

# Military and Civil Uses of Osaka Castle in the Modern Age

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## Abstract

Osaka Castle burnt down during the Meiji Restoration in 1868, and the site has had various uses since. Although the greater portion of the site is presently utilized for Osaka Castle Park, it was once used as a military base during World War II. The history of its utilization is not well known, since it was long under the jurisdiction of the Japanese army. This paper attempts to clarify just how it has been used throughout the Modern age since the Meiji Restoration.

Civil and military uses of the site occurred competitively throughout time. In the beginning of the Meiji era, military and civil uses began to coexist, with several modern buildings appearing in a Western style. During the Meiji era, military use was constantly expanding, while the Taisho era saw a decrease in military use in accordance with the international tendency towards military reduction. In the early Showa era, they coexisted once again, but this time in competition for land use that would eventually find a military use. When we examine the history of utilization of the site through the modern age, we find that the site is a mirror that reflects the times.

**Keywords:** Osaka castle; modern age; military use; civil use; modern history

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## 1. Introduction

By the end of the Tokugawa (Edo) era, there were 182<sup>1</sup> castles in existence throughout Japan. Due to the defeat of the Tokugawa feudal government during the Meiji Restoration, virtually all passed to the new Meiji government. Osaka Castle was the greatest case among them.

The greater part of the original site of Osaka Castle is now used for Osaka Castle Park, but was once occupied by military installations during World War II. Although the original site has had various uses since the Meiji Restoration, the history of this utilization is not well known. A major reason for this is that the greater part of the site was long under the jurisdiction of the Japanese army until the end of the war. This paper attempts to clarify just how it has been used throughout the modern age since the Meiji Restoration through a structural analysis of the military and civil uses.

## 2. Osaka Castle and the Definition of the Site

Built in 1585 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Osaka Castle was a large castle, which had not only central and

secondary enclosures, but also a third as well as an outermost enclosure ('Sohgamae'). After Hideyoshi's death, the third moat was filled in just after the Osaka Winter War, while the buildings were burnt down during the Osaka Summer War. During the Edo era, the Tokugawa government reconstructed an even more magnificent version than the previous one. Since the third moat and Toyotomi's enclosure had vanished, the area was redeveloped as an administrative district for the Tokugawa Shogunate. Osaka flourished so, as the center of the economy and transportation for the entire country under the direct jurisdiction of the Tokugawa government, that the city became known as the 'nation's kitchen' during the Edo period.

Osaka Castle burnt down once again in 1868 at the time of war between the Tokugawa and the new Meiji government. The extent of the original site of Osaka Castle as defined in this paper is the area that includes not only the central and secondary enclosures but also the zone inside the third enclosure of Toyotomi's time. The area was used as one unit by the Tokugawa government as well as afterwards by the new Meiji government, and was roughly 1.5km x 2km as a whole.

## 3. States of Utilization According to Period

The state of utilization of the site shown below is divided into 5 periods beginning with the Meiji Restoration.

### 3.1 Early Meiji (1868-1880s)

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In the beginning of the Meiji era, some important facilities for modernizing the nation were established at the site of Osaka Castle. Seimi-kyoku (a college of chemistry and physics) was constructed at first in the western area of the site in 1868<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2). Successively, a foreign languages school and a medical school with a hospital were constructed in the same neighborhood (Fig. 3), all of wooden construction in a Western style.

Masujiro Ohmura, founder of the Japanese army, had planned to develop the site of Osaka Castle into a center for the Japanese army, so accordingly, within a few years of the beginning of the Meiji era, a military headquarters, a military school for officers, a military hospital, and an ordnance factory were successively constructed within the inner area of the site. Heigaku-ryo (a military school for officers), set in a Western style, had a square plan with a large courtyard in the center, which was completed in 1870<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 4).

Figure 1 shows the state of the site of in the early years of the Meiji era. The names and jurisdictions of the facilities were changed frequently due to the unsettled policies of the government. Though several modern buildings were constructed hastily in a short period, the national bodies moved to Tokyo with the capital transfer. In accordance with the enforcement of Haihan Chiken (the new prefectural system that replaced the feudal clans), the centralization of

government and power advanced, and as a result, Osaka declined in status. From a military point of view, Osaka lost its national status and in turn became the center of the western portion, and not all of Japan as before.

