

Hanoi's ancient citadel is a new World Heritage site



The proposed new international air terminal



The famed Long Bien bridge in an earlier era



The city's new infrastructure rises



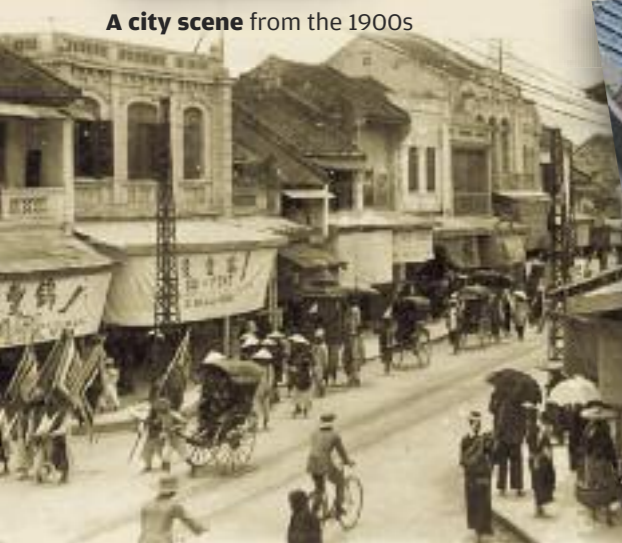
HANOI

1,000 YEARS OF HISTORY



HANOI CIRCA 1990s: Heading into a very different future today

A city scene from the 1900s



New and old Hanoi



Japanese construction engineers at work



A new expressway gains shape



A CHALLENGING FUTURE



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Building a new Hanoi



FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY THE LONG BIEN BRIDGE HAS ACCURATELY TRACKED THE HISTORY OF HANOI.

It was reputedly built by one of the most renowned of modern architects, Gustave Eiffel, whose signature construction remains the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Started in the late 1800s and completed in 1902, dazzled French colonial officials called it "the bridge that joined two centuries." Spanning the Red River, the bridge opened Hanoi to economic prosperity and a vast hinterland of northern Viet Nam, linking the city with China to the north and the country's major port of Haiphong to the east.

Schoolchildren sang its praises in a poem: *"Hanoi has the Long Bien Bridge So Long and Wide Across the Red River Vehicles Pass in a Long and Carefree Way"*

It became perhaps the most prominent symbol of national resistance in the conflict with the United States. American warplanes repeatedly attacked the bridge, but as soon as a span was dropped, it was almost always quickly rebuilt. On one recent day, a long line of Japanese tourists

walked across the rickety steel frame of the bridge. An ancient locomotive clanked uncertainly and slowly across the track. Noisy motorcycles sped across its outer lanes. The bridge resembles nothing less than a patched-up war veteran, but it remains a barometer of the city's present and future. It was once the only bridge across the river which glows red at various times of the day. Upstream and downstream, however, newer, larger bridges now span the waterway, testimony to Hanoi's rapid expansion. And on this particular day, experts from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) were discussing with visitors a new mega-project for Hanoi, the development of another span across the Red River which will be part of a new multi-billion dollar urban rapid transit system.

A Major Birthday

IN OCTOBER, HANOI MARKS THE OFFICIAL 1,000th anniversary of its birth. In fact the area has been inhabited since at least 3,000 BC, but city fathers have chosen to date modern Hanoi from the year 1010 when the first ruler of the Ly Dynasty located his capital here.

Since then the city has enjoyed a checkered history, being abandoned at various times as the seat of imperial power to competing cities such as Hue, becoming the capital of French Indochina after 1887, briefly the seat of the Viet Minh government following World War II and then capital of an independent and finally unified Viet Nam. Though now politically stable with the scars of war erased, Hanoi nevertheless faces new, formidable challenges as it marks its auspicious birthday. They are problems similar to those faced by

emerging mega-cities around the world. In 1900 only 13% of the world's population, 220 million people, lived in cities. That figure rose to 3.9 billion, or 49% of the global population in 2005 and, according to the United Nations, for the first time in history more people now live in urban areas than rural districts. And while established centers such as Tokyo or London have been able to develop gradually over the centuries and have reasonable financial and human resources to tackle growth problems, 'developing' cities must confront a myriad of problems all at once. Helping these cities, and hundreds of millions of people who survive in their slum areas, is an increasing area of activity for JICA.

