Beyond the City:
Perspectives from Urban Studies in Japan

Toru Miura

Ochanomizu University & Toyo Bunko

Abstract: Our book of *Islamic Urban Studies* (published in 1991) has revealed that the assumption of a city consisting of a particular space, society, economy and cultures and the definition of the city based on dualities like the city versus the village has been a stumbling block in urban studies. We propose to study cities "as a frame of reference," looking at "the city as space" rather than "urban space." Japanese cities developed from Imperial court capitals in ancient times, quasi autonomous bodies in medieval times, castle cities in early modern times, and modern cities as a result of industrialisation. The Society of Urban and Territorial History in Japan (founded in 2013) defines its goal as the fundamental study of human settlements including villages in a comparative and multi-disciplinary way. While various trends of urban studies either in Middle Eastern studies or in Japanese studies have converged to such a common point, we should ask again what is urbanism in Islam or in each region, going beyond the city.

Keywords: Urbanism, Islamic City, Urban History, Japan, Damascus.

Islamic Urban Studies

In 1991 a book, *Islamic Urban Studies: Historical Survey and Perspectives*, was published in Japan by five Japanese scholars including me, as a product of a three-year scientific research project, "Urbanism in Islam," lasting from 1987 to 1990 (headed by Yuzu Itagaki), and its revised edition appeared in English in 1994.[1] Its aim was to coordinate, without any distinction of academic field, the main research undertaken since the nineteenth century concerning "cities" in the five regions under the sway of Islam: the Maghrib (the Western Arab lands), the Mashriq (the Eastern Arab lands), Turkey, Iran and Central Asia. This publication surveyed over 1400 books and articles and has been reviewed as a pioneering work by many leading scholars, including Dale F. Eickelman, Ira M. Lapidus, Suraiya Faroqhi, Richard D. McChesney and Besim Selim Hakim.[2] In this paper, I will discuss the potential of urban studies in general by reviewing urban studies on the Islamic Middle East and other regions, especially those done in Japan.[3]

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1. Masashi Haneda and Toru Miura (eds.), *Islamic Urban Studies: Historical Survey and Perspectives* (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Press, 1991) (English and enlarged edition, London-New York: Kegan Paul International, 1994).

2. For example, review by Dale F. Eickelman in *MESA Bulletin* 30 (1996); by Ira M. Lapidus in *IJMES* 29/1 (1997); by Suraiya Faroqhi in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8/2 (1997); by R. D. McChesney in *BSOAS* 60/1 (1997); by Jean-Claude Garcin in *JESHO* 40/3 (1997); by Besim Selim Hakim in *Bulletin of the American Institute for Yemeni Studies* (Winter/Spring 1996).

3. I have reviewed urban studies after the publication of *Islamic Urban Studies* in 1994 in my book, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus: The Ṣāliḥiyya Quarter from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2016), 2-5.

The title "Islamic Urban Studies" being extremely ambiguous, the notion of "Islamic city" was discussed in the Introduction and Conclusion, with the intention of making clear the limitations of the term in urban studies. In the Introduction, "An Interpretation of the Concept of the 'Islamic City'," Masashi Haneda emphasises that the notion of the "Islamic city" is a product of Orientalist ideas and European colonial research on Arab regions, especially the Maghrib and Syria which had Roman or Hellenistic traditions. Here it should be noted that these traditions make it easy to compare Islamic cities with European commune cities in an Orientalist dichotomy.

When we review the notion of the "Islamic city," whether it is the "Islamic city" of the old and new Orientalists or that recently presented by Muslim scholars,[4] we notice that the assumption that a city consists of a particular space, society, economy and culture has proved a stumbling block. In particular, definitions of the city based on contrasts between dualities, like the city versus the village, or urban dwellers versus farmers and nomads, are outside the reality of Middle Eastern and Central Asian cities, characterized as they are by a continuum between the two. Therefore, rather than asking whether or not cities and rural villages are the same, it is preferable to try to set up a framework with the city as the starting point, so that we can look at rural villages and nomadic society in a continuum, encompassing both their similarities and their differences. This is not a problem particular just to Middle Eastern and Central Asian cities; similar questions have been raised concerning European, Chinese and Japanese cities as well.[5]

The phenomenon of the city exists throughout the world and the urban characteristics possessed by cities have a commonality over and above regional differences. Is it perhaps because of this that we are attracted to the city itself and to the theme of the city, and attempt to use it as a comparative framework? An

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4. Besim Selim Hakim, *Arab-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul International, 1986); Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism* (London-New York: Greenwood Press, 1991); Muḥammad ʿAbd as-Sattār ʿUthmān, *al-Madīna al-Islāmiyya* (al-Kuwayt: al-Majlis al-waṭanī li ath-thaqāfa wa al-funūn wa al-ʾādāb, 1988). Hakim and ʿUthmān propose a notion of the Islamic city where its planning and social life is regulated and controlled by Islamic law. The famous geographer Eugen Wirth proposes a model of the Islamic Middle Eastern city in contrast to the Western city in his book, *Die orientalische Stadt im islamischen Vorderasien und Nordafrika: Städtische Bausubstanz und räumliche Ordnung, Wirtschaftsleben und soziale Organisation*, 2 Bde (Mainz: Zabern, 2000). *The Cities in the Pre-Modern Islamic World: The Urban Impact of Religion, State and Society*, eds. Amira K. Bennison and Alison L. Gascoigne (London: Routledge, 2007) criticises the notion of the "Islamic city" and discusses an approach to changing cities over a wide range of time and region in its Introduction, but does not refer to the above-mentioned book, Haneda and Miura (eds.), *Islamic Urban Studies*.