### 3.2 Middle and Late Meiji (1880s-1912)

The college and schools mentioned earlier, which were established in the early years of Meiji era, successively degraded in status to a local level and were combined to form a 'Higher School', which then moved to Kyoto in 1889, and was to become Kyoto Imperial University. The medical school was closed due to a change of policy at the Education Ministry of the Meiji Government. After these facilities moved out from the site, the lots and buildings were converted for military use.

The former palace of Wakayama Castle of the Kishu clan moved into the central enclosure of the site in 1885, and was used for one of the army's offices (Fig. 7). A reservoir was located in the central enclosure in 1895 to take advantage of its high location, with the water being widely distributed to the citizens of Osaka.

The ordnance factory gradually expanded in the northeastern portion of the site, and a railroad used for conveyance was connected to the main line in Osaka in 1895<sup>4</sup>. In this period, vacant lots became so few that

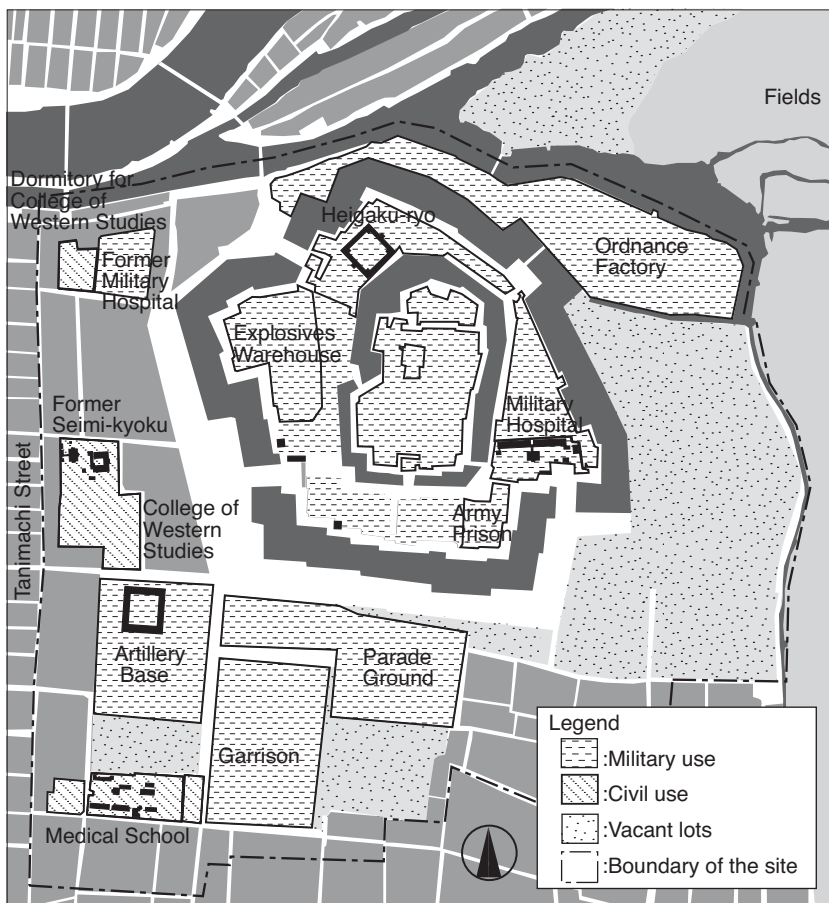


Fig.1. Map of Site in 1872



Fig.2. Seimi-kyoku (1868)



Fig.3. Medical School (1869)

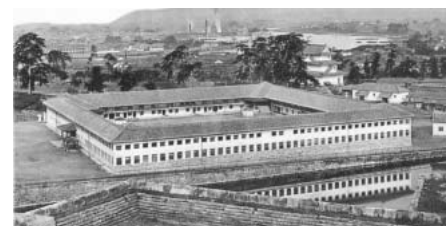


Fig.4. Heigaku-ryo (1870)

most of the land was used for military purposes.

