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From flowers to factories: a peregrination through changing landscapes on the edge of Tokyo

Paul Waley^a

^a University of Leeds,

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From flowers to factories: a peregrination through changing landscapes on the edge of Tokyo

PAUL WALEY

Abstract: The east bank of Tokyo's main river, the Sumida, was lined on its northern stretch at Mukōjima by an embankment and by a series of temples, shrines and gardens that had been in the Edo period and continued into the Meiji era to be a favoured place for escape from the city and its physical and social constraints. In 1889, a large textile mill was founded at the embankment's northern end, and in the years that followed the area was largely industrialised. This paper traces this process of industrialisation and its culmination in the death of the cherry trees that lined the embankment as a result of flood and fire. It uses a variety of accounts to examine this process of marginalisation of a cultural landscape. In so doing, it reflects on some of the contradictory impacts of the process of urban modernisation and highlights the construction of a new riverside park and promenade in Mukōjima that incorporated the contradictory but classically modernist impulse to preserve the old while showcasing the new.

Keywords: Tokyo, landscape, modernisation, representation, recreation, industrialisation

The Mukōjima embankment

The embankment that ran alongside the Sumida river at Mukōjima, just outside the Tokugawa shoguns' capital city, Edo, was undoubtedly built with the principal aim of protecting the fields and houses in this low-lying area, while at the same time providing a pathway. No one seems to know for certain when it was built, but probably its construction dates over a long period of time toward the end of the sixteenth century and was part of a larger system of embankments and raised pathways that had been added to over the years. It needed regular and substantial repairs over the succeeding centuries (Tokyo 1907: 2, 654). As well as uncertainty over when the embankment was built, there is some dispute about the date of the first planting of cherry trees (*sakura*; *Prunus yedoensis*) along the embankment

pathway. Although some trees might have been planted earlier, the Edo and Meiji topographies state that it was the eighth Tokugawa shogun, Yoshimune (ruled, 1716–45), who was the first to plant the trees along the embankment.¹ The other sites chosen by Yoshimune for the planting of cherry trees – to the north and south of the city – became places of symbolic significance in the manner of Mukōjima. In addition to the cherry trees, whose roots were regarded as particularly effective in binding the soil, willows (*yanagi*; *Salix alba*) and peach trees (*momo*; *Prunus persica*) were planted to reinforce the embankment against flooding. Responsibility for their upkeep was given to the headman of the local village. The trees were damaged by flooding on a number of occasions and further plantings of cherry trees occurred at irregular intervals.

Mukōjima was situated just outside the city, part urban periphery, part market garden (Figure 1). It lay on the far bank of the city's main river, the Sumida. During the cherry blossom season, the embankment became the site of bacchanalian festivities under the blossoms (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002; Waley 1996). Just behind the embankment, a number of shrines, temples and gardens were located, some of which were linked together in the latter part of the Edo period to form a pilgrimage route to the Seven Gods of Good Luck, a none-too-arduous amble through groves and past streams and tea-shops. This was the urban periphery as pleasure garden, an Edo version of Greenwich, shorn of Greenwich's associations with naval power and landed wealth or perhaps of the Vauxhall Pleasure Garden, but without the sense of being immured (Ogborn 1998). With its assemblage of temples and gardens, Mukōjima was one of the city's principal *meisho*, or famous places, so designated in countless topographical guides, including, for example, the official *Tōkyō annai* (Tokyo Guide) of 1907. This status was derived from its popularity as a location for the enjoyment of the cherry blossoms. Being a *meisho* imbued it with a special aura and a resonance with the *meisho* celebrated in classical poetry and centred around Kyoto and Nara (Waley 1996). Various figures who were in one way or another associated with the Tokugawa shogunal regime chose to make Mukōjima their home. Foremost among them was the last shogun himself, whose compound at the south end of the embankment became his main residence in the city after his fall from power. While we can only speculate as to why the former shogun chose this particular mansion out of several others, the choice was consonant with the Edo tradition of retiring to Mukōjima. Among others who lived here were men of state like Katsu Kaishū, who had managed the handover of the shogun's capital to imperial troops in 1868, the soldier and statesman Enomoto Takeaki and the satirist Narushima Ryūhoku. Throughout the nineteenth century, indeed, on both sides of the Meiji restoration, leading figures 'bought into' the Mukōjima landscape with all its connotations and associations. For these and other prominent figures, residing in Mukōjima was a statement of allegiance to a culture and its landscape in decline. And through their presence, something of the mystique and the associations of the embankment and its hinterland remained even as the nature of the landscape changed.²

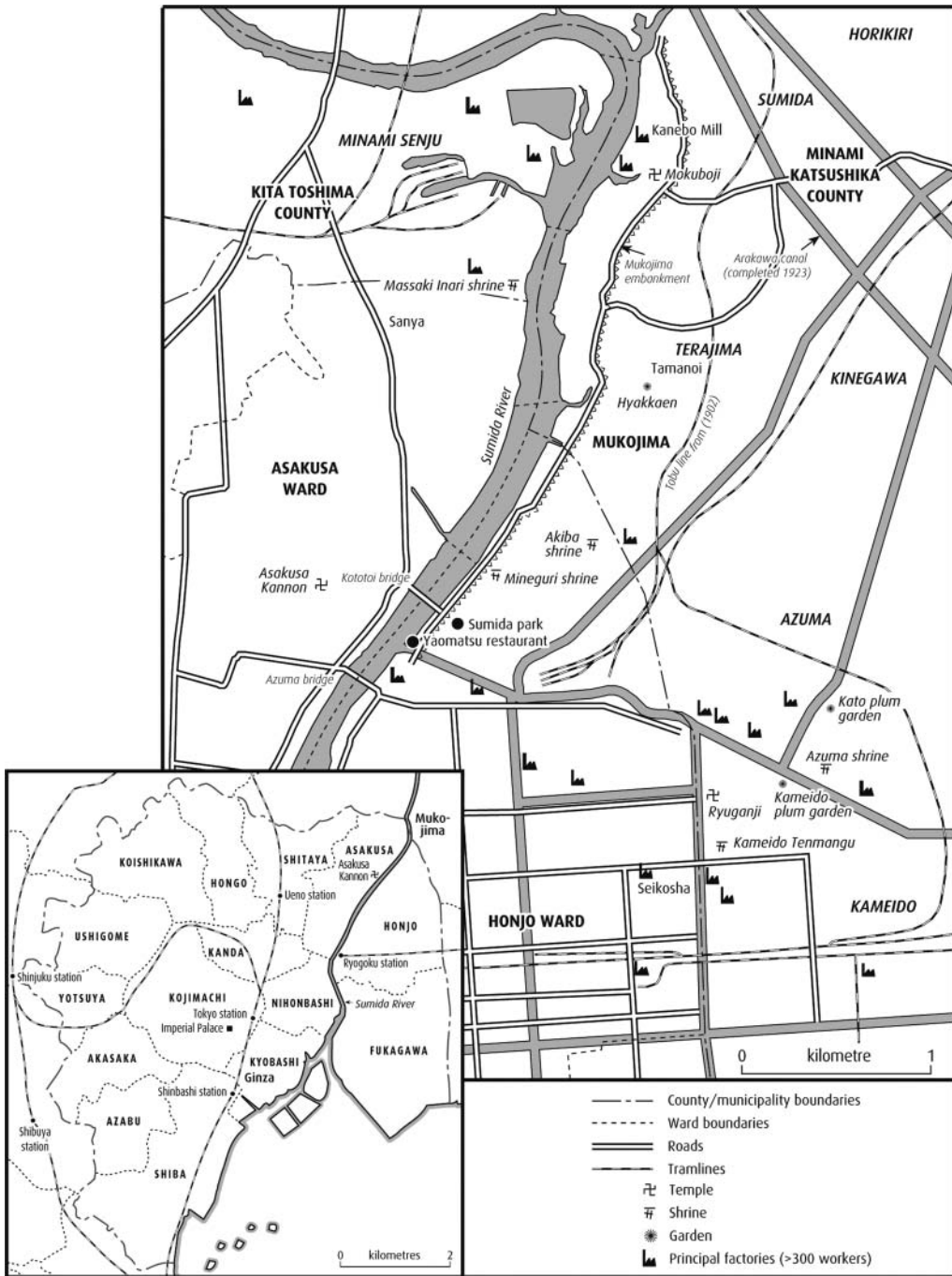


Figure 1 Map showing Mukōjima and its location in Tokyo.