5. Italian cities such as Venice and Florence constituted territorial states which included their immediate surroundings (*contad*), and were multi-stratified and included outsiders. The economic and geographical methodology of "Central Place Theory" (Walter Christaller) is applied to the study of cities in Western Europe and China (George William Skinner) to locate a city in its surrounding region in a hierarchical continuity, not separating it. Japanese cities have been ambiguous like those of the Islamic world, regarding the continuity of urban and rural regions rather than their distinct separation.

attractive feature of the city as a frame of reference has been that because it has an individual substance, whether it be physical form, facilities or the people who live there, it has particular and concrete aspects, but at the same time it remains continually open in the direction of universality. The attraction of universality draws diverse people to the city, with the resultant collision between the values of particularity and universality. An overriding order is thus necessary to resolve that potential conflict. We must therefore construct a framework to study the city as a place which condenses themes of human history, such as particularity and universality.

By starting from the issue of the city, rather than from an *a priori* premise that the city exists, it becomes possible to consider a framework that is able to encompass both rural villages and nomadic societies and allows comparisons with cities and societies in other regions. I have proposed that we study cities "as a frame of reference," through a framework which uses the city as the starting point for an insight into geography, the economy, society, history and culture, rather than regarding it as the *a priori* premise and having as its final purpose the definition of the city. To this end it is necessary to create a frame of reference that will allow the mutual overlap of pluralities, and with this in mind, my concluding chapter "Reinterpreting Urban Studies: Towards a New Perspective" in *Islamic Urban Studies* examined trends in urban studies in terms of five themes: the city as space, the city as a point of intersection, the city as an association, the city as history and the city as culture. In the interests of understanding the city as a frame of reference, I deliberately use the expression "the city as space" rather than "urban space."

Urban Studies in Japan

Cities in premodern Japan also featured such a continuum of city and rural area. However until the mid-1970s, cities in Japan were studied based on the model of the commune city (self-governing community) in Europe. In 1976 Yoshihiko Amino, a famous scholar of Japanese medieval history, published a pioneering work, "The Medieval City in Japan,"[6] in which he paid attention to market places, ports, and inns as spaces of exchange called in Japanese "*muen*" "*kugai*" and "*raku*," free from the governing power, similar to the European commune city. His new definition of urban space and urbanism accelerated studies of urban history to the extent that many multi-volume publications followed: Yasuo Takahashi and Nobuyuki Yoshida ed., *Introduction to the Urban History of Japan (Nihon toshi-shi nyumon)*, 3 vols., Tokyo, 1989-90; *The Urban History Annual* (*Nenpo toshi-shi kenkyu*), vols. 1-20, Tokyo, 1993-2013 (fig.1); and *City, Architecture, and History* (*Toshi, kenchiku, rekishi*), 10 vols., Tokyo, 2005-06. In December 2013, the Society of Urban and Territorial History (Toshi-

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6. Yoshihiko Amino, "The Medieval City in Japan," *Japanese History* (*Koza Nihon rekishi*) 25 (1976). Re-issued in id., *The World of Japanese Medieval Cities* (*Nihon chusei toshi no sekai*) (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1996).

shi gakkai) was founded in Japan by about five hundred scholars in the fields of history, architecture, archaeology, geography, sociology, and urban planning. Its Prospectus states:

> "The history of the city is that of civilization itself. Thousands of years have already passed since humanity began settling in urban dwellings, and still today mankind's daily life and activities are fundamentally based on the city. Thus, to understand the history of cities is none other than to critically and logically consider the history of habitation. The city has come to find itself on the verge of crisis never before experienced but increasingly the status quo, not just because of natural disasters but also due to human intervention. A re-evaluation of the fundamental layer of traditional urbanism around the world, lost in the course of modernization, should be carried out from a modern perspective. By uncovering this rich historical underlay, its inherent value would become apparent. Despite it being a long process, our strategy is to gain a solid foothold in the history and unique life of cities within this age of confusion, in order to develop prospects for the optimum city."[7]

The Society stresses that urban history is framed by general and fundamental studies of human settlements and therefore it seeks to encompass not only cities, but society and the extent of space, including villages and the natural environment, which is the first feature. This approach corresponds to the above-mentioned proposal to the framework of Islamic urban studies in 1994, "the city as space" rather than "urban space."

Vol. 14, "Power and Urban Society," 2006 (Cover: Castle city of Kanazawa).

Vol. 19, "Traditional Cities," 2011 (Cover: Nihonbashi Street in Edo city, wholesale shops, merchants and artisans).

Fig. 1: The Urban History Annual Nenpo toshi shi kenkyu.

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7. See the website of the Society, http://suth.jp/en/association/prospectus/

Referring to the historical development of Japanese cities, four periods or four models have been presented: the court/imperial capital in ancient times; quasi autonomous bodies in medieval times; the castle city in early modern times; and the modern city with industrialization. Nara and Kyoto are typical Imperial court capitals. The former was founded in 712 and the latter in 794; *Heiankyo* (Kyoto) means peaceful city, similar to *Madīnat as-Salām* (Baghdad) founded in 756. The planning of both Nara and Kyoto followed the plan of Chinese imperial capitals such as Chang'an, a great capital in the Tang dynasty (618-907), in terms of the grid street plan and placing the palace in a central position to north, (fig. 2). In medieval times (the eleventh to sixteenth centuries) markets and merchants developed in Kyoto, in the castle cities (*jokamachi*) of territorial military lords and in local cities, and autonomous neighbourhoods (*cho*) of townsmen (*chonin*) were organised, as well as artisan associations and religious communities, (fig. 3).[8] In the early modern (Edo) period, the Japanese archipelago was unified and governed by the Tokugawa Shogunate, and castle cities under the country's military lords (*daimyo*) developed to be large configurations of three main zones surrounding the lord's castle: grounds of *samurai* soldiers' residences, precincts of religious institutions (temples and shrines), and districts of townsmen (artisans, merchants and daily workers), (fig. 4) Edo, the capital city of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867) comprised eight hundred neighborhoods with a population of one million. The detailed sectional maps of the city (*Edo kiriezu*) printed and distributed during the 1850s show these three zones using different colors, (fig. 5). Large-scale merchants were needed by the consumer society of the samurai estates and the religious institutions on one hand, but they were also dependent on commoners living in back streets, such as artisans, petty merchants, and daily manual labourers, in terms of the purchasing of everyday necessities and the maintenance and repair of shops and the houses of the samurai, religious elites and wealthy merchants.[9] In Japan many kinds of cities and towns formed and developed in terms of foundation, spatial plan, social organization and cultural institution.[10] Therefore urban studies have been and should be conducted through a combination of social history, spatial history and cultural history, thanks to abundant sources in the form of chronicles, administrative and private documents, and many kinds of maps.[11] The multi-