### 3.3 The Taisho period (1912-1926)

The Taisho era saw a decrease in military use in accordance with the international tendency towards military reduction. As the 4th Battalion of the Japanese Army moved off the site in 1920, the Prefectural

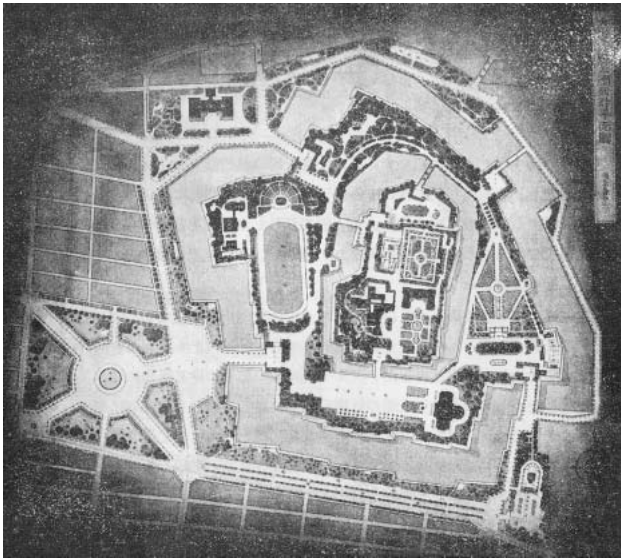


Fig.5. Osaka Castle Park Project by Shiihara (1920)

Government Office<sup>5</sup> as well as a high school moved in. Also in 1920, Hyoichi Shiihara, a planner of Osaka Municipal Government, designed the Osaka Castle Park Project<sup>6</sup>. His plan was to remake the site into a park, which included a concert hall, a library, a museum and sports grounds, which was to be achieved by removing all military installations (Fig. 5).

As the administrative area of Osaka City was extended in 1925, Osaka became Japan's largest city. Celebrating this achievement, a memorial exhibition was held and a pavilion called 'Hoko-kan' (Hideyoshi Pavilion) was built in the central enclosure, to which people came in large numbers. This construction of the 'Hoko-kan' seemed to stimulate a public fervour for reconstructing the castle tower.

### 3.4 Pre-war Through World War II (1926-1945)

In 1926, the Taisho Emperor died and in the following year, the enthronement ceremony for the Showa Emperor was held. In commemoration, Osaka City announced the plan for making Osaka Castle Park, which included the reconstruction of the castle tower in reinforced concrete, which was completed in 1931. Figure 6 is a map of the site at that time. The area of the park was much smaller than the project designed by Shiihara in the Taisho era but, in fact, the

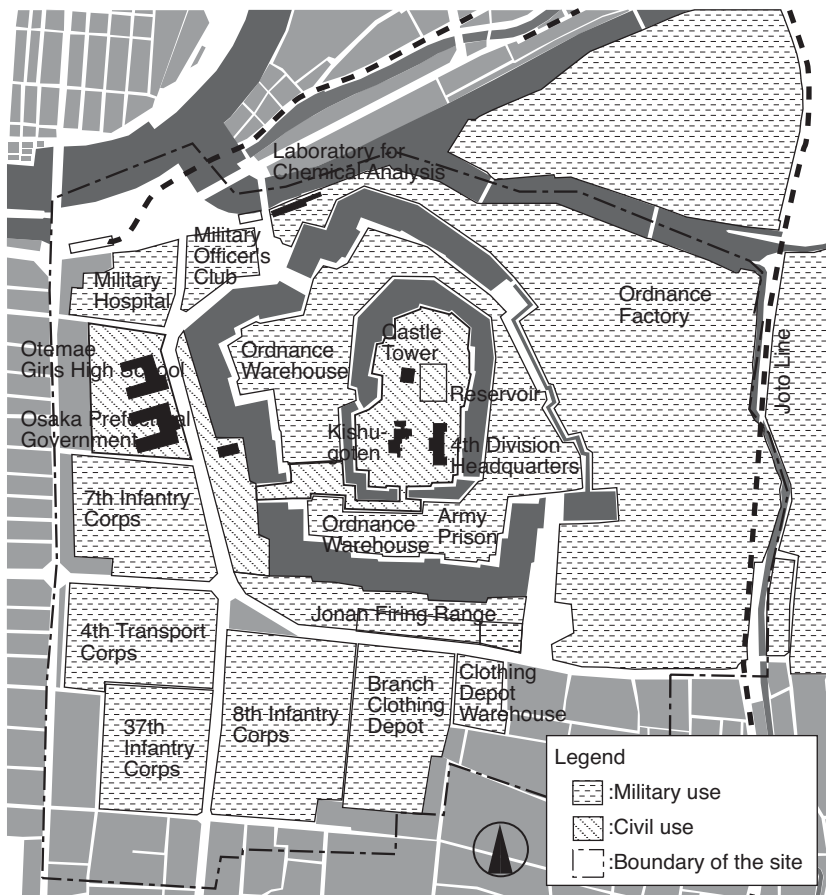


Fig.6. Map of Site in 1931



Fig.7. Kishu-goten (removed in 1885)



Fig.8. Castle Tower (1931)



Fig.9. 4th Division Headquarters (1931)



castle tower was realized in the very center of the army base (Fig. 8). At the same time, an office building for the 4th Division Headquarters was constructed in a Western style next to the castle tower in the central enclosure (Fig. 9). Both of these were constructed with private contributions of citizen in large numbers. The Headquarters building was a gift to the army in return for the gratuitous lease on a part of the site open to the public.