Hanoi has enjoyed a checkered history... and faces new, formidable challenges.

The agency previously cooperated with China to formulate an urbanization policy for the city of Shanghai and the entire Yangtze River delta region. It has worked for years in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, in such areas as flood control. Japanese experts have been at work for several

Bach Mai Hospital; Chief advisor Akiyama with colleagues (bottom)



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years on a comprehensive blueprint for the Kabul Metropolitan Area, drawing up a master plan to create satellite townships and business areas which will more than double the size of the Afghanistan capital to around 1,000 square kilometers.

Cooperating with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, JICA





Japan became the first international donor to resume aid to Viet Nam in the early 1990s.

recently concluded a comprehensive report on the increasing risks faced by coastal mega-cities such as Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Manila because of changing climate conditions.

That report concluded such cities faced the threat of deteriorating weather conditions, increased flooding and greater numbers of urban poor in the future and that few developing cities had yet focused their attention on developing strategies to combat these problems.

Rushing into the Future

HANOI AND VIET NAM'S COMMERCIAL CAPITAL, Ho Chi Minh City (see page 13), in many ways are typical of these global emerging cities. Only a few decades ago Hanoi was a small, sleepy colonial backwater. A little more than a decade ago there was virtually no modern infrastructure – few roads, almost no cars, no sewage system, intermittent power supplies, few hotels, antiquated factories, hospitals and schools and only a limited number of experts able to handle even the basic infrastructure of an emerging modern society.

Today, Hanoi is rushing headlong into the future and all of the above challenges have taken on added urgency. The city's population will explode to eight million by 2020. It needs new roads, bridges, buses, trains, schools and hospitals.

Viet Nam has become an emerging "Tiger" economy, but it needs tens of thousands of trained engineers, teachers and doctors to sustain a growing economy, and new hotels and airports to support one of its most important industries, tourism, whose figures are expected to increase from 4 to 23 million people within a few years.

Hanoi's lakes and rivers are justifiably celebrated in poems and prose, but the truth is they need a vast cleanup to help regulate flooding which causes regular havoc in the capital.

Beautiful but Haunted

EVEN THOUGH THE WAR ENDED OFFICIALLY IN 1975 and Viet Nam instituted the Doi Moi economic liberalization policy in 1986, the land remained hauntingly beautiful but seemed almost

empty and stalled as late as the 1990s.

Food was de-rated and meat appeared more frequently on family menus. Clothes and shoes were more plentiful, but mainly from China. There were no shopping malls, high rises or places of entertainment.

Young couples took advantage of the virtually darkened city at night for regular courtship around the city's famed lakes. There were no private cars, only the wonderful tinkle of thousands of bicycles in the narrow streets, though the more affluent young men were beginning to woo girlfriends with the motorcycle of the moment, a Honda 'Dream' machine.

"We had nothing during that time," recalls Do Doan Loi, then a young doctor and now deputy director of Hanoi's main Bach Mai Hospital. "There was no equipment. Even simple stethoscopes were difficult to find. The national budget was tiny and there was often little to eat."

Japan became the first international donor to resume aid to Viet Nam during that period and has remained perhaps its most important bilateral partner since then. One of its first moves was to provide US\$20 million to Hanoi's hospitals, a project which a young Japanese neurosurgeon Dr. Minoru Akiyama helped to orchestrate.