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8. Amino, "The Medieval City;" Michihisa Hotate, "Development and Rule of *Cho* Organisation in Medieval Japan," *Nihon toshishi nyumon* 2 (1990): 1-19; Tetsuya Sugimori, "*Cho* and *Cho* Organisation," *Nihon toshishi nyumon* 2 (1990): 59-78 (all in Japanese).

9. Nobuyuki Yoshida, "The Spacial Configuration and Social Structure of the Great Pre-Modern City of Edo," in *Urbanism in Islam: The Proceedings of the International Conference on Urbanism in Islam*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: The Middle Eastern Culture Center, 1989), 37-73.

10. The Society of Urban and Territorial History edited *Encyclopedia of Urban & Territorial and Architectural History of Japan* (*Nihon toshi-shi kenchiku-shi jiten,* in Japanese), ed. Toshishi Gakkai hen (Tokyo: Maruzen Shuppan, Heise 30, 2018).

11. Kaoru Iwamoto, "Studies on Urban History of Early Modern Japan," *Journal of Urban and Territorial History (Toshishi kenkyu)* 1 (2014): 123, (in Japanese).

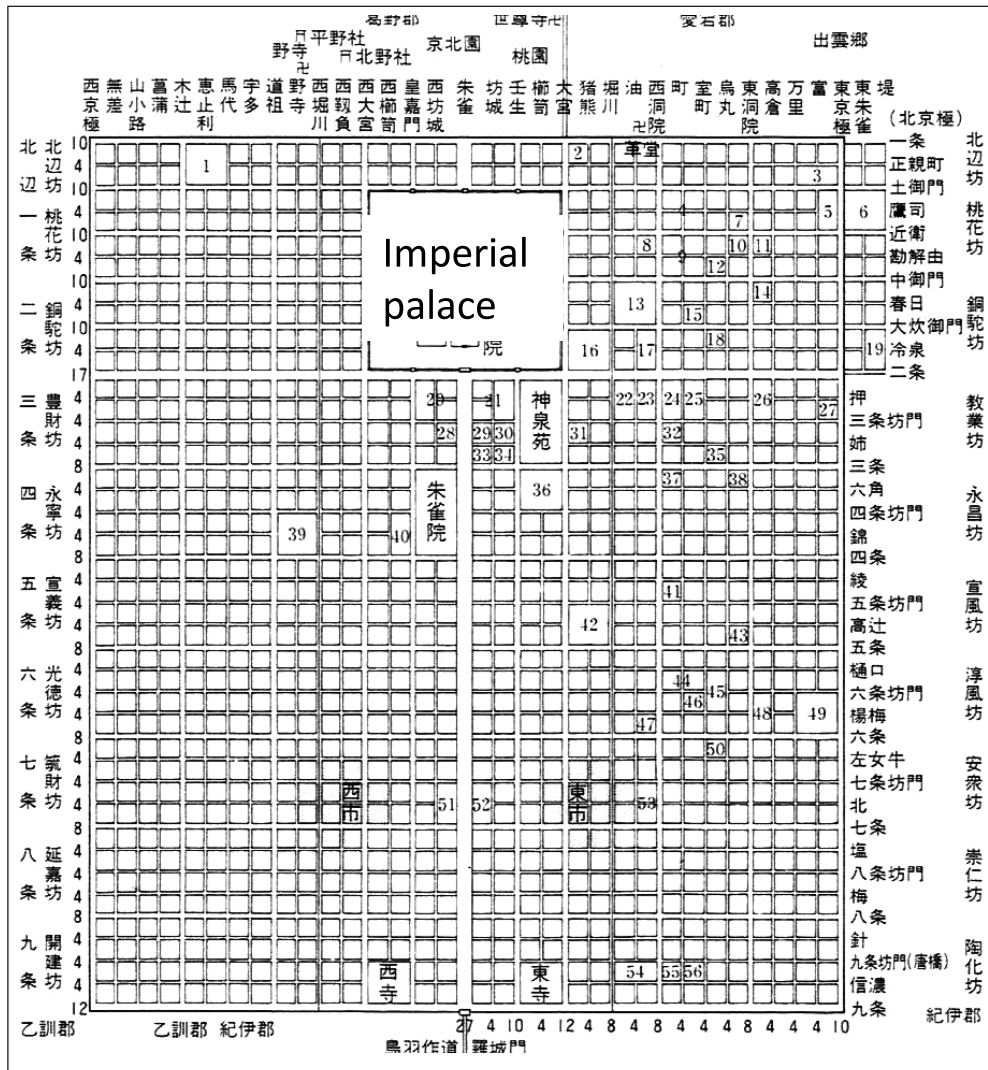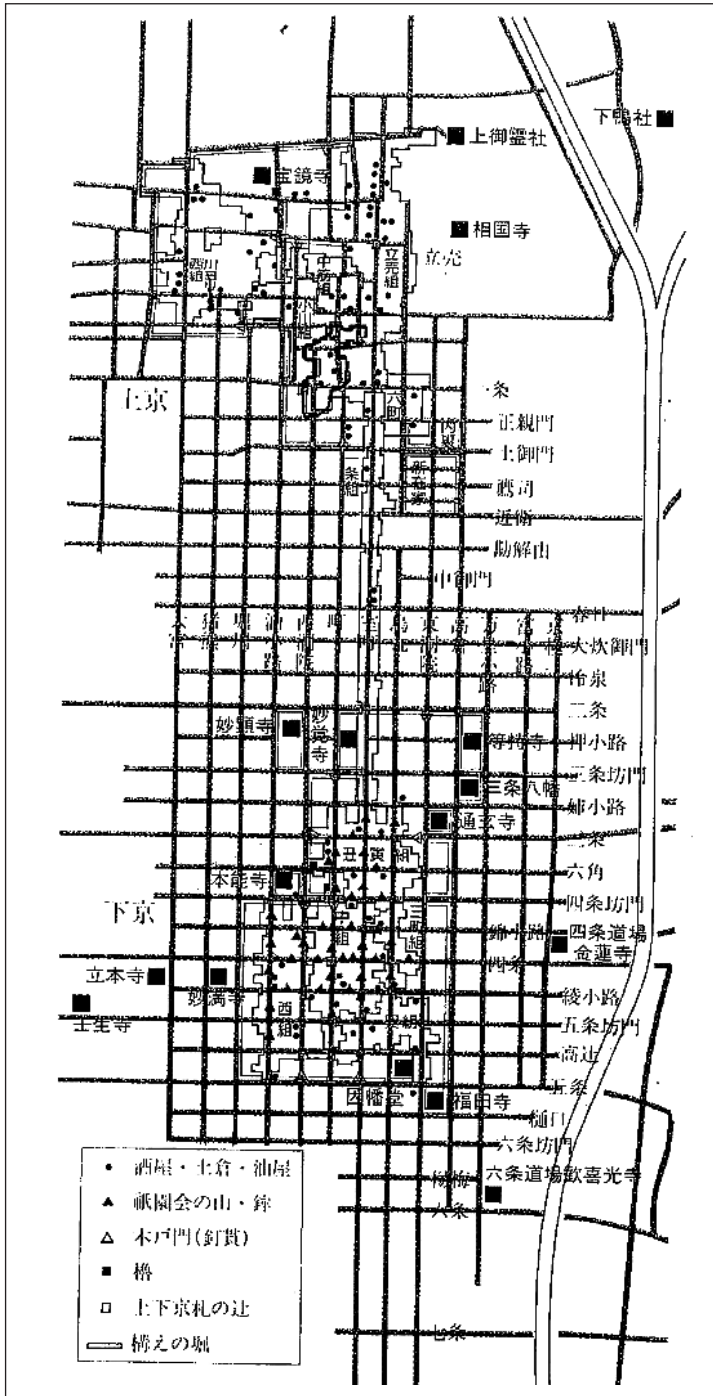disciplinary way to analyse a specific city in a specific era is the second feature of this Society.

