



## The Forgetting Is All

Tokyo's unplanned postwar growth

Unlike residents of heavily damaged Berlin after WWII, those who survived the firebombings of Tokyo didn't set up memorials or try to build in a way that acknowledged the past, says an expert.

"The Japanese want to forget the war," Hiroo Ichikawa, a Tokyo urban planner and dean of urban policy at Meiji University, told an audience of about 125 people on Tuesday, Jan. 15, at the second of the UO Department of Architecture's series on cities recovering from war and disaster.

"The war is nothing for us now. It changed our entire system, and it was good for us to change, so maybe it was the same for the city," he added.

The Allies, especially Americans, firebombed Tokyo incessantly from March through May of 1945 (over 390,000 bombs were dropped on Tokyo during the latter portion of the war), and in one particularly intense day of bombing (March 9-10), more than 100,000 people died. Ichikawa said that more than 40 percent of the city was flattened, particularly the most modern portion of Tokyo, which had been rebuilt after a 1923 earthquake destroyed it. He said that it's mainly the Imperial Castle, now the Imperial Palace, that remains in the eastern section of the massive city.

The size of Tokyo's greater metropolitan area, at almost 35 million, dwarfs even the next-largest city in the developed world, Ichikawa said. He showed portions of a DVD which he helped produce about the history of urban Tokyo; the narrator repeatedly made it a point to say that Tokyo was not like Paris or London and couldn't expect to follow European urban planning styles. The narrator also claimed that many other megacities — like Jakarta, Mexico City and Cairo — could learn from the lessons of

Tokyo's chaotic nature.

But what are those lessons? Build wider streets, for one thing, Ichikawa said. In part thanks to American administration of Japan after the country's surrender in August 1945, urban planning wasn't under the control of the Japanese. Tokyo has some freeways radiating out from its nominal downtown, but otherwise, Ichikawa said, "We have no wide streets." And the city, which had tried to organize greenbelts and parks to help stop the fires during bombings, blew right through those greenbelts as it grew.

Now, he said, there's little public green space in Tokyo. Instead, large ring cities grew up and merged with the central city. That population explosion occurred, Ichikawa said, because the Japanese economy recovered so much faster after the war than anyone in Japan — or the U.S. — had expected. Housing shortages, pollution, traffic congestion and problems with waste disposal plagued the city in the 1950s and 1960s.

Though the ring cities tried to build downtowns and skyscrapers for office workers, the thrust for the past 15 or 20 years has been a recentralization and an overcrowding in the city, Ichikawa said. On the DVD, Tokyo residents stood in perfect lines while waiting for public transportation and patiently, calmly merged during their turn on crowded highways (eliciting laughter from the American audience) — but, Ichikawa said, the density and urbanization takes a toll. "Tokyo does not have beauty," he said. "That is its weakness."

Architecture student Sarah E. H. Thomas, who visited Tokyo over the summer with the Department of Landscape Architecture's Kyoto program, disagreed with Ichikawa. "Shinjuku District, the first big skyscraper district, is an amazing area," she said. "But I guess it depends on your definition of beauty."

Last week's lecture focused on rebuilding Berlin after WWII, and student Sarah Oaks said the differences in the two cities' styles were marked. "Berlin was self-flagellating," she said, and Berlin lecturer Brian Ladd left his audience with the impression that everything had to be preserved and discussed endlessly.

Not so in Tokyo, Ichikawa emphasized. "The Japanese people don't know about any remnant buildings from the bombings. In the U.S., you know more about it. But maybe [Japanese] people just want to forget."

**EW**

Look for a Q&A with Hiroo Ichikawa on [blogs.eugeneweekly.com](http://blogs.eugeneweekly.com) coming soon. Next week at 7 pm Tuesday, Jan. 22, in 177 Lawrence on the UO campus: Scott Bollens on the Balkans. More info available at [aaa.uoregon.edu](http://aaa.uoregon.edu) or 346-3656.

## Visual Arts

### The Memory Is All

Photos of Peruvian war's devastation at the EMU

The guerrilla war that devastated Peru between 1980 and 2000 didn't only cause almost 70,000 deaths. The toll included the burning of villages and destruction of fields, the loss of limbs and eyes — and the devastation of hope.

Now, Eugeneans can witness, through beautifully mounted art, the war's human cost.

"Yuyunapq: To Remember," an exhibit of war photographs, opens at the UO's Adell McMillan Gallery in the Erb Memorial Union on Thursday, Jan. 17. The exhibit runs in conjunction with "Human Rights and Memory in Latin America," a Jan. 31-Feb. 2 conference sponsored by the Wayne Morse Center and the Latin American Studies program.

Yuyunapq means "to remember" in Quechua, the language spoken by the Peruvian native peoples who suffered the most during the

conflict between brutal Maoist rebels and equally brutal right-wing government forces.



Celestino Ccente, 1983

The photos come from an exhibit that has been up since 2003 in Peru, when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) released its report on the violence. The 40 photos coming to the UO, which have traveled to Mexico, Switzerland, Italy, Spain and other places in the U.S., make up only a small portion of the exhibit in Peru. But Latin American Studies and history professor Carlos Aguirre says they're strong tools for learning and for memory.

"Photographs are very powerful — not neutral, not objective — representations of reality," he says. These show the acts of violence and some of those who committed the violence; injured people; ruined buildings and relatives of victims demanding justice, Aguirre says. "It's a collection of how the war affected people in different circumstances."

Though the photos focus the violence and the suffering, Aguirre believes they demonstrate more than that: "They show the solidarity of ordinary people." —Suzi Steffen

An opening reception for "Yuyunapq: To Remember" is at 3:30 pm Thursday, Jan. 17, in the Adell McMillan Gallery of the EMU on the UO campus. Guided tours are available; contact Carlos Aguirre at [caguirre@uoregon.edu](mailto:caguirre@uoregon.edu) for more information. Information on the conference is available online ([las.uoregon.edu/events/conference.htm](http://las.uoregon.edu/events/conference.htm)).



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