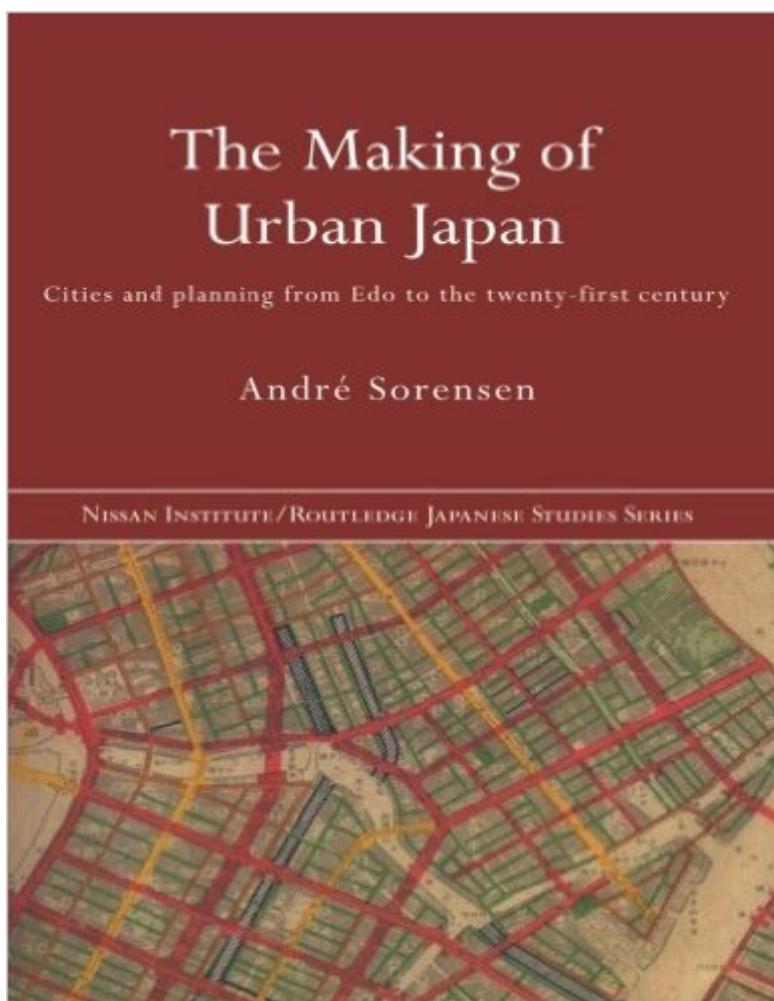


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The Making Of Urban Japan: Cities And Planning From Edo To The Twenty First Century (Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies)



Synopsis

During the twentieth century, Japan was transformed from a poor, primarily rural country into one of the world's largest industrial powers and most highly urbanised countries. Interestingly, while Japanese governments and planners borrowed carefully from the planning ideas and methods of many other countries, Japanese urban planning, urban governance and cities developed very differently from those of other developed countries. Japan's distinctive patterns of urbanisation are partly a product of the highly developed urban system, urban traditions and material culture of the pre-modern period, which remained influential until well after the Pacific War. A second key influence has been the dominance of central government in urban affairs, and its consistent prioritisation of economic growth over the public welfare or urban quality of life. AndrÃ© Sorensen examines Japan's urban trajectory from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, paying particular attention to the weak development of Japanese civil society, local governments, and land development and planning regulations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sorensen's book is a wonderful overview of the history of Tokyo (and Edo before it), from the point of view of the geographical and physical structure of the city and its development over time. The book should be read by anyone with a serious interest in the planning, architecture, or social history

of Tokyo. Well illustrated with maps and plans many of which are not, to my knowledge, readily available to an English language audience elsewhere.

I read this book originally from my schools library for a rather length report on the development of castle towns (mainly Edo) during the Tokugawa era. This book ended up being one of my main sources for research as it gives amazing details of the development of Tokyo through the ages all the way up to modern day. It's a very factual book that is also pretty easy to read, what more could you ask for! It was upon this note that I decided to buy this book for my own library at home. That way I have easy access to the vast knowledge for future referencing.

I feel a bit outrageous in assigning my own book five stars, but what can I say, I'm biased!! I am really just writing this note to let potential readers know that my book is winner of the International Planning History Society book award for best single-author book in planning history 2000-2003, awarded at the IPHS conference in Barcelona in July. For me, that is just about the best possible affirmation of the value of the book. I am also pleased to inform you that a new paperback edition was released during May of 2004. I have included below three excerpts from recent reviews in relevant journals. Best wishes, Andre Sorensen. Reviews: 'Andre Sorensen has written a very important book. More than any English language study now available, it unlocks a major puzzle in understanding modern Japan - why has a country that has excelled at industry and efficiency in its economy (and transport systems) failed so miserably in providing a high urban quality of life for its citizens? ... A very well written work' - Urban Studies. 'Meticulously researched and impressively presented ... a tremendous resource for the serious scholar.' - Geographical Association. 'This book should establish itself as the first port of call for both students and scholars embarking on a study of Japanese urbanism and planning history ... a highly sophisticated work' - Environment and Planning/Government & Policy

One of the most detailed and interesting books of its genre. Well worth the read if you're into it. But I would guess most people buying this kind of stuff are students in Uni.

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