Imperial palace

Fig. 2: Kyoto, Imperial Capital.

The third feature is the comparative study approach. The leaders of the Society have organised comparative study projects, such as a comparison between Edo, Paris, and London.[12] Furthermore it held a symposium comparing the local cities of Iida, a small castle town in Japan, and Charleville in France.[13] It is a
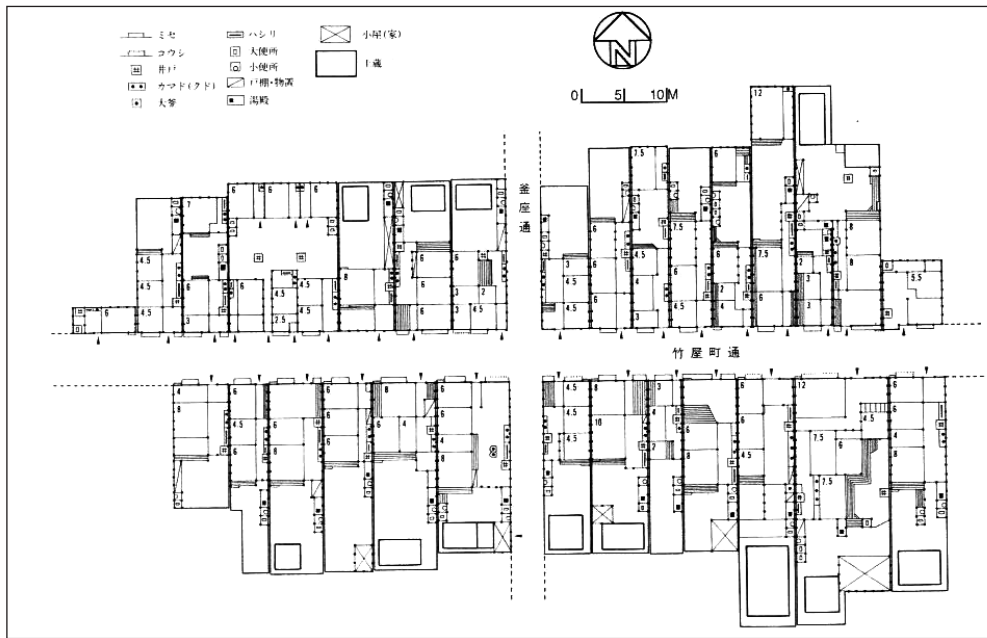
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12. Kazuhiko Kondo and Takeshi Ito, *Edo and London* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2007) (Special Issue of *Toshishi kenkyu*); Norie Takazawa, Allain Thilly and Nobuyuki Yoshida, *Edo and Paris: Towards a Comparative History of Traditional Cities* (Tokyo: 2009) (Special Issue of *Toshishi kenkyu*) (all in Japanese).