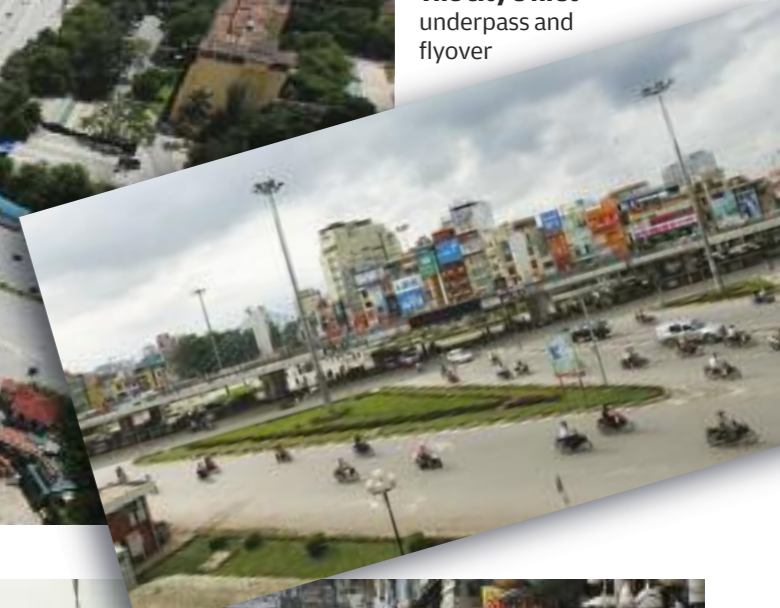
Do Doan Loi recognizes that initial Japanese support helped 'kick-start' Viet Nam's entire medical system, including the subsequent training of thousands of doctors, nurses and other medical staff. And on Dr. Akiyama's part, he, like other Japanese experts, has returned to the country repeatedly to participate in a succession of projects in various medical fields.

JICA helped the government to develop the first

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The city's first underpass and flyover



economic and social master plan for the northern part of the country. Other Japanese experts subsequently began a US\$9 million three-year project to help Hanoi authorities develop their own city blueprint for the future. Important elements of that master plan, including the mass urban transit system, are now moving forward to the practical implementation stage.

Spectacular, Sometimes Invisible

PROJECTS IN HANOI AND HO CHI MINH CITY range from the spectacularly visible to the understated and 'invisible' – the building of highways, bridges, rail track and airports; cleaning up rivers and lakes and establishing a micro water treatment system to protect the environment; supporting hospital and health facilities; training the thousands of specialists and factory managers who will guide an increasingly complex national infrastructure; to mobilizing neighborhood committees to establish environmentally-friendly garbage collection systems.

Noi Bai airport is the major gateway to northern Viet Nam, and Japan earlier this year signed an agreement to provide technical and financial assistance for a second new 69 billion yen terminal which will boost capacity to 16 million people annually.

Though approved and implemented at different times, a key insistence of Japanese planning for the Hanoi area is that individual infrastructure projects



A new rapid transit system is being planned

Cleaning up Hanoi's lakes (bottom) and To Lich River (right); A new water treatment plant (center)





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Old and new Hanoi



could totally freeze up if people continue to switch to cars, but it will take another 10 years to develop an effective public transport system.”

A beginning has been made but Hanoi is starting from ground zero.

A 60-route bus system was inaugurated several years ago. But the key will be the redevelopment of Hanoi station and a proposed five-line mass transit system, two lines of which Japan has agreed to help finance and provide technical expertise.

Advanced planning for the 28-kilometer, US\$2.5 billion elevated line one is underway and work is expected to begin in 2013. At peak hours, trains will run every four minutes and the entire system is being designed to handle 300,000-400,000 people daily.

A City of Water

HANOI, ABOVE ALL, IS A CITY OF WATER BUT like the mega coastal cities studied by JICA, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, that water system now poses a threat. Hanoi’s very name can mean ‘between rivers’. A massive sweep of the Red River encompasses the old city and the entire area is so low-lying there are dozens of lakes within the city boundaries.

They have inspired writers, poets and lovers. The To Lich River was immortalized in the legend of *The Fairy Bride*, for instance. A handsome student, Tu Uyen, fell in love with a beautiful young girl, but she suddenly vanished into thin air. Apparently she was

a fairy. The stricken young man was eventually directed to the river where he purchased the painting of a young woman who looked exactly like his ‘fairy.’

