

the world that manages to maintain a stable order with this sort of configuration. Tokyo is the polar opposite of the clearly ordered city promoted by the Athens Charter.

How did this sort of metropolis come into being? Tokyo's system was created through the overlapping of countless partial additions and revisions—made during 150 years of modernization as opportunities afforded by external factors (including disasters) presented themselves—in a complex pattern based principally on topography.

Japan is one of the few modern states to have succeeded in creating a society with little disparity between rich and poor, even though it boasts the second biggest economy in the world. Racial, religious, and social homogeneity has also contributed to the development of a singular condition: even as the pieces of the mosaic continually divided and led to increased boundaries between them, these did not immediately generate border frictions. In societies with large disparities between rich and poor, units of territorialization have become ever larger in order to minimize border frictions. American cities offer good examples of this.

Another unique characteristic of metropolitan Tokyo is that it is the most conspicuous realization of the urban model proposed by Lynch and Rodwin: the multicentered city. But its structure might be better described as nebular. The countless centers in inner-city districts are connected by subway and express train systems more closely knit than any other comparable systems in the world. This transportation system is without equal in the world in frequency of operation, punctuality, cleanliness, safety, and the provision of services. It is this infrastructure that enables the many focal points of interest in Tokyo to be understood as both coherent individual units and a cohesive, though diverse, whole.

These constitute the positive aspects of urban design in Tokyo. What are the negative ones? First, the failure of practically all cities in Japan including Tokyo to develop an urban infrastructure of housing in the course of modernization. Although there may be many excellent or interesting individual buildings, most remain points of singularity and fail to contribute to the creation of any larger social asset. Although the Japanese live longer than any other people in the world, they are producing fewer children, leading to a decrease in population and a surplus of housing. Poorer quality or badly located suburban bedroom towns built for a once-growing population are increasingly empty.