13. Norie Takazawa, Nobuyuki Yoshida, François-Joseph Ruggiu and Guillaume Carré (eds.), *Comparing Traditional Cities: Iida and Charleville* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2011). (in Japanese)
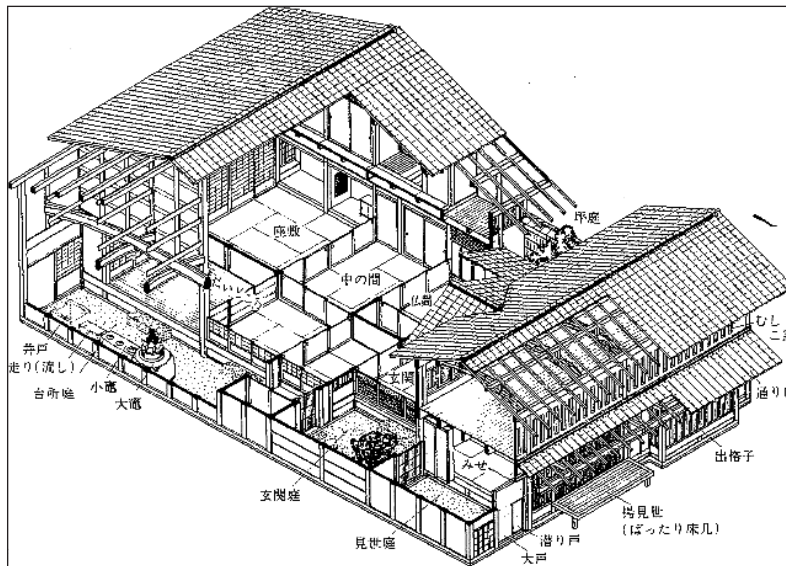
challenge to compare the two, which had neither direct contact and nor indirect influence, and is different from a comparison between regions having contact and influence, following Marc Bloch. These three features of urban studies in Japan influenced me greatly when reviewing urban studies of the Islamic Middle East in the Introduction of my book.

3.1 Neighbourhood organisations in Kyoto in the XVIth century.

3.2 Neighbourhood (cho) with streets (lanes), similar to the quarter
(*ḥāra , maḥalla*) in Middle Eastern cities.

3.3 *Machiya* court yard house in Kyoto.

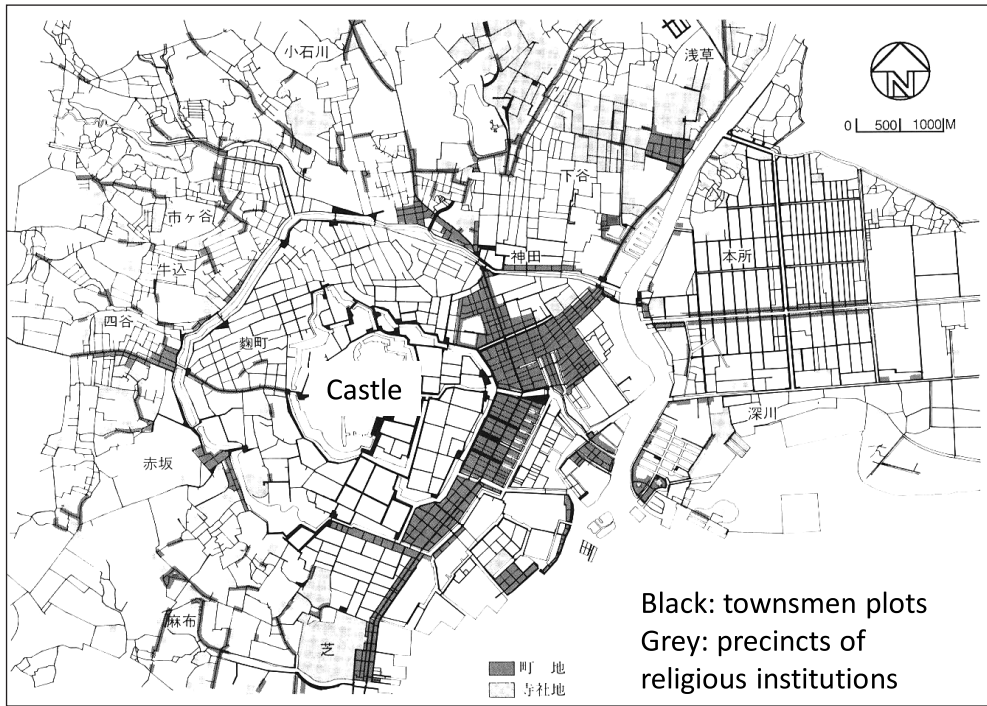**Fig. 3**: Neighbourhood (*cho*) and court yard house (*machiya*) in Kyoto.
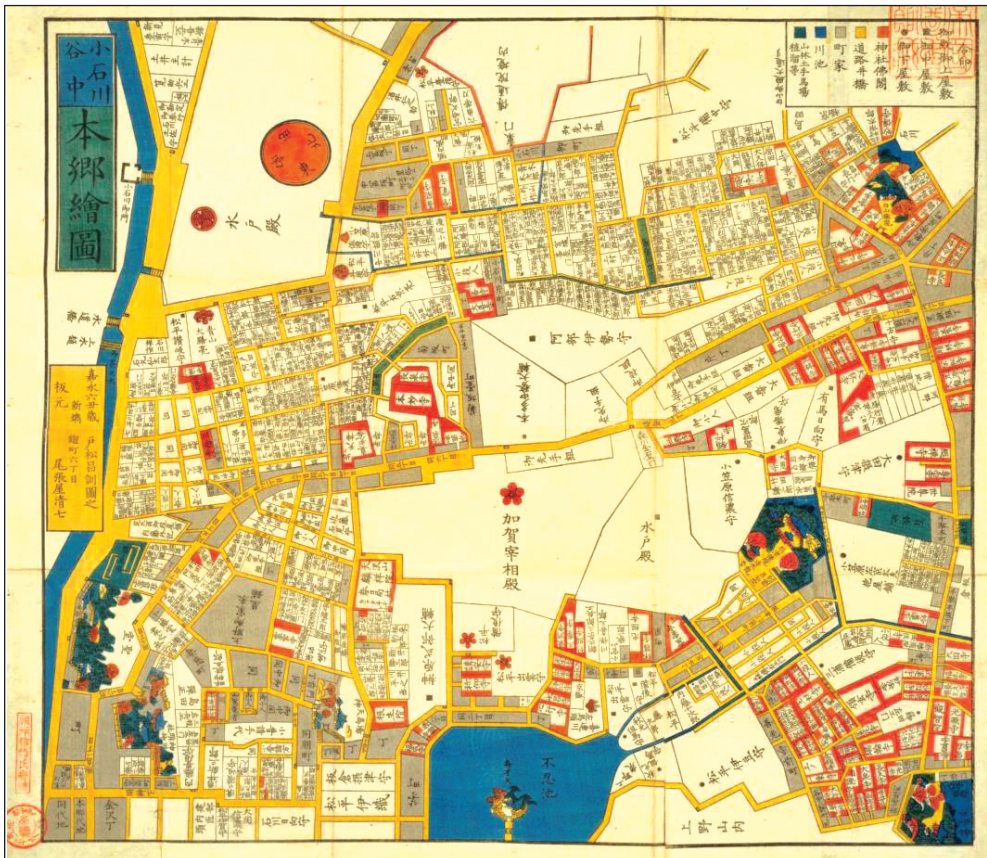
Fig. 4: Castle City of Edo.