In 1936, Osaka Broadcasting Association Building was completed in the southern part of the site. The broadcasting industry became much more important during the war. This building, which was designed by Hitoshi Watanabe, one of the most active architects of the time, had a simple appearance with the latest equipment.

In 1940 the Joto Parade Ground moved out and the ordnance factory expanded into this location. When the Pacific War began in 1941, the army prohibited the general public from entering Osaka Castle Park, and requisitioned the castle tower at once. Towards the end of 1944, the site was damaged by air raids considerably, with the ordnance factory taking the brunt of the beating. In 1945, Japan surrendered and World War II ended.

### 3.5 End of the War to the Present (1945-the present)

With the end of the war, the Allied Powers took over the zones of central and secondary enclosures as its General Headquarters (GHQ). Under its control,

an accidental fire destroyed the Kishu-goten, and with it, the only traditional wooden Japanese building on the site was lost. 3 years later, the site was returned to the Japanese Government. Some buildings survived, in spite of violent damage incurred by the air raids. The former office building of the 4th Division Headquarters in the central enclosure was repaired and reused as the head office of the Police Department, and in 1960, it was converted to the Osaka City Museum.

Figure 11 is a map of the site at present. Several buildings and gardens have been constructed since the 1960s. Though the main building of the ordnance factory (Fig. 12) had been one of the important remnants of the war, it was destroyed in 1981, in spite of historians appeal for its conservation<sup>7</sup>, and the Osaka-Jo Hall was built in it's place. The former army laboratory building for chemical analysis (Fig. 13) has been empty for several years, and has deteriorated considerably. The site of Naniwanomiya, a palace of an ancient capital, has been excavated in the southern part of the site since 1953, and now turned to Naniwanomiya Historical Park.

## 4. Changes in Military and Civil Uses

Utilization of the site can be divided into military use verses civil use, with the changes during the modern age shown below:

### 4.1 Military Use

During the first 4 or 5 years of the Meiji era, a

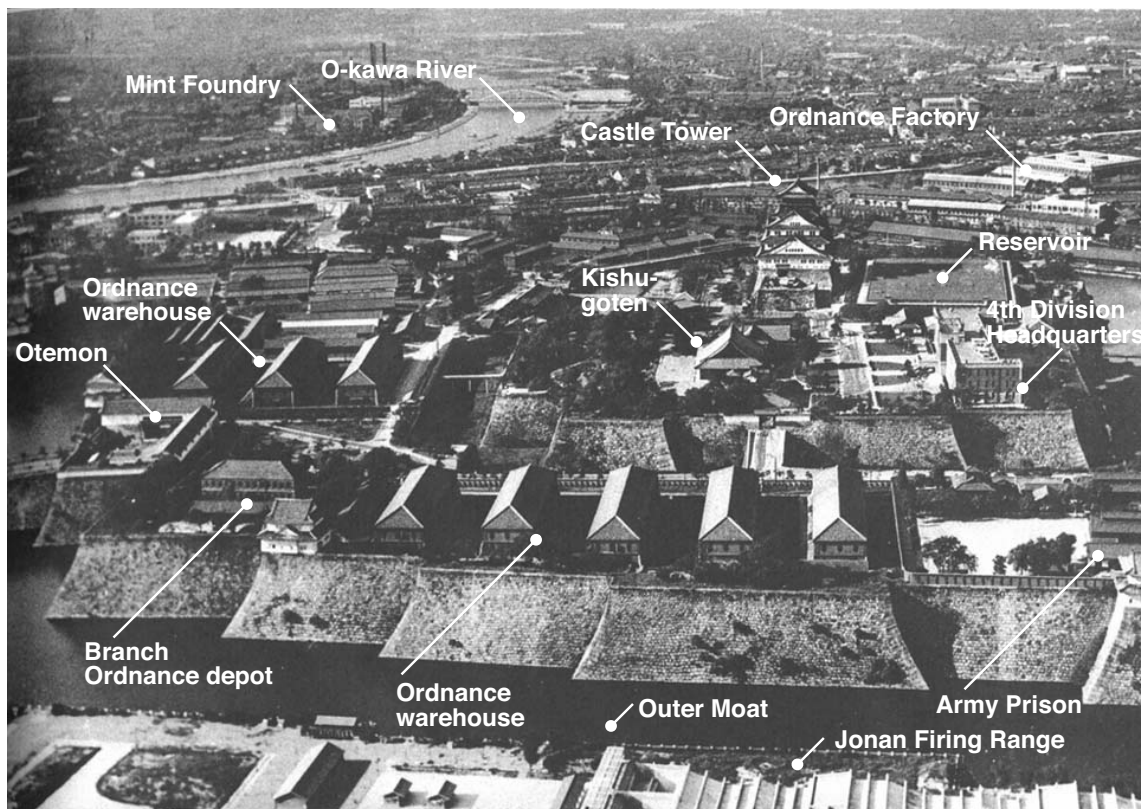


Fig.10. Osaka Castle as Seen from the South in 1932

school for military officers and a military hospital were built within the secondary enclosure, and an ordnance factory was built within the third enclosure. Masujiro Ohmura had planned to develop the site of Osaka Castle into a center for the Japanese army, though the plan did not proceed due to the transfer of the capital to Tokyo as well as his death by assassination, but it did become a center for the western section of the Japanese army.

Due to a military reduction after World War I, a battalion was moved out of the site and the Prefectural Government Office and a high school were moved into the location. Several years later, financed entirely by the citizenry, the army's headquarters building was constructed along with the castle tower in the central enclosure of the site.

In 1931, the same year as the opening of the castle tower, the Manchurian Incident occurred, and the likelihood of war increased worldwide once again. Logically, the military use grew into the major use for the site (Fig. 10), with the Osaka Ordnance Factory expanding to such an extent that it became one of the largest factories in Japan at that time. In 1945, Japan

lost the Pacific War, and the Allied Forces took over the site for the next 3 years.

#### 4.2 Civil Use

During the Meiji Restoration, Toshimichi Ohkubo proposed transferring the capital from Kyoto to Osaka. Osaka became regarded as worthy of the capital city with a good economy, and culture, as well as geographical advantages. During this period, Seimi-kyoku (a college of chemistry and physics) was also established on the site. The college was needed for developing the chemical industry in Japan along with the Mint Foundry, the establishment of which had been previously decided. Also related to the establishment of the Seimi-kyoku, a greater plan for a New University Project was drawn up by Yoshio Tanaka who was a planner of Osaka Prefectural Government. He designed the campus with a western style zoo and botanical garden.

Although the New University did not materialize, Seimi-kyoku and other schools such as a western language school and a medical school were in fact realized. In the subsequent half century, Hyoichi