Only a few decades after the fall of the shogunate and the ushering in of an imperial government in 1868, factories were founded along the embankment and nearby waterways, and Mukōjima was transformed into an industrial suburb. Throughout the Meiji era, the embankment retained its popularity during the cherry blossom festival. By the latter part of the period, groups of workers were escorted to the embankment; the crowds grew in intensity and the police were called in to maintain order. But as the area became increasingly urbanised and industrialised, flooding grew in intensity. The flood of 1910 was the first and probably the most damaging, but it was followed in 1923 by the Great Kantō Earthquake, which brought on fires that destroyed nearly all the buildings in the area. Mukōjima was rapidly rebuilt, but now as a rather non-descript industrial suburb.

In reflecting on change along the Mukōjima embankment, I start by depicting in this paper an increasingly ‘self-conscious’ landscape, stimulated by commercialisation. The text of this paper then follows the sometimes contradictory developments on or near the embankment as factories were founded and the landscape so close to the hearts of Edo ‘revisionists’ was tarnished. By the 1920s, in a process accelerated by the catastrophic earthquake of 1923, Mukōjima and the rest of the east bank of the Sumida River had become an industrial zone. I conclude by returning to the embankment and relating attempts to re-package elements of the former Mukōjima landscape in a new and explicitly modern park. In taking this peregrination around the east bank of the Sumida river, I reflect on the shifts that modernisation wrought on Tokyo’s cultural landscape.

Mukōjima and the reorganisation of urban space in Tokyo

Tokyo was neither a colonial creation nor a colonised city. It has therefore very much its own story to tell about modernisation and the city as a site for modernity (Harvey 2003). It is generally agreed that the regulation of urban space lies at the heart of urban modernity. In the words of Matthew Gandy, ‘The search for spatial order has been an integral element in the contradictory experience of modernity’ (Gandy 1999: 24). Regulation entailed initially the implementation of new and more comprehensive rules governing roads and traffic, movement around the city, and soon after an allocation of urban space to specific activities. Urban space was, in other words, reorganised to accord with the perceived needs of a nation introducing a modern, Western polity. What, we ask, was the new urbanism at the heart of Japan’s modernity? In what ways did it differ from what had gone before? Edo, the shogun’s capital, was certainly a city suffused by a sort of commercialism, not least of cultural products such as prints, maps and all forms of souvenirs and of food products often linked with specific tea houses and eating establishments. It was therefore a consumer-based commercialism with strong roots in the city’s cultural landscape. It was too a commercialism based on

a thriving artisanal sector feeding the needs of a consumer society. It was into this urban society that Westerners first inserted their own version of modernity.

The reorganisation of urban space in Tokyo was drastic but by no means unprecedented – a similar process of change befell Beijing during the early years of republican government or Istanbul at the fall of the Ottoman empire or indeed Tokyo itself during its transformation from an industrial to a post-industrial city. But the changes initiated by the Meiji regime had a profound impact on the landscape, and there was little that the Meiji rulers cared to preserve. No monuments were marked for preservation, as were (if in rather erratic fashion) the Altar of Heaven and other imperial structures in Beijing (Deng 2000; Shi 1998). Fire soon eliminated what had not already been disposed of. The government lacked the resources to build the sort of triumphalist baroque capital that certain parties were advocating (Fujimori 1982: 248). No national monument was built, as later in Jakarta, to symbolise the struggle against colonial power – precisely because there had been no colonial power (Kusno 2004).

The process of modernisation undergone in the city was intertwined with westernisation and industrialisation. As these conjoined processes picked up speed in the later Meiji years, the urban periphery moved outwards, ever further as the first suburban railway lines were built in the 1920s. Tokyo spread with extreme rapidity. The population of the city and its six surrounding counties grew from just under one million in 1880 to over three and a half million by 1920. Tokyo spread in every direction, but particularly out to the west. As a result, a new social and cultural geography of the city emerged, one that has been reflected in a changing balance between a declining centre and east of the city, Shitamachi (within which Mukōjima is generally located), and an emergent west, Yamanote.³

Tokyo's urban periphery moved outwards, but it also moved inwards, into the memory and into the margins of the city. The former periphery itself, now no longer so peripheral in a geographical sense, became a container for those who eked out a living on the margins of society. The rapid urban change and the industrialisation that was central to it created large numbers of marginal and marginalised people, working on the edge of industrial society, as rickshaw pullers, porters, rubbish pickers, home workers and in small factories (Nakagawa 1985). Not only did industrialisation in its early phase create a new marginalised society, but it also transformed parts of Tokyo, and specifically the northeast of the city, including Mukōjima, into a fragmented terrain, a patchwork of factory compounds and pockets of slum housing. So the story of Mukōjima is also, or indeed especially, a story about the changing nature of the urban edge, which, in the Edo period, had shown a quite clearly defined binary nature, especially in the north-east of the city around Mukōjima. It was a place of escape and of easy pilgrimage, a liminal space, a meeting place with the otherworldly. It was a release from the constricted spaces and limited freedom of movement of the city. At the same time, the urban edge was a zone of impurity, the site of the ritually impure, the location of outcaste settlements, of temple crematoria, and, along

roads leading out of the city through the periphery, of execution grounds. It was also a space of subversive play, the anti-quotidian space of the licensed brothel district (Maeda 2004: 76).

The landscape of Mukōjima and the urban periphery changed rapidly, but our appreciation of this change is filtered, mediated, through the sensibility of writers and others engaged in the representation of the city's changing landscapes. The pages that follow are something of a peregrination through this changing landscape, piggybacking on the walks and works of others. Movement and the constrictions imposed on movement, whether conscious or subliminal, lie behind most of the representations of the landscape of Mukōjima discussed here, many of which issue out of walks consciously undertaken to record impressions (Nishiyama 1972). Others present their material, guidebook style, as a textual *flânerie*.

It seems to me that there are four sometimes overlapping tendencies in representations of the landscape here. First there are the revisionist writers, who convey a sense of landscape lost, elegists lamenting a disappearing culture. The most significant are Narushima Ryūhoku and Kōda Rohan, a writer and classical scholar with strong links to the shogunal regime (Sherif 1999), and in particular Nagai Kafū, who, in a sort of inverted Orientalism, used Mukōjima and nearby parts of the city as a metaphor for the values that he saw as being lost to Westernisation (Hutchinson 2001). Other writers whose names are connected with Mukōjima include the poet Masaoka Shiki, who spent brief periods living there and wove Mukōjima motifs into his poetry. Secondly there is a smaller group of journalists and writers, Matsubara Iwagorō and Yokoyama Gennosuke foremost among them, authors of investigative reports into social conditions in the margins of the city (Matsubara [1892] 1988; Yokoyama [1899] 1985). They adopted some of the imagery of British 'social explorers' such as Charles Booth, but retained idioms and metaphors from earlier topographical literature. Their work, as time passed, became more 'scientific', and helped to bring about official responses to the conditions of slum dwellers.

