

ABSTRACT

Tokyo: The Birth of an Imperial Capital

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The transformation of the shogun's capital Edo to an imperial capital, Tokyo, in 1868 was not a self-evident move. Why did not Kyoto, which had served as the imperial capital for more than one thousand years, remain the seat of the emperor despite the formal "restoration" of power to him? What other alternatives were considered? Why was Edo chosen, despite the fact that no emperor had ever visited it before? What was the model for calling Edo "The Eastern Capital"? How was this name pronounced at first? Did Kyoto cease to be an Imperial Capital? Why did a battle break out on Ueno Hill despite the fact that Edo had surrendered peacefully to the imperial army? Why was Ueno Hill turned into a national and later municipal park? Why was a statue of the rebel Saigō Takamori erected there? How was the emperor transferred to Tokyo? Why did the population of Tokyo greatly decline after the Meiji Restoration and when did it regain its previous size? Did the court aristocracy follow the emperor to Tokyo? Did the emperor stay in his Tokyo palace, as the Kyoto emperors had done, or did he go out to tour the country? When was the public able to see his face? Did the restoration affect the foreigners in Tokyo? How was the European ward of Ginza established? How did the transportation in Tokyo change after the Meiji Restoration? Why was Emperor Meiji buried in Kyoto? My paper will try to answer these and other questions relating to the establishment of Tokyo as an imperial capital.