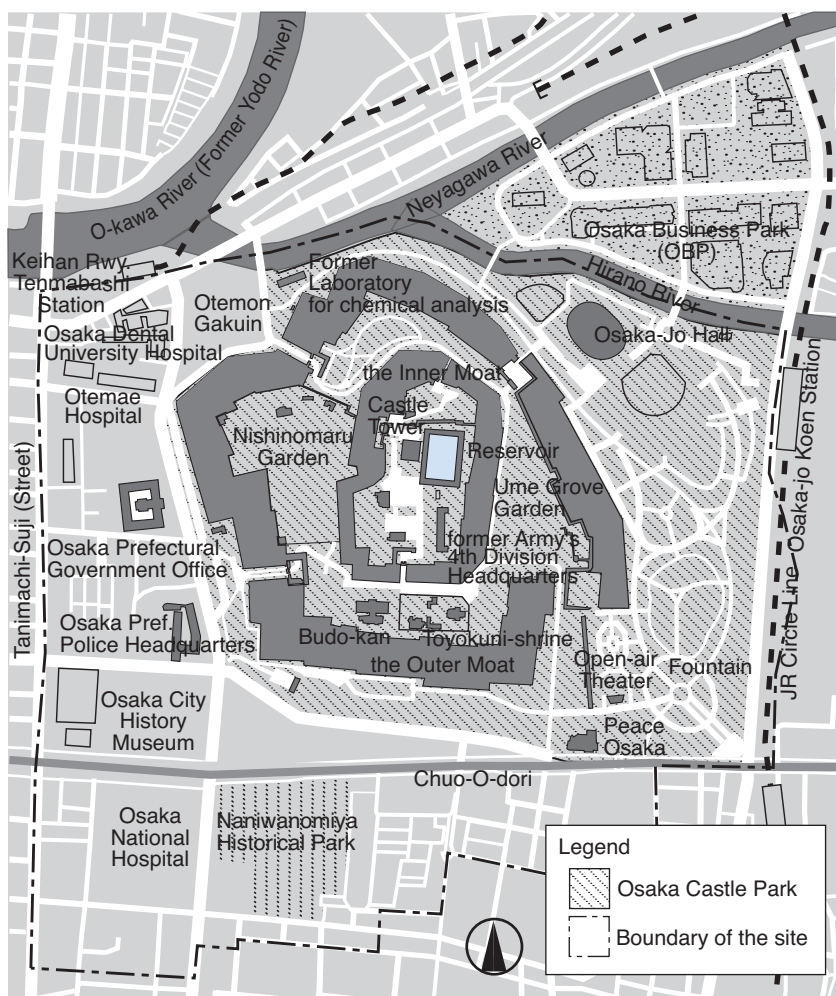


Fig.11. Map of Present Site



Fig.12. Main Building of Ordnance Factory (1873)



Fig.13. Laboratory for Chemical Analysis (1919)

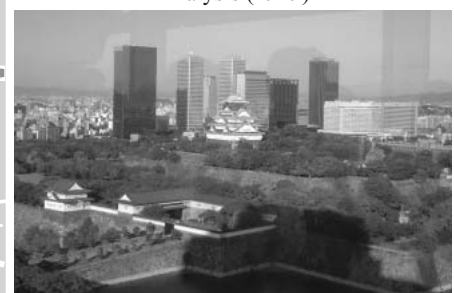


Fig.14. Osaka Castle Park and Osaka Business Park

Shiihara, a planner of the Osaka Municipal Government, conceived the Osaka Castle Park Project. He planned to remake the entire site into a park by removing all military installations. Although the plan was not feasible in practice, the new castle tower was reconstructed and a small park was put into place. Within a decade of the opening year, these were closed with the opening of the Pacific War, and the area was put wholly under the army's control.

With the close of the war, the castle tower and some buildings that had been damaged due to the bombing were repaired. Among them, the army's headquarters building was converted to the Osaka Municipal Museum. Several new buildings such as a gymnasium for Japanese traditional sports, a multi-purpose hall, and a peace center were built on the site. The present shape of the Park is rather close to the plan of the Osaka Castle Park Project designed by Hyoichi

Shiihara in 1920 of the Taisho era.

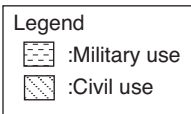
### 4.3 Relation to the Times

Table 1 shows the chronological changes of military and civil uses of the site with historical events of Japan and the world. This table demonstrates that changes of land use of the site are closely related to the circumstances of the times, especially relating to the military circumstances of the world.

### 5. Conclusion

The site of Osaka castle is located in the core district of the city. It is not only the geographical core, but also the symbolic and historical core of the city. Since it was originally constructed as a fortress, the characteristics of firmness, independence, segregation, and a fine view are evident. Logically, it is suitable for military facilities, and is also useful as a memorial