Thirdly, there were the official topographies, ward histories, statistical surveys and the like, published in growing numbers but deriving from Confucian traditions of encyclopaedic topographies. Finally, throughout the modern period, topographical literature continued to be produced (Schulz 2003; Tsuchida 1994). Much of it followed, often self-consciously, the format of such literature in the Edo period. Ascribing what might be called a moral geography to the city, these topographies of contemporary *moeurs* drew on earlier topographical traditions, and in so doing they occupied the space and period of disjunction between the old order and the new society. Writers like Hattori Bushō and Hirade Kōjirō, captured new Tokyo in an idiom reminiscent of Edo and reflected, sometimes with irony but often with a wide-eyed surprise, on the subtleties of the transformation that saw new activities occupying spaces of traditional significance in the city (Hattori [1874–6] 1976; Hirade [1899–1903] 1975; Maeda 2004: 67). Newspaper articles form an addendum to this list, cutting across categories and

overlapping with each of them, modern manifestations of a mass culture that has its roots in the preceding era. The picture built up in the following pages of a changing landscape on the margins of Tokyo is then a composite of these various sources, inhabiting, so to speak, the spaces that they create.

***Hyakkaen* and other flower gardens behind the embankment**

Edo-period representations of the landscape of the Mukōjima embankment and surrounding area convey the sense of a large and undifferentiated garden, but the temples, shrines, tea shops, small settlements and gardens that are mentioned in Edo accounts and illustrated in maps and prints clearly indicate territorial distinctions. With the advent of the Meiji era, land was no longer in the (nominal) hands of the shogunate. Plots were bought and sold. The commercial give-and-take, which had been restricted to souvenirs and refreshments, now came to include the charging of fees to enter gardens. New gardens opened, and occasionally closed again.

The question of whether to charge customers became an issue at the most famous of all the gardens in Mukōjima, the Garden of a Hundred Flowers, *Hyakkaen* (Figure 2). It had been founded by Sawara Kikū, a dealer in curios and cultural man-about-town, in 1803. Kikū had relied on visitors buying tea and souvenirs such as locally baked pottery ware and had not charged an entrance fee (Sumida 1967: 1334). His descendants seem to have continued this system. It no longer worked, however. The crowds who visited the garden did not spend enough to pay for maintenance. The decision was taken, therefore, to charge for entrance. When the writer and chronicler of the east bank, Nagai Kafū, visited the garden in 1913, he found a new ticket booth outside the gate (Nagai 1992: 231). This does not seem to have solved the problem of how to manage an Edo-style garden in a rapidly industrialising part of Tokyo. According to an article in the *Yomiuri* newspaper of 3 September 1911, the crowds were so great at blossom time that Kikū's fifth-generation descendant fearing for the safety of the flowers, had formed a circle of 'friends of the garden' to decide how best to proceed. This was at a time when, according to the same article, many other gardens opening on the city outskirts were all Western in their design (quoted in Kawazoe 1979: 147).

It was at this point, in 1915, that the garden was bought up by a local industrialist, who appointed Kikū as manager. Shortly after the 1923 earthquake, in accordance with the industrialist's wishes, his widow donated the garden to the Tokyo municipality (Kawazoe 1979: 147). The garden was not spared by the earthquake and fires. The historian of Edo, Mitamura Engyo, writing in 1930, makes no mention of the garden's plum trees in his account of the city's seasonal attractions (*Nihon chiri taikai* 1930: 419). By 1932, however, when the Asahi's 'panorama of Tokyo', *Shin Tōkyō daikan*, was written, the garden had been provisionally designated a historical site by the Ministry of Education. It was, the



Figure 2 'Hyakkaen Flower Garden at Mukojima', Ogawa Isshin, *Scenes in the Eastern Capital of Japan* (published in 1895). Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Records and Archives Institute.

authors of the *Daikan* wrote, 'one of the famous places of the new Tokyo' (Asahi 1932: 1, 33).

There was at least one garden in the area that embodied the contradictions of Mukōjima, of this once 'Arcadian' landscape undergoing an encroaching industrialisation. This was the Satake Garden. Late Edo maps show the property as belonging to the Matsudaira lords of Echizen. It probably became the property of the Satake family sometime after 1868. In 1890, the decision was taken to open the garden to the public for three months every year from March to the end of June. By this time the garden had become part of the grounds of the Dai Nippon brewery. There was no denying the popularity of the garden, it seems, but one commentator writing in 1910 objected (although in very restrained terms) to the vulgarity of the publicity for the beer company, and he found a lack of harmony in a Japanese garden among red-brick factory buildings (Sumida 1967: 1329). The garden, it would seem, appealed to a mass public.

The city had since Edo times been ringed by horticultural nurseries, which supplied the demand of city dwellers for potted plants. Most of these were located just outside the city to the north and north-east, and some, such as Chōshun'en in Mukōjima and the peony garden at Honjo Yotsume, doubled up as gardens

for viewing. The Chōshun'en, Garden of Everlasting Spring, was founded by a certain Asakura Toyoyoshi and opened, according to the *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue* (Newly selected illustrated famous places of Tokyo), in 1885 or 1886 (Hirade 1975: 290; Tokyo 1907: 1, 288; Yamashita [1898] 1969: 14, 147). The garden seems to have become a fixture on the east bank: 'For roses, the Chōshun'en in Mukōjima is the most noteworthy', Hirade wrote. The main seasons during which a visit was recommended were June and the spring and autumn equinoxes.

An iris garden had been opened in the early part of the nineteenth century in the watery terrain of Horikiri village, a couple of kilometres northeast of Mukōjima. 'Originally, in the Bunka era [1804–15], a peasant called Izaemon from the village first cultivated irises here, growing ever more exotic species', Hirade Kōjirō wrote at the end of the century. The number of visitors in the month of June when the irises are in flower grew steadily through the decades. Writing in 1918, Tayama Katai described the gardens in the following terms: 'When the flowers are in bloom, the people of the city often visit, their variegated parasols adding colour to the country lanes. . . . In the Kodaka Garden there is a small hill, on the top of which stands a pine tree. The garden is shaped so that you can see the iris blooms from there. In the Musashiya garden is a pond surrounded by small pavilions where drinks of sake can be had' (quoted in Tsuchida 1976: 73).

Restaurants and the commercialisation of the embankment

An important component in the growing commercialisation of the landscape was the number and variety of restaurants in Meiji and Taishō era Mukōjima. The crowds were thicker along the embankment during the cherry blossom season. At the same time a socially varied clientele patronised its main restaurants: bankers and bureaucrats, industrialists and retired soldiers, as well as writers and actors (Figure 3).