Fig. 5: Sectional Maps of Edo (1850s). Houses of domainal lords (white); Temples/
Shrines(red); Townsmen's residences/shops (grey).

Comparative Approach

In re-constructing the framework for urban studies, Jean-Claude Garcin's proposal of the notion of "megalopolis" draws our attention, as does his method to create a "balance sheet" (*bilan*). His edited book on Arab Muslim cities[14] is a collaborative work between French and Arab scholars that analyses the cities of Damascus, Kairawan, Baghdad, Cordova, Cairo, Aleppo, and Fes according to common subjects such as population, urban morphology, authority, administration, relations with both surrounding and far-distant regions, religious and cultural topography, and civic identity. An analysis of individual cities along these lines creates a "balance sheet" of the whole. Garcin concludes by denying the existence of a unique type of Islamic urban morphology related to the demands and organisation proper to Islam.[15] Instead he proposes a new concept of "megalopolis" to differentiate the commonality of great cities from

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14. Jean-Claude Garcin (ed.), *Grandes villes méditerranéennes du monde musulman medieval* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000).

15. Garcin (ed.), *Grandes villes*, 276, 309.

other local cities in the Arab-Muslim world, deliberately abstaining from the concept of the Islamic city. He entitles such a commonality "urbanism" (the same term appearing in the name of the above-mentioned Japanese research project). Gracin's notion of megalopolis is suggestive and stimulating, for it attempts to capture the cities in their historical development from local cities to universal cities of the "megalopolis" in terms of demography and cosmopolitanism, and so avoids being caught in the pitfall of the static definition of the Islamic city. Garcin states that the urbanism of the megalopolis cannot be the same to that of other cities, because the megalopolis is connected to universality.[16] Individual cities did not always come under the purview of the megalopolis, but changed their character historically.

Summarizing various viewpoints on cities, I propose two kinds of analytical issue. One is how to distinguish the city from its environs, whether rural or nomadic. There are three kinds of viewpoint here. First is the centrality of the city that attracts people and materials to it and gives it the power to control the whole society, including the environs. Second is the separation between the city and its environs, such as municipal autonomy of the civil community in medieval Europe. Third, the city is a mediator between the urban and the rural and creates a wider order that includes the city and its environs.

