

Statement Condemning the Destruction of the National Stadium
and
the Woods of Jingu Gaien, the Outer Garden of the Meiji Jingu Shrine
by
The Custodians of the National Stadium, Tokyo
March 5, 2015



the National Stadium being demolished and felled trees of Jingu Gaien
January 17, 2015, courtesy of Yasuhiro Hamano

The Custodians of the National Stadium, Tokyo, strongly condemn the Japan Sport Council (JSC) for embarking on the demolition of Tokyo's iconic National Stadium, venue of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. As a preliminary measure, JSC workers have felled Jingu Gaien's historic trees, which have been cherished by athletes and citizens alike. The JSC is taking these ill-advised steps to begin the construction of a colossal new main stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. The construction costs are already estimated to double and even triple the initial estimate. Similarly, management and maintenance costs will spiral out of control. Thus, the new stadium is destined to become a white elephant after the Games.

Beginning in November 2013, we organized a series of symposia to discuss the multifaceted aspects of the project. Prominent architects, urban planners, historians, environmentalists, economists and facilities managers have unanimously pointed to the absurdity of JSC's plan. Exploring the many problems in detail, these experts warned that the impractical proposed monster stadium will prove an environmental, financial, and aesthetic burden not only to Tokyo, but to the whole nation. We made public every bit of the amassed knowledge and information and submitted the findings to the JSC and relevant authorities. We have also submitted petitions asking them to consider realistic, feasible proposals to retrofit the 1964 stadium. Unfortunately it appears our appeals have never been considered.

Therefore, we direct our condemnation to both the Japan Sport Council and all the recipients of our petitions. The members of the group (listed below) have ignored our appeals both in writing and in person:

Yoshiro Mori, President, Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Hakubun Shimomura, Minister, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
Yoichi Masuzoe, Governor of Tokyo
Ichiro Kono, President, Japan Sport Council
Yoshihiro Onizawa, Board Member, Japan Sport Council, and
Masao Yamazaki, Director, New National Stadium Project, Japan Sport Council.

Those listed are in positions to be fully informed of the serious problems inherent to the new national stadium project. However, they have failed to consider making any fundamental changes. When the results of their failure become evident, they should take legal and ethical responsibility, that is, when the inevitable difficulties of constructing the new stadium and of managing the unwieldy monster hit home and its finances become even more costly.

We also believe the Council of Advisors for the National Stadium Future Plan, who approved the terms of the 2012 International Design Competition for the New National Stadium, must share the responsibility for a facility that will become a national burden. Among the Council members listed in the Attachment hereto, we single out Shunichi Tokura and Tadao Ando. Tokura has insisted on the retractable, and perhaps dangerous, roof as a must for commercial music events. Ando chaired the Design Competition, which awarded first prize to Zaha Hadid, whose designs fail to consider both technical and financial feasibility.

In making this statement, the Custodians of the National Stadium, Tokyo, represent 36,000 people who have supported our petitions, the panels of top-level speakers of our symposia, public opinion in Japanese and international media reports and surveys, including, among others, the 62,751 naysayers to any new national stadium in the YAHOO January 2015 voting.

The Custodians of the National Stadium, Tokyo, grasp that the Tokyo Olympic national stadium issue is much more than a controversy about a construction project. We are fighting against an unprecedented threat to Tokyo's landscape. We are fighting for Tokyo's urban living environment and for cultural and historic assets that all citizens can enjoy now and in the future. The Japan Sport Council's steamrolling tactics violate every aspect of the rules of a democracy. In good conscience and with sound judgment, we shall never stop raising our voices against the planned stadium and the destruction it will cause.

The Custodians of the National Stadium, Tokyo



Nobuko Shimizu (Board Member, Preserving Landscapes and Living Environment)

On behalf of Co-chairs:

Satoko Ohashi (Architect)
Chizuko Kamimura (Network for Preserving Landscapes & Living Environment)
Miwako Sakai (Designer)
Kimie Tada (Chief Editor, "Confort")
Sadako Tani (Bunkyo Link for Architectural Preservation)
Keiko Hioki (Community Culture Planning Coordinator)
Sakura Mori (Art Coordinator)
Mayumi Mori (Writer & Representative, Yanesen Kobo)
Akiko Yamamoto (Japan Association for MACHI-NAMI Conservation and Regeneration)
Chiaki Yoshimi (Heritage Houses Trust)

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Attachment

The Council of Advisors for the National Stadium Future Plan

Teiichi Sato, Chairman (Professor, International University of Health and Welfare, Graduate School; former Ambassador Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO)

Yuichiro Anzai, Ph D., Vice Chairman (President, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science)

Tadao Ando, Chair of the Architecture Group (Architect)

Junji Ogura, Chair of the Sports Group (Honorary President, Japan Soccer Federation)

Shunichi Tokura, Chair of the Culture Group (Composer; President, the Japanese Society for Rights of authors, Composers and Publishers)

Shintaro Ishihara, Naoki Inoki, and Yoichi Masuzoe (Governors of Tokyo past and present)

Toshiaki Endo (Board member, Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games; Chairman, the Parliamentary Caucus for Sports)

Yohei Kono and Hiroshi Yokokawa (Chairman, past and present, Japanese Association of Athletics Federations)

Hiroshi Suzuki (former member of the House of Councilors; Councilor, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

Hidenori Suzuki (Chairman, Japanese Anti-Doping Agency)

Tsunekazu Takeda (President, Japanese Olympic Committee)

Fujio Cho (President, Japan Amateur Sports Association)

Mitsunori Torihara (President, Japanese Para-Sports Association)

Yoshiro Mori (President, Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games; Chairman, Japan Rugby Football Union; former Prime Minister of Japan)

Hirofumi Ryu (Acting Chairman, Parliamentary Caucus for the Promotion of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games)