The best known of the Mukōjima restaurants were the two Uehan – Oku no Uehan and Naka no Uehan – and the two Yaomatsu – the Makurabashi and Suijin establishments. According to an article in the *Miyako* newspaper of 8 February 1910, these four were known as the local Shitennō, the 'four Buddhist kings' (Sumida 1967: 1372). As the shogunal regime tottered before the advance of the imperial forces in 1867, the first of the two Uehan restaurants to be established became a meeting place for loyalist supporters of the Tokugawa. The proprietor, Okiku, was renowned for her fearless disposition. In the early Meiji years, she and one of her sons founded a second Uehan restaurant, between the river and embankment. It was known as Naka no Uehan, the Middle Uehan, or as Yanagibatake no Uehan, the Uehan of the Willow Fields. According to the *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue*, it had a garden with pines, a pond, a lawn, and a tea hut (Yamashita 1969: 14, 164). Many of its patrons were drawn from the nobility (newly constituted from the old daimyo class) and it had a special awning for people arriving in horse and carriage. In 1910, however, according to the *Miyako*

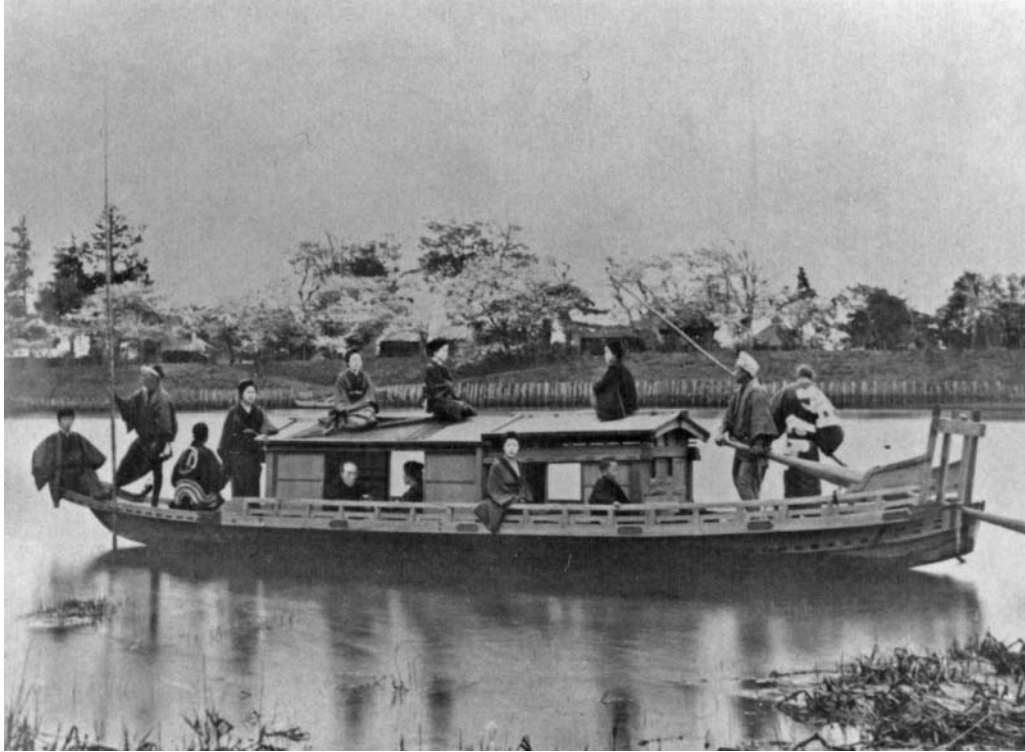


Figure 3 'Pleasure Boat on River Sumida', Ogawa Isshin, *Scenes in the Eastern Capital of Japan*. In the background of this carefully staged photograph are the cherry trees and embankment of Mukōjima. Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Records and Archives Institute.

newspaper report referred to above, it suddenly closed down. Land and building had been bought for ¥50,000 by the Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō school (Sumida 1967: 1372). The Oku no Uehan, refurbished and enlarged, continued to prosper, despite (or perhaps because of) the proximity of the Kanegafuchi Bōseki mill.

The Makurabashi Yaomatsu restaurant was the first of the landmarks that a person would come across walking north up the Mukōjima embankment out of town. Nagai Kafū writes of a party held at the restaurant in 1913 to mark the departure for Manchuria of his mentor Iwaya Sazanami, a leading literary figure and writer of stories for children (Nagai 1992: 240). Bankers and government officials were also, according to the *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue*, among the regular patrons (quoted in Sumida 1967: 1380). Sometime around 1894, spring water was tapped and a pond and bath house built in the restaurant grounds. Curative powers were claimed for the waters. The Yaomatsu was but one of several 'garden restaurants' in Mukōjima that tried to attract new customers by building a pond, waterfall, and bath house in which to take the waters.

To the relief of the *Tōkyō eiri* newspaper critic several establishments serving Western-style food opened in Mukōjima. One of these, the Hirano Tei, was a

branch of an Asakusa restaurant specialising in meat. It opened in 1882 and was 'cheap and therefore of interest', according to a newspaper report (18 March 1883; Sumida 1967: 1383). The other was a temporary establishment that remained open only for the weeks of the cherry blossom festival. This was the Kyūyū Tei, whose patrons were ferried out in elegant pavilion boats. Two less refined beneficiaries of the cherry blossom crowds were the famous confectionery shops Chōmeiji Sakuramochi and Kototoi Tei.

Policing the crowds on the embankment

New measures were passed early in the Meiji era to control the use of roads and to regulate the flow of traffic (Ishizuka 1988). This reflected a policy of public order on the streets, with all stalls, booths and other 'obstructions' to traffic no longer permitted, and hawkers and other representatives of the informal economy removed. The Meiji government was keen, from early on, to clean up the streets and other 'public' places and show a modern face to the world.

In the new national capital of Tokyo, leisure became an organised pursuit, with its own spaces and time frames. Often, however, the sporting pursuits were inserted into an already existing calendar and map of events. On the one hand, the cherry blossom festival retained traditional elements, including a carnivalesque atmosphere of drunken revelry and cross-dressing (Ohnuki-Tierney 2002); on the other, new practices appeared, including policing of the event, arrests for unruly behaviour, traffic control, investigation of prices. In a completely new expression of the 'recreational' nature of the river bank, boat races were introduced along this stretch of the Sumida and boathouses built along the Mukōjima embankment. The races, involving leading universities and banks, were held on the first or second Saturday of April, a time when the cherry trees were in full blossom (and, not by accident, the same time of year as the Boat Race on the River Thames in London). Crowds of cheering, boater-waving students added an unaccustomed note to the traditional sounds of blossom-viewing revelry (Hirade 1975: 251). The races were regularly watched by members of the imperial family, including the emperor himself, whose visit to the races and the cherry blossoms is reported in detail in the *Tōkyō nichinichi* newspaper (4 April 1884) (Sumida 1967: 738).

Policing of the revellers became an important aspect of events. Hirade Kōjirō, writing in his *Record of Tokyo customs*, found the press of people too great for words. The ferries were so crowded, he wrote, that they seemed in imminent danger of capsizing, and the two famous local confectionery shops looked likely to collapse at any moment. On Sunday 15 April 1900, the police reported 205 arrests for drunken behaviour and ninety-six for disorderly conduct. Six people were injured (Hirade 1975: 285). Reports indicate a degree of unruliness and drunkenness among the revellers that was not universally appreciated (*Tōkyō Hyakunenshi Henshū Iinkai* 1979: 3, 1308). References in the writings of Hirade, Kafū and others paint a picture of large crowds, of students, workers and the like, and a



Figure 4 'Cherry Blossoms at Mukojima', Ogawa Isshin, *Scenes in the Eastern Capital of Japan*.
Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Records and Archives Institute.

certain amount of inebriation (Tsuchida 1976: 48). 'Everyone leaves their sense of shame at home', Hirade wrote. 'There are troops of office workers and swarms of apprentice tailors.' Hirade adds that men dress up as women and make an exhibition of themselves, although he is quick to inform his readers that this custom has been prohibited and his manuscript was written before the ban was declared (Figure 4).