One day, the painting transformed itself into the young woman who told her suitor she had been sent by the Fairy Queen to be his wife. Because the young scholar took to drinking, his wife fled back into the painting, but when she reappeared a second time she produced a son. Eventually, she announced she had to return to her home and urged her husband “Let us journey to Heaven together” and two white swans carried them away.

The river no longer inspires such romantic fancy. Parts have already been dredged, cleaned up and widened but other stretches remain stinking pools of garbage and an urgent facelift is being planned. In addition to the river project, JICA is helping to clean up a total of 18 of the city’s more than 50 famed lakes, as well as building three modest water treatment plants. The scale of the water problem facing Hanoi is that the three plants can only handle the waste of several thousand people in a city of several million.

Among other problems, clogged water arteries prolong the impact of annual flooding, increasing the threat of waterborne diseases. Even with the modest improvements already achieved, ‘run-off’ times for flood waters have been sharply reduced.

A Skilled Workforce

ANY CITY’S ULTIMATE HEALTH RESTS ON THE skills of its citizens and a robust economy. Early in Hanoi’s emergence after decades of isolation, JICA not only helped to rehabilitate its medical system but also to establish a key industrial park.

Today, more than 50,000 workers are employed by 67 enterprises, 65 of them Japanese, with such iconic names as Canon and Panasonic, at the 677-acre Thang Long Industrial Park. This one industrial center alone accounts for 3.3% of Viet Nam’s exports.

The country’s booming economy needs a more skilled labor force and better managers for small and medium sized companies which have exploded from some 20,000 to 500,000 today and which in turn supply global giants such as Toyota.

JICA has established close ties with key education institutions such as the

Hanoi University of Industry, the Foreign Trade University and the Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology, providing equipment, developing manuals and training courses which have helped transform the country into a free market economy and training tens of thousands of key workers.

JICA experts have developed key links between local labor organizations and foreign companies while ‘senior’ volunteers spend time with individual companies, helping them improve their management and shop floor skills.

Shizuo Iwata, a doctor of engineering who helped develop Hanoi’s original master plan, is now working on the next stage of this ‘integrated approach’ — to ensure that all infrastructure improvements, for instance, are linked directly with the city’s overall economic expansion.

“We are going to redevelop the Hanoi train station,” he said. “We don’t want to just build new rail lines, but ensure that the areas around these lines are developed with new businesses, shops and homes. If we do it correctly, the government could even recover the rail development costs from these other businesses.”

JICA Representative Motonori Tsuno recalls that when Japan began its development assistance, “We began with a blank page. Viet Nam needed a blueprint for the future. JICA helped both the central government and Hanoi prepare and kick-start those master plans with a judicious mix of technical assistance and yen loans for both infrastructure and social programs.”

He added, “But the next 5 to 10 years will be critical in Viet Nam. Traditional official development assistance (ODA) will no longer fill the needs of an increasingly complex infrastructure.”

“Viet Nam’s basic institutions need to be radically improved,” he said, and cooperation from nontraditional sources such as the private sector will be necessary if Hanoi, indeed, Viet Nam is to consolidate recent advances. ■

Any city’s ultimate health rests on the skills of its citizens and a robust economy.

Hanoi is a city of water... inspiring writers, poets and lovers.

Halting the Chaos

IN A LITTLE MORE THAN A DECADE, HANOI HAS transformed itself from one of the quietest and most sedate of capital cities to one of the world’s noisiest and most chaotic. It has become a virtual race against time not only to effectively link the city with the outside world via a network of roads and bridges, but to also end its internal hemorrhaging.

JICA experts have helped redesign traffic flows and key intersections, build the first city flyover and underpass, train police officials and change the attitude of Hanoi’s often undisciplined drivers, particularly motorcyclists who must now all wear crash helmets or face stiff fines.

Says chief advisor Michimasa Tagaki, who has spent several years in Hanoi working on the traffic problem: “Fatalities here are four times higher than in Japan. Hanoi has one of the highest ratios of motorcycles to people in the world and the percentage increase of vehicles each year is 10-20%. The system



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A graduating class of business executives (left); Local workers at a Japanese factory (center); JICA officials assist workers at a local factory (above)