Table 1. Changes of Land Use in Chronological Order

	Utilization of in the Original Site of Osaka Castle		Events in Japan & World
	Military Use	Civil Use	
Meiji (1868 - )	1869 Military Headquarters established. 1870 School for Officers and Ordnance Factory established. 1871 Osaka Army Corps established. 1888 Osaka Army Corps renamed the 4th Division.	1868 New University Project by Tanaka 1868 College of Chemistry and Physics completed. 1869 College of Literature and Foreign Languages established. 1869 Medical School established.	1869 Hanseki hokan: formal return of domain registers. 1871 Establishment of prefectural system 1873 Conscription Ordinance enacted. 1877 Satsuma Rebellion 1894 Sino-Japanese War begins. 1904 Russo-Japanese War begins.
Taisho (1912 - )	1920 The 4th Battalion of the Army removed.	1920 Osaka Castle Park Project by Shiihara 1923 Otemae Girls High School established. 1926 Osaka Prefectural Government Office Building completed.	1914 World War I begins. 1922 Washington Naval Treaty signed.
Showa (1926 - )	1931 The 4th Division Headquarters completed. 1940 Ordnance Factory expanded.	1928 The making plan of Osaka Castle Park announced. 1931 Osaka Castle Park opens. 1942 Entering park prohibited. The requisitioning of the castle tower by the army.	1929 US stock market crashes, prolonged depression begins. 1931 Manchurian Incident 1936 Second of the London Naval Conferences; Japan withdraws. 1938 World War II begins in Europe. 1941 Pacific War commences. 1945 World War II ends.
After the War (1945 - )		1948 De-requisitioning to Japan 1953 Excavation of Naniwanomiya begins. 1960 Large repairs on stonewalls and turrets begins. (until 1970) 1960 Ex-4th Division Headquarters reused as the museum. 1961 Toyokuni Shrine removed from Nakanoshima. 1965 Nishinomaru Garden opens. 1974 Ume Grove Garden opens. 1983 Osaka-jo Hall completed. 1986 Osaka Business Park opens.	



park, museum, or school on the basis of its historical as well as other characteristics.

The state of the site at the beginning of the Meiji era is indicative of its future in terms of utilization. The construction of the Seimi-kyoku was decided during the initial stage of the Meiji Restoration, as well as a plan for the construction of the New University Project. The University included not only colleges like the Seimi-kyoku but also botanical and zoological gardens. On the other hand, at almost the same time, a plan for making a military base for the Japanese army was also conceived and put into practice in the site.

Civil and military uses in the site occurred competitively throughout the times, and the relationship was strongly influenced by the circumstances of the time, especially by the military affairs around the world. During the Meiji era, military use was constantly expanding with the development of vacant lots on the site in accordance with the wars that occurred one after another, while, on the other hand, in the Taisho era, we see a decrease in military use in accordance with the international tendency towards military reduction. Demonstrating this fact, the Prefectural Government Office as well as a high school move into the site, and at the same time, a daring plan for remaking the greater part of the site into a park was conceived.

In the early years of the Showa era, two opposing strategies emerged, one relating to the effects of the military reduction up until that time, the other relating to the atmosphere that lead to World War II, both competitively coexisting. The circumstances of the time were well reflected through the utilization of the site. Financed entirely by the citizenry, the castle tower and the army's headquarters building were constructed at the same time. These were constructed in a pair as a strategy for gaining the right for civil use within a military zone. A Japanese style castle tower and a Western style army building stood side by side in the central enclosure, but within a decade of the opening

year, they were closed with the opening of the Pacific War.

After the War, the site was opened entirely for civil use, with the greater portion of the site being remade into Osaka Castle Park. During the construction, the remains of the military installations as well as remnants of past wars were carelessly destroyed.

When we examine the history of the utilization of the site through the modern age, we find that the site is a mirror that reflects the times. The site is a marker of the history of the modern age as well as a depot for historical relics dating from feudal times. The remains of an ancient palace were discovered at an area located within the site and are presently under excavation. The site of Osaka Castle is a valuable repository full of historical heirlooms of Osaka from ancient time to the present.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Moriyama, E. (1989) Meiji Ishin - Haijo Ichiran, Sin Jinbutsu Oraisha
- <sup>2</sup> There are some plans, photos and perspective drawings of this building in books as below: Shinryo-shi shiryu kenkyuu-kai (1994) Siryo shinryo-shi seimi-kyoku kara sanko made, Shinryo-shi shiryu kenkyu-kai, Fujita, H. (1995) Osaka Seimi-kyoku no shiteki tenkai - Kyoto daigaku no genryu, Shibunkaku syuppan.
- <sup>3</sup> Plans of this building have not been handed down. Yagyu, E. guesses the ground plan of that in her book, Maboroshi no Heigakuryo, Rokko-shuppan, 1983.
- <sup>4</sup> Osaka Houhei Kosyo Enkaku-shi that was published in 1902 included some maps of the ordnance factory in the early and middle Meiji.
- <sup>5</sup> The former government office building was built in 1874 in Enokojima, a bayside district in Osaka City.
- <sup>6</sup> Hyoichi Shiihara (1932) Osaka Joshi no Koen Keikaku, Kenchiku to Shakai, 15(7), 37
- <sup>7</sup> This building was originally constructed as the turning lathe workshop in 1873.

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- 2) Shinohara, Hiroshi (1983) Rikugun Sosetsushi, Libro Port
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