Traffic control had long been a problem, and as early as 1889 the police had issued orders banning the passage of carts along the embankment during the cherry blossom season. The police every year opened a temporary post in the grounds of a local shrine, according to a report in the *Tōkyō asahi* newspaper of 6 April 1901. That year the police carried out a particularly strict investigation of prices charged by the stall-holders. Very few, it seems, hung up notices of their prices as they were supposed to. According to the same newspaper report, the previous year two beer companies had opened stalls along the embankment. In 1901, they were joined by many other beer companies (Kirin, Kabuto, Ebisu, Daikoku, Tokyo, Sapporo, and others), locked in fierce competition to win the custom of the revellers. The article goes on to say that the growing commercialization of the cherry blossom

viewing is evident in the number of painted hoardings advertising goods such as medicines and beer that were hung alongside the cherry trees (Sumida 1967: 740).

Several accounts speak of factory workers being escorted in groups to enjoy the blossoms. The report quoted above refers to a visit to Mukōjima by the 700 workers of Seikōsha, the watch company today known as Seiko, whose factory stood in Honjo Ward. The trip was organized to fête the tenth anniversary of the founding of the company, and the workers were all dressed out in uniform. Meanwhile, some of the one thousand and more members of the Honjo Ward Umbrella Makers Association visited the embankment around 15 April dressed up as one of the seven gods of good luck or as famous historical personages. Local factories became involved in the festivities in a variety of ways. A report in the *Kokumin* newspaper of 17 April 1892 refers to the opening of a tea stall run by the makers of Kaō soap along the embankment where refreshment is offered free of charge. In these ways, elements of the industrial society of the east bank were integrated into the traditional landscape. Embankment became a space for mass enjoyment and the celebration of sporting events (Hirade 1975: 251).

Some time in the 1890s swimming in the Sumida became a popular summer pastime. While the rowing was clearly of restricted, elitist participatory interest (even if it elicited interest and enthusiasm among a larger number of people), the swimming attracted children from all kinds of backgrounds. The *Tōkyō annai* refers to the many swimming areas, *suieiijō*, on the right bank south of the Ryōgoku Bridge and on the east bank north of it (1907: 2, 669). Swimming, indeed, had become a ‘famous product of the Sumida River’ according to a 1915 report in the *Asahi* newspaper on the start of swimming races (quoted in Sumida 1967: 620). People swam in the river up to the beginning of the war, at least according to discussions that this writer has had with inhabitants of the Shitamachi area. Nevertheless, the sullying of the waters of the Sumida is a constant refrain among writers of the late Meiji and Taishō eras like Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Nagai Kafū, who saw in it a metaphor for the pollution of a way of life.⁴

The encroachment of industry

The Kanegafuchi Bōseki mill, built at the north end of the Bokutei embankment, was the first of the large textile plants to be established in the Tokyo periphery. The early date of its opening, 1889, and its relatively prominent position along the river conspired to make of it an important symbolic presence. It is described at length in the *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue* (Yamashita 1969: 14, 165). In the *Tōkyō annai*, the reference is accompanied by a photograph of its gate (1907: 2, 807), which itself precedes a series of photographs of famous east bank gardens – Horikiri Shōbuen, the bush clover garden of Ryūganji, and the wisterias of the Kameido Tenjin shrine.

The Kanegafuchi Bōseki company was formed in 1887 with capital of ¥1 million by six leading members (including Mitsukoshi, Daimaru, and Shiragi) of the Edo association of cotton wholesalers. The company's first factory was built here at the northern end of the Mukōjima embankment. As with all compounds set off by fence, wall, or ditch from the surrounding landscape (whether daimyō compound, brothel district, or temple precinct), the gate was the factory's most visible and most symbolically important architectural element (apart, that is, from the chimney). According to the *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue*, the gate had stood at the main entrance to the college for the nobility, the Gakushūin, in Kanda Kinshichō. 'The main gate is an imposing structure with its iron bars carved into arabesque scrollwork. On the outside is a plaque inscribed with the company name' (Yamashita 1969: 14, 166). The gate itself normally remained closed; passage was effected by a second entrance to the south of the main gate.

In front of the main gate stood a bridge, Tanchōbashi, over the ditch that surrounded the factory. 'This is where the once famous Tanchō-zuka [Mound of Cranes] was situated, and that is how the bridge got its name. Now all trace of the mound has disappeared, and few are the people in the locality who have heard of it. With the name of this bridge memories of former times, however slight, are retained' (Yamashita 1969: 14, 166). In the *Illustrated Famous Places of the Environs of Tokyo (Tōkyō kinkō meisho zue)*, it is specified that the mound was built to commemorate the cranes reared (for the shogun's annual crane hunt) on an island in the middle of a pond here (quoted in Sumida 1967: 1059). The mound had been moved a short distance away, we read, and in its place a shrine to Inari had been erected. This was declared the tutelary shrine for the factory and named the Kanegafuchi Inari Shrine. On 12 May every year, the foundation of the factory was marked by a festival, when rites were performed, as well as a dance to the gods (*kagura*) and theatrical displays. According to the same topography, the company planted cherry trees along the embankment in front of its premises, where previously there had been none. The windows of the factory dormitories afforded a fine view of the blossoms.

The factory precincts were extensive, and contained, in addition to the factory sheds themselves, several dozen dormitory buildings, a bathhouse, two refectories, and a sick bay (Yamashita 1969: 14, 168). By 1890, the plant already had over two-thousand workers, of whom three-quarters were women (Tokyo 1890). By 1912 it had half as much again, representing in its early phase a significant proportion of the population of the local area.

Kanegafuchi Bōseki was not the only factory built along the embankment, nor indeed the first. In 1890 there were eight industrial enterprises within a strip about 500 meters wide on either side of the embankment, fourteen by 1900, twenty-two by 1910, and sixty-eight by 1920. What this meant in terms of wheeled traffic, both motor and human-powered, can be well imagined.

There was little in the way of resistance to the industrialisation of Mukōjima and the surrounding area. Some unhappiness and a few protests were occasioned by

the prospect of the establishment of the Kanebō factory and by the construction of a railway line and the new drainage outlet for the Sumida river, but these came to nought. The first ever workers' rally in Japan was held outside a Mukōjima shrine, and strikes punctuated the history of the east bank, but these were events in an already industrialised landscape. There were few calls to protect and preserve the old landscape of the Mukōjima embankment. The journalist and writer Itō Gintetsu pleaded for an end to wholesale industrialisation and for protection of the landscape of Mukōjima (*fūryū Mukōjima hogo an*) (Tōkyō Hyakunenshi Henshū Inkai 1979: 1309; Schulz 2003: 121). This call was unusual, although it is worth noting that Yada Sōun appealed, after inspecting the totality of the destruction wrought by the earthquake of 1923, for some sort of movement to preserve the commemorative stones and other surviving remains of the past. Writers like Kafū lamented change, but they never thought to combat it. Prominent literary figures who lived there out of choice moved away, after the flood of 1910 or, in the case of the writer and scholar Kōda Rohan, after the earthquake of 1923 (Sherif 1999: 10).

