modern Townscape*, ed. John Pendlebury, Erdem Erten, and Peter Larkham (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 90–107.
- 36 Uzō Nishiyama, H. Mimura, and T. Katayose, “Home City,” *Kindai Kenchiku* 14 (1960).
- 37 Nishiyama, “A Plan for Kyoto.”
- 38 Shinya Katagata, “Ch. 3: Kōsōkeikaku: kūkan no ronri to yosoku,” in *Nishiyama Uzō no jūtaku, toshiron: sono gendaiteki kenshō* [Nishiyama Uzō’s Reflections on Housing and Cities: A contemporary verification], ed. Shōji Sumita and Nishiyama Uzō Kinen Sumai Machizukuri Bunko (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2008).
- 39 Andrea Yuri Flores Urushima, “Genesis and Culmination of Uzō Nishiyama’s Proposal of a ‘Model Core of a Future City’ for the Expo 70 Site (1960–73),” *Planning Perspectives* 22, no. 4 (2007).
- 40 André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan. Cities and Planning from Edo to the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2002).
- 41 Hiroshi Nakabayashi, “Ch. 4: Chiiki seikatsu kūkan keikaku-ron to keikan keikaku-ron Nakabayashi Hiroshi,” [Nishiyama Uzō’s Reflections on Housing and Cities: A contemporary verification] in *Nishiyama Uzō no jūtaku, toshiron: sono gendaiteki kenshō*, ed. Shōji Sumita and Nishiyama Uzō Kinen Sumai Machizukuri Bunko (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2008).
- 42 Carola Hein, “Crossing Boundaries: The Global Exchange of Planning Ideas,” in *Making Cities Global*, ed. Andrew Sandoval-Straus and Nancy Kwak (Philadelphia: UPenn Press, 2017).
- 43 Carola Hein, “Nishiyama Uzō and the Spread of Western Concepts in Japan,” *10+1*, no. 20 (2000).

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