The other analytical issue is how to analyse the city itself. We can set up two kinds of dimension: space, and the social relations organised on it (fig. 6). In other words, the former is the hardware of a city and the latter its software. It is notable that both change relationally: developments in the hardware prompt changes in the software (social relations), while changes in the software prompt further changes in the hardware (urban morphological settings). Recently Nimrod Luz has proposed the model of "Mamluk city" in his study of Syrian cities, paying attention to a combination of morphological and social changes to overcome the stereotyped notion of the Islamic city.[17]
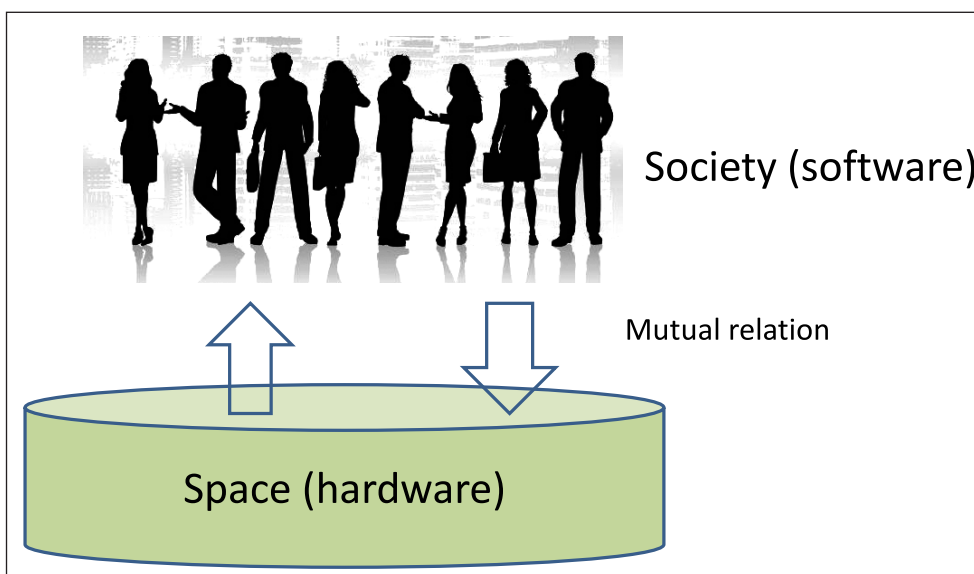
Lapidus, in his first book in 1967, proposed analysing the functions and mutual interactions of social organisations and networks (family, ethnicity, neighborhood, law schools, Sufi orders, patron-client relationships and so on) in Middle Eastern cities, instead of analysing formal structures and organisations. He worked further to construct a model encompassing the historical development of Islamic societies and the total structure. In a comparative study of Chinese and Islamic societies, Lapidus uses the term "network" on three levels: as an analytical tool, as the social reality for "informal and unstructured interconnections,"

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16. Garcin (ed.), *Grandes villes*, 10-1.
17. Nimrod Luz, *The Mamluk City in the Middle East: History, Culture, and the Urban Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). He quoted the Proceedings of *Urbanism in Islam*.

and as Islamic cultural characteristics.[18] Since the 1980s, there has appeared a large amount of detailed analytical study of socio-political structures in cities at particular periods, based on an examination of social relations between the ruler, notables and common people. They paint a vivid picture of the multiple relationships and historical change in specific societies also by employing archival sources. However, two difficulties arise. The more specific studies elucidate the individual situation of a particular city, the more we lose sight of what is common and universal. In the field of comparative studies, the flexibility and informality of Middle Eastern or Islamic societies are stressed, compared to cities in Europe or China. However, recent studies have used the terms "network," "nexus" or "*sociabilité*," whether implicit or explicit, to designate informal and multi-directed social relations inside and outside cities in Europe, China and Japan.[19] If we simply stress that Middle Eastern/Islamic cities are characterised by multiple social networks in contrast to the rigid institutions in Western European cities, we will fall into a similar pitfall of dichotomy as the notion of "Islamic City."

Fig. 6: Dynamism between urban space and social relations.

18. Ira Lapidus, "Hierarchies and Networks: A Comparison of Chinese and Islamic Societies," in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, eds. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

19. Concerning Chinese society, see Joseph W. Esherick & Marry B. Rankin (eds.), *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). The concept of *sociabilité* has been used in the French Annales school since the 1960s to designate both formal and informal social ties. In studies of Japanese cities, scholars have marked social networks between governors, townsmen and wandering people to define the concept of the city and its features.

Therefore even to study a particular city, we should search for the rules of dispute among various social networks at a more fundamental level, as well as for their inner structure, not satisfying ourselves with simply finding a variety of social networks. Second, in a comparative framework, we should try to compare urban societies by the composition of factors, not making judgements about the existence or non-existence of a specific institution such as a guild, council, mayor, or Friday mosque. Third, in a historical perspective, we should intentionally pay attention to changes in societies and the causes of those changes, which leads us to a comparison of vectors from one point to others, instead of a comparison of individual factors. Multi-dimensional comparison is an easy way to penetrate a stereotyped dichotomy and fixed regional framework, (fig. 7).[20] *The City in the Islamic World* (edited by Salma K. Jayyusi et al., Leiden, 2008) proposes the concept, "the city as a living organism," using abundant materials and comprising a large number of papers relating regional features, urban functions and contemporary transformation.
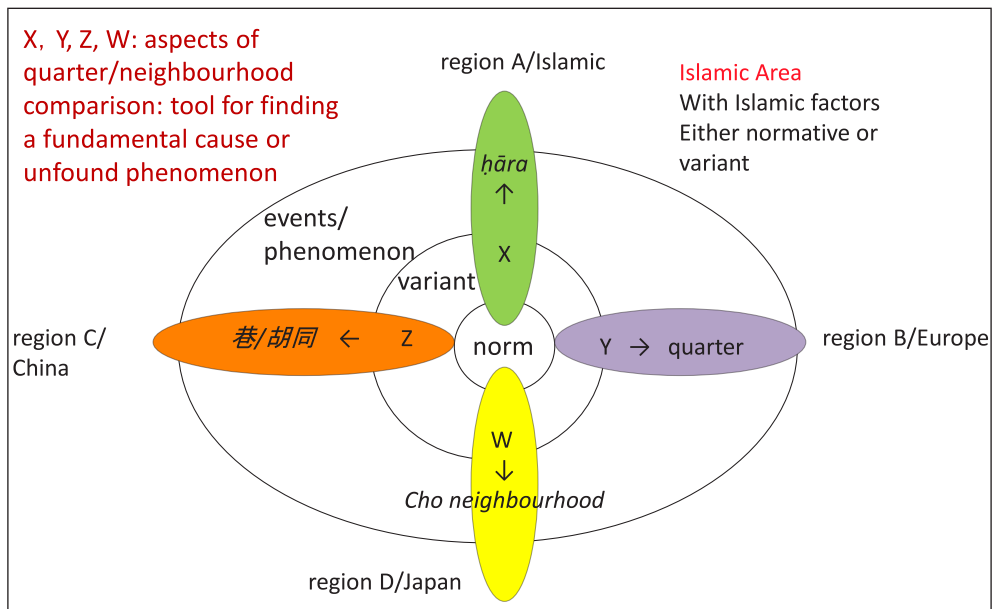

Fig. 7: Comparative and Cross regional Study.