Industrial capital on the east bank was formed by an implicit alliance between local farmers and landowners-turned-entrepreneurs and by large corporate ventures with links to government ministries. In a few, limited ways the managers of textile mills attempted to integrate their establishments into the east bank landscape and even to claim a certain proprietary interest in this landscape. This can be seen in the company song written for the Kameido plant of Tōkyō Mosurin, located close to the plum tree groves at Kameido and Azuma shrines. The song begins with the line, 'In Kameido, famous for its flowers' and goes on to describe the scented plum trees and the Azuma grove, which concealed the Azuma Shrine. There follow references to the 'three-thousand hearts as one' of the factory workers and the pure white cotton being spun in the factory beside the river. Hosoi Wakizō worked at the factory and wrote about the conditions there.⁵ He was vitriolic in his criticism of the song. You arrive at the factory from the end of the tram line. Everything is covered in dust. Nowhere is nature to be seen. 'From the first line of the first verse,' Hosoi wrote, 'it tells of the distant past and nowhere mentions present conditions' (Hosoi 1980: 291).

In general terms, however, the large factory grounds, surrounded as they were by ditches and barbed fences, remained isolated from the rest of the territory, their young female workforce seldom free or willing to venture out (Hosoi 1980: 194, 338).

Fractured landscapes of poverty

Mukōjima, once on the urban periphery, now became peripheral in a different sense of the term. It became part of the margins of the city. The periphery changed nature and morphed into a margin, a crevasse, a series of black valleys or holes. The landscape changed. Ponds and ditches appeared, mosquito-infested.

Sludge appeared through the grimy water of canals. The open spaces of fields and ponds were drained, sliced up and fenced off for factories. One might protest, arguing that spatial (as well as social) confinement had been one of the defining characteristics of life in Edo. Many of the commoner class lived down gated alleys; many members of the military class lived in walled and gated compounds. It is difficult to gauge what effect this might have had on the inhabitants of the city. But there is little doubting the magnitude of the transformation caused by the various elements of the new industrial landscape. Not only, then, did industrial capital change the landscape, but it had the power to change the dynamic of landscape change, which now accelerated, became plastic in its form but hard in its surfaces. Tucked in alongside the factories and their red-brick compounds were a number of poverty pockets (*hinmin kutsu*), the most egregious of which bore colourful if not lurid names. These were the new urban margins, now written about and reported, memorably by Matsubara Iwagorō (1988) and Yokoyama Gennosuke (1985), and before long surveyed and enumerated by city government officials (Nakagawa 1985).

The factories sealed themselves off. The slums that developed on the east bank were sealed off too, hidden from the view of those whose interest, attention, or concern was likely to be aroused by them. Sometimes they were hidden from view by a fence; more often they were cut off from the rest of the city by a ditch (Arakawa 1963: 261). Just occasionally, in the Nippori, Mikawashima, and Minami Senju areas, they were hidden behind railway tracks. They shared this characteristic isolation from the rest of the urban structure with the large textile mills whose surrounding walls were often tipped with sharp objects in part to impede intrusion but principally to prevent escape (Hosoi 1980: 194–5). The same social and moral attributes were imputed to the occupants of these areas as was to those of the brothel districts. Slum dwellers were considered to be lacking in education, dirty, and promiscuous (Sugihara and Tamai 1986: 23). The girls working in the textile mills were often regarded as prostitutes by the police and others in authority (Hosoi 1980: 262, 330). In all this, we have distinct echoes of conditions in the industrialising cities of Europe, of ‘those separate territories, assigned to poverty’ of which Engels wrote (quoted in Briggs 1968: 26). The east of Tokyo was far away from the more prosperous wards, and even if pockets of poverty were to be found throughout the city, it was more convenient that they should be over there, across the river.

If ditches and fences sealed off factories and slums from the rest of the city, so they did too for many of the illegal brothel districts of the east bank. The largest brothel districts east of the Sumida were those of Tamanoi and Kameido. When brothels were first opened in Tamanoi in 1918 and 1919, the area was still undeveloped, with only a few houses lining the occasional roads and the waterways (Maeda, Y. 1986). Even the name Tamanoi was yet to come into general currency. The Tamanoi prostitutes had been forced to move from their cramped premises across the river in Asakusa because of the construction of a new

road. The brothels had been clustered under the Asakusa ‘Twelve Storeys’, the city’s only tower and greatest attraction, but when this was severely damaged in the 1923 earthquake and subsequently demolished, the area at its feet was cleared for the road. The brothels relocated to sites beyond the municipal boundaries, in Tamanoi and Kameido, on the north side of the Kameido Tenjin shrine.

Tamanoi was the largest and most peripherally located of the east bank brothel districts. In its heyday in the 1930s it covered over ten hectares. The area was haphazardly developed, a maze of dank, ill-lit, malodorous alleys and arms stretching out from windows to grasp the sleeves of passers-by. Tamanoi was patronised principally by workers and soldiers, but in the 1930s the area acquired a well-known client, the author Nagai Kafū. Kafū had by then renounced his search for reminders of the vanishing culture of Edo and was now immersing himself in a different world, one that he rendered his own in a story called *Strange Tales from East of the Sumida* (*Bokutō kitan*). Tamanoi was the subject of his story, lightly disguised as fiction. It was published, with illustrations by Kimura Shōhachi, in the *Asahi* newspaper in 1937. This obscure brothel district became as a result one of Tokyo’s most unlikely famous places (*meisho*), but in so becoming, it perpetuated the vision of the urban periphery as place of darkness.

The east bank as ‘dark triangle’

The transformation of the east bank was officially recognized when, as a result of zoning measures introduced in 1925 following the promulgation of the Town Planning Act in 1919, almost the whole of the east bank between the Sumida and the new outlet for the Arakawa was officially designated an industrial zone, *kōgyō chiiki*.⁶ In the rest of Tokyo, parts of the north and south of the fifteen-ward area were also similarly designated. The growing contrast between an industrial east and a residential west of Tokyo was recognised and reinforced through the designation of the west, northwest, and southwest, as residential – *jūtaku chiiki* (Horiuchi 1978: 50; Ishida 1987: 136).

The designation of the east bank as an industrial zone merely reflected existing activities in the area. In making the designation, it was stated that the social and natural conditions of the area (the availability of waterways for transport, for example) were considered appropriate to an industrial zone (Horiuchi 1978: 52). In practice, the designation was of little direct consequence on the ground. The three designations were broadly indicative of general land use rather than being strictly prescriptive, and indeed land use zoning has continued to follow this pattern. Any sort of building could be constructed in an industrial zone (except for a limited number of factories considered liable to pose a risk to health or to public safety). Undesignated zones were open to most sorts of factory except the largest, and could be considered comparable to light industrial zones in European cities (Horiuchi 1978: 53). On a symbolic level, the designation of the east bank as an industrial zone can be seen to speak of its relegation to periphery. This is

the argument advanced by the literary critic Isoda Kōichi, who sees it as part of the ‘provincialisation’ of the Shitamachi area and everything it represented in the way of regional identity and historical and cultural tradition (Isoda 1975: 55, 84).

