

A POSITIVE STUDY OF "GESHUKUYA"—A TYPE OF BOARDING HOUSE IN URBAN AREAS
IN MODERN JAPAN

—with case studies of Tokyo, Hongo district and "Hongo-Kan"—

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[SYNOPSIS]

"Geshukuya"—a kind of boarding houses in Japan—is not a result of modernism or "modernized houses", but a unique type of apartment houses in urban areas featuring the modernization in Japan. This study is the first trial of comprehensive and academic research of "Geshukuya".

In Tokyo, generally, "Geshukuya" was serving meals and other variety of services, increasing its number at least from 1926 to 1945, having public images—freedom, degradation, commercialism and cruelty—in the first quarter of 20th century and sharing the industrial style with "Ryokan" (a kind of inn) under the regulations by the local government of Tokyo from 1878.

In Tokyo, the biggest concentration of "Geshukuya" existed in Hongo district because of the adjacency to the University of Tokyo and other educational facilities. Especially, the chain migration from Seino District, Gifu prefecture—pioneer immigrants from the late 19th century to the first quarter of 20th century and their relatives and neighbors—had leading positions among the association of "Geshukuya" in Hongo. They helped each other to stabilize their life. Some of them even represented their community as members of a town assembly.

About "Hongo-kan" and some other "Geshukuya" existing still now and demolished recently in Hongo, the history of the architecture, the management and the daily life had been researched and recorded by measurements and hearings to the owner and so on. As a style of architecture, "Geshukuya" has some features—the plan with courtyards, "Tokonoma (alcove)" in each room, the high-rise and voluminous tendency and a mass in Hongo.