Focal Point for Urban Studies

Returning to urban history studies in Japan, the Society of Urban and Territorial History aims to find prospects for the optimum city by uncovering the rich historical underlay of traditional cities around the world. Accordingly, a series titled "The City in Tradition" was published in 2010-2012. It is composed

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20. Cf. Toru Miura, *Area Studies as a Third Path between Humanities and Social Sciences* (Tokyo: Islamic Area Studies Project, 2001).

of four volumes: Idea, Power and Hegemony, Infrastructure, and Articulation.[21] These four factors created and formed individual cities in combination, and the contributors attempt to analyse how these factors functioned in specific cities, in order to seek for an optimum city in a contemporary world where most cities have lost their original ideas and traditions.

The research project *Urbanism in Islam* thirty years ago accelerated urban studies in a multi-disciplinary and comparative perspective in Japan as well as abroad. In Japan urban studies, especially of traditional cities in Japan, greatly developed in cooperation with scholars of cities in China, Korea, and Europe. By contrast, urban studies in Japan concerning Islamic Middle Eastern cities rather slowed after 1995, although a large scale research program, "Islamic Area Studies" (led by Tsugitaka Sato) from 1996-2002 (first stage at the University of Tokyo) and 2006-2015 (second stage at Waseda University) was conducted with the financial support of the Japanese Government. It stressed comparative and transdisciplinary approaches in the subjects of politics, economics, sociology, history and culture, but the city itself was not a major focal point of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies in Japan, and diverse research subjects were taken up such as Islamic movements, Islamic economy, democratization, saint veneration, gender, architecture etc. We should now ask in what direction is urban studies moving. While urban or territorial studies must be a starting point for studying broader society, does it have any original or unique feature differentiated from other studies? To answer this question, we should discuss what is urbanism in each region or in human history in general. In my own study of Damascus and the Ṣāliḥiyya quarter, I have pointed as a feature the dynamism of social relations created and acted by individuals in the urban space of quadrilateral blocks, and this can be called urbanism in Islam.[22] This question may be important, for various trends of urban studies have converged to a common point, as shown in the field of Middle Eastern studies and urban history studies in Japan.

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21. Nobuyuki Yoshida and Ito Takeshi (eds.), *The City in Tradition* (*Dento toshi*), 4 vols (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010-12).

22. See Miura, *Dynamism*, Conclusion.

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العنوان: ما وراء المدينة: مقاربات ووجهات نظر من الدراسات الحضرية في اليابان

ملخص: كشف كتابنا الصادر عام 1991 في موضوع الدراسات الحضرية الإسلامية أن افتراض وجود مدينة تتكون من مساحة معينة، ومجتمع، واقتصاد وثقافات، وتعريف المدينة على أساس الثنائيات المتداولة من قبيل المدينة مقابل القرية، كان بمثابة حجر عثرة في طريق الدراسات الحضرية. ونقترح في هذا الصدد دراسة المدن "كإطار مرجعي،" بالنظر إلى "المدينة كمكان" بدلاً من الانكباب على دراستها بوصفها "مساحة حضرية." لقد تطورت المدن اليابانية من عواصم البلاط الإمبراطوري في العصور القديمة، في هيئات شبه

مستقلة خلال العصور الوسطى، ومن المدن القلاع في العصور الحديثة المبكرة، انتهت إلى المدن الحديثة كنتيجة لحركية التصنيع. وتحدد جمعية التاريخ الحضري والتاريخ الإقليمي في اليابان (تأسست عام 2013) هدفها على أنه متجسد في الدراسة الأساسية للمستوطنات البشرية بما في ذلك القرى بطريقة مقارنة ومتعددة التخصصات. في حين أن الاتجاهات المختلفة للدراسات الحضرية سواء في دراسات الشرق الأوسط أو في الدراسات اليابانية قد تقاربت إلى هذه النقطة المشتركة، ويجب في هذا السياق أن نسأل مرة أخرى ما هو التمدن في الإسلام أو في كل منطقة، ما وراء المدينة وبعيدا عنها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العمران، المدينة الإسلامية، التاريخ الحضري، اليابان، دمشق.

Titre: Au-delà de la ville: Perspectives des études urbaines au Japon

Résumé: Notre ouvrage d'études urbaines islamiques (publié en 1991) a révélé que l'hypothèse d'une ville constituée d'un espace, d'une société, d'une économie et de cultures particuliers et la définition de la ville basée sur des dualités comme la ville contre le village a constutué une sorte de pierre d'achoppement dans les études urbaines. Nous proposons d'étudier les villes "comme cadre de référence," en regardant "la ville comme espace" plutôt qu'un "espace urbain." Les villes japonaises se sont développées à partir de capitales de la cour impériale dans l'Antiquité, d'entités quasi autonomes à l'époque médiévale, de cités-châteaux au début des temps modernes et de villes modernes à la suite de l'industrialisation. La Société d'histoire urbaine et territoriale du Japon (fondée en 2013) définit son objectif comme l'étude fondamentale des établissements humains, y compris les villages, de manière comparative et multidisciplinaire. Alors que diverses tendances des études urbaines que ce soit dans les études moyen-orientales ou dans les études japonaises ont convergé vers un tel point commun, il convient de se demander à nouveau ce qu'est l'urbanisme en islam ou dans chaque région, au-delà de la ville.

Mots-clés: Urbanisme, cité islamique, histoire urbaine, Japon, Damas.