The perception of the east bank as industrial zone is reflected in various gazetteers and geographical accounts of Tokyo during this period. The east bank’s transition is well illustrated in the following introductory comment on Honjo Ward in *Tōkyō annai*: ‘It is now becoming for the most part an industrial ward. Nevertheless, in the north there is the famous scenery of Mukōjima [*shōku Mukōjima ari*], and in the eastern outskirts [*tōkō*, just beyond the ward’s borders] there are the places of recreation and excursion [*yūranchi*] such as Kameido, the Reclining Dragon Plum Tree, and the Bush-Clover Temple [Hagi-dera], giving it a special allure [*isshu no tokushoku*]’ (1907: 2–598). By 1930, the industrialisation of the east bank had evolved sufficiently for the *Nihon chiri taikei* to contain the following sentence in its chapter on industry in Tokyo: ‘In the overall distribution of industry, the thickest concentration of factories is to be found between the Sumida river and the Arakawa drainage outlet.’ Together with areas to the north, ‘this forms Tokyo’s largest and densest industrial zone’ (1930: 117). The *Shin Tōkyō daikan* headlines its introduction to Mukōjima Ward as follows: ‘Industrial zone pride of the metropolis – Commemorative stones darkened by soot’ (1932: 1, 33). The article, written in a faintly ironic, jesting tone, writes of the major factories of the new ward as a ‘march-past of Japanese industry’ (*Nippon daihyō kōgyō no on pareedo*).

The location within the east of the city of this industrial zone and its attendant social conditions elicited comparisons with London, especially among the early social investigators and campaigners of the turn of the century who had, as we have seen, been influenced by British works on the subject. Yokoyama Gennosuke, in a 1910 article headlined ‘A panorama of the industrial areas of Tokyo and of factory life’, wrote that, ‘If you mention East London, everyone has heard of the dens of poverty. The wards of Honjo and Fukagawa are the East Tokyo of Japan [*Nihon no iisuto Tōkyō*]’ (quoted in Ishizuka 1977: 252).

Not many years later, another Socialist writer, Haniya Yūtake, referred to the ‘triangle of darkness formed by Tamanoi, Sanya, and Kototoi Bridge’ (Unno 1983: 7). Sanya, although it did not become Tokyo’s largest day-labourers’ district until sometime after the war, was already an area that included a large contingent of rootless and jobless people (Unno 1983: 17). It was situated on the west bank, in Asakusa Ward, a few hundred meters in from the river, a sort of modern equivalent to the *eta* village of Edo. Haniya wrote of the tramps, not even able to afford the 25 *sen* that a bed in a lodging house cost, sleeping on benches along the embankment by Kototoi Bridge and in the new Sumida Park (Unno 1983: 8, 17). This stretch of the Sumida, north from Asakusa, has remained a meeting point for the destitute and the homeless.

‘Cherry tree promenade for the new age’

It was not long before the urban planners of Meiji Tokyo cast their eyes in a north-easterly direction. A new park had been planned for the river bank at Mukōjima as part of the Municipal Improvement Act of 1888. It was to be one of nine large parks to be created, the original plan envisaging rather ambitiously a new road and a narrow park stretching all the way north from Eitai Bridge. A revised plan called for a more modest expanse of 50,000 square meters. It was to stretch north from the Tokugawa residence and include the embankment itself and a strip of land to its east. The proposal for Mukōjima Park was criticised on various grounds in an article published in the journal of the *Nihon Engei Kai* (Japan Horticultural Association) in October 1903 (Sumida 1967: 1306).

It took a force no less strong than the Great Kantō Earthquake to get the plan translated from paper onto the ground. The plan – it should be noted, however – had already been discussed in March 1923, six months before the tremor, as part of measures to be introduced under the new Town Planning Act of 1919. The earthquake, however, provided an impetus by underlining the role of parks as gathering points in case of disaster (Jinnai 1987: 115). According to a thorough account of the tergiversations that preceded construction of the park, the plans were amended six times; the final plan, under which the two university boathouses were to be moved north, was decided in 1929.⁷ Another feature of the landscape that was sacrificed in order to gain extra acreage was the Yaomatsu restaurant, which stood in what was to be the southwest corner of the park.

The park, in its finally approved form, consisted of 18.7 hectares of land on either side of the river, a narrow strip on the west bank and a wedge on the east bank (ten hectares) that included the former grounds of the Tokugawa residence (bought up after the earthquake) and tapered northward into a thinner strip of land occupied principally by the embankment (now a ‘promenade’) and the Mimeguri Shrine and Chōmeiji and Kōfukuji temples. It was bisected by one of the new bridges constructed after the earthquake, the Kototoi Bridge.

Sumida Park was an attempt to weld the traditional famous places of Mukōjima into an Occidental-style park (Jinnai 1987: 115). The author of the account mentioned above describes the attempt in the following terms: ‘In Sumida [Park], while concern continued to be shown about the preservation of historical sites, a step was taken in deference to the demands of the new age’ (Yokoyama, in Sumida 1967: 1309). The main feature of the park was a new avenue of cherry trees, and it was here that Western-inspired designs had been introduced. The avenue stretched for a kilometre north from Makura Bridge. In total it was thirty-two meters wide and comprised an eleven meter-wide central carriageway and two 4.5-meter-wide aisles, separated the one from the others by a 2.7-meter-wide grass strip on which the trees were planted. 400 Somei Yoshino cherry trees were planted in rows along the two grass strips – in an attempt, Yokoyama wrote, to ‘revive the Mukōjima of old and create a smooth and comfortable driveway’

コンクリートに現代化された向島の言問



Figure 5 The title of this picture reads ‘*Konkurīto ni gendaika sareta Mukōjima no Kototoi*’ (Mukōjima’s Kototoi modernised with concrete). Sumida Park with the Tōbu line railway bridge under construction in the background, suggesting a date of 1930 for the photograph. Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Records and Archives Institute.

(Sumida 1967: 1316). The new ‘embankment’ elicited the use of a variety of foreign terms, promenade being perhaps the most appropriate, given the formal, classical landscaping. ‘[This is] a cherry tree promenade for the new age’, wrote the author of the chapter on Tokyo’s parks in the *Nihon chiri taikei* (1930: 324) (Figure 5).

The other main feature of the park on the east bank was the rehabilitated former Tokugawa garden, into whose pond water was now newly pumped from the river. Trees and flowering shrubs were planted, all in a self-consciously Japanese style (*Nihon chiri taikei* 1930: 325). Sporting facilities were an important feature of the park. It was hoped that this stretch of the Sumida would become an important national centre for water sports (Yokoyama, in Sumida 1967: 1317). A new concrete boathouse for the universities and spectator stands were built on ground bordering the northern point of the park, behind which stood two tennis courts for joint use of oarsmen and the general public. On the west, Asakusa bank, on land newly reclaimed from the river through the construction of a dike, a modern outdoor swimming pool was built, fifty meters long and thirty-five

meters broad with diving boards, changing rooms and night-time illumination. Next door to it a running track was staked out for use by schools and the general public.

A shifting cultural landscape

The story sketched out in the preceding pages refracts light in interesting ways on the process of modernisation of urban space in Tokyo. The literature on European cities would lead us to expect a fragmentation and a commercialisation of the landscape (Lefebvre 1991; Ogborn 1998). It is surely the case that the material base of space was reorganised. Land was commodified; spaces were compartmentalised and fragmented as part of a general process of insertion of capital. And yet the landscape had previously been carved up and compartmentalised. The commoner class lived in quarters that were enclosed within gates; many samurai were immured within the compounds of their lords. Perhaps it is precisely for this reason that the edge of the city was felt to have a certain subliminal liberating effect. Certainly, the Edo topographical guides present enough evidence in terms of favoured sites on the edge of the city to sustain this proposition.

Within this splintered landscape, the whole of urban space in Meiji-era Tokyo assumed one hierarchical form, whereas before one might say that there had been competing military and commoner hierarchies. Those outside the new hierarchy of urban space centred around the Imperial Palace, the ministries and the Ginza, beacon of Western modernity, outside even its lowest rungs, were thrust into the margins. And the margins increasingly meant ambiguous spaces like those along the river at Mukōjima and elsewhere and in the backstreet slums that were a particular (but not unique) characteristic of the industrial east bank of the river. As for the sense of release provided by the contact with open and 'natural' surroundings, it was no longer necessary to go to the urban edge to encounter this. Parks began to provide a similar sort of experience in central parts of the city (Tanaka 1974; Waley 2005).

The same sort of points can be made about the introduction of a more tightly regulated urban landscape. The shogun's capital city had indeed been regulated and society had of course been tightly controlled. Rather, it is that the nature of the regulation changed and the precision and consistency with which it was enforced was intensified. Nor should it be thought that there was a clear break between the urban landscape of Edo and that of the imperial capital that replaced it. Elements of the new society and landscape were introduced using the spatial vocabulary of the old city. New organised leisure pursuits were introduced, and for these, spaces had to be found. Horse races were held around a lake that was intimately connected with old Edo pastimes, the Emperor in attendance. Swimming areas were created in the Sumida river (although before too long the river's waters had become polluted and unsuitable for swimming). Boat races between leading

universities and banks were held along the Mukōjima stretch of the river, timed to coincide, more or less, with the cherry blossom season.

So while Tokyo itself was the setting par excellence for Japan's modernisation, the centre of gravity in the city's cultural geography shifted radically. But this shift should not disguise a much subtler and finer grained relationship between place and social change. Different districts within the city came to stand in the public imagination for different reactions to the modern. Tokyo's patchwork of territories represented a diverse engagement with the process of modernisation. Often their new associations bore no relation to their previous ones in the shogun's city, a dislocation that was used by some writers as a means of commenting ironically on the process of modernisation itself (Burton 1997). The *locus classicus* here is Ginza, an unexceptional part of the commoner city in Tokugawa times, but the showcase for an imagined European way of life after its reconstruction in brick a few years into the Meiji era (in 1872). But there are many other examples: Ueno, the quasi-sacred hill on which the Tokugawa tutelary temple stood, became in the 1880s the site of national exhibitions whose main purpose was to spread the gospel of modernisation, westernisation and industrialisation. The history of Tokyo is expressed through an ironic commentary on its cultural geography, as districts change fortune abruptly, associations are radically upset and centre and periphery are turned inside out.

Some concluding thoughts on a landscape of the periphery

The ever receding lines of the rural landscape, the elevation of new buildings that obscured ancient views, and the grimy intrusions of the industrial world – this process was evident around Tokyo, but nowhere did it seem more definitive than in and around Mukōjima. The landscape here was richly evocative, but the city centre was close by, within walking distance, and even closer for those who were conveyed in a rickshaw. The dreamy otherworldly landscape so poignantly captured in woodblock prints became a landscape of mechanized production and mass consumption. The ethereal pleasures of a walk with intimations of a pilgrimage gave way to organized sports and tour parties. But the crowds on the embankment and the factories behind them brought pressures to the embankment and to its temples, shrines and gardens to which they eventually succumbed. Trees died and gardens closed. Mukōjima's transformation from place of otherworldly recreation into industrial suburb was particularly poignant.

Industry located on the east bank of the city's main river because land was available and relatively cheap and water was plentiful. But factories drained the water table and roads and buildings reduced run-off, exacerbating the floods that had already been fairly frequent occurrences, to the point where the authors of the official history of the ward wrote that, 'The history of this region in the early modern period was in one respect a history of the struggle with the flood waters' (Sumida 1978: 411). And if the floods were not bad enough, many of

the blossom-bearing trees, especially the plums, suffered from the polluted air. The former sense of an urban ensemble (as represented in topographical and illustrative guides to the whole city) was lost. Industry had created a new sort of periphery, marginalising people and polluting air, ground and water.

It was the rapidity and the totality of landscape change that was so remarkable. And this accelerated as the twentieth century wore on. When change is rapid, the poignant nature of places recollected is intensified, and the geography of the city becomes a cultural and moral commentary. The Mukōjima that I first visited in 1978 was already a transformed landscape starkly different in many respects from what it had been twenty years previously. A motorway had been built over the embankment. The Kanebō factory had been moved away and in its place a wall of ten fourteen-storey apartment blocks had been built. Since then, a new river bank and a pedestrian bridge have been constructed, to provide more space for the crowds who still flock to this relatively impoverished corner of contemporary Tokyo to enjoy the cherry blossoms. The embankment has remained a favoured location for the homeless, whose neat tarpaulin tents form a blue ribbon along the river.

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Notes

1. The *Shinsen meisho Tōkyō zue* (Newly selected illustrated famous places of Tokyo), edited by Yamashita Shigetami, quoted the *Shinpen Musashi fudoki kō* (New Musashi topography), published in 1824–8, as stating that 121 cherries, twenty-eight peaches, and seventeen willows were planted in 1732 on the embankment (Yamashita 1969: 10).
2. It is instructive to note in this context that the educator and propagandist for a Western outlook Fukuzawa Yukichi remarked of himself that he was the perfect country bumpkin (*yabo*) who did not visit Mukōjima until his fourteenth year in Edo (Maeda 1976: 7).
3. A considerable literature now exists on the shifting meanings of Yamanote, once associated with the provincial and less-than-urban values of the military lords and their retainers and later with the new elite and professional and managerial classes and of Shitamachi, denoting the endogenous, increasingly esoteric culture of the old regime and later the poorer and more industrial east and east-centre of the city. And so, by a dialectic process, Shitamachi came to stand in people's imaginations more and more for the values of traditional small enterprise and of old-style entertainment. The marginalisation of Mukōjima, which fell within the folds of the wider, industrial Shitamachi, is part of this story (Isoda 1975; Seidensticker 1985; Smith 1986; Waley 2004).
4. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke was born and brought up in Honjo, near the banks of the Sumida just south of Mukōjima. He wrote movingly of the river and its ferries in an essay entitled *The waters of the Great River* (*Ōkawa no mizu*), published in 1914 (Sumida 1967: 655; Waley 2003: 221).
5. Hosoi Wakizō, a writer and campaigner for workers' rights, found himself employment in the Azuma plant of Tōkyō Mosurin, where he lived the life of its workers. His account of conditions

- in the factory are described in his book *The Sorrowful History of Women Factory Hands* (*Jokō no aishi*), published a year before his death in 1925.
6. This was the first piece of national planning legislation enacted in Japan and implemented first in Tokyo. However, its impact was severely curtailed by the earthquake of 1923, which called for a different type of response (Sorensen 2002: 126).
 7. The account was written by Yokoyama Shinji and appeared in the *Toshi kōron* (Urban debate) journal, of August 1931 (Sumida 1967: 1310–21)

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Paul Waley is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Leeds. His interests cover urban and cultural geography, both historical and contemporary. Recent publications include *Japanese Capitals in Historical Perspective: Place, Power and Memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo*, co-edited with Nicolas Fiévé (RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 'Ruining and restoring rivers: the state and civil society in Japan' (*Pacific Affairs*, 2005, Vol. 78, No. 2) and 'Tokyo-as-world-city: reassessing the role of capital and the state in urban restructuring' (*Urban Studies*, 2007, Vol. 44, No. 7). He can be contacted at p.t.waley@leeds.ac.uk.