

Radio Towers - National

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Abstract

Introduction

As the subject of this paper is probably unfamiliar, it is best to start with a straightforward description before looking back over the period in which these 'radio towers' appeared, flourished and, largely, disappeared: The radio towers discussed here are public radio receivers mounted typically in a 2m tall concrete or wooden 'tower' in a public place, typically a park.¹ These towers, ultimately somewhere in the region of 400 of them, were erected around Japan between 1932 and the end of the second world war. The overwhelming majority are now lost, many destroyed in the allied bombing which destroyed much of the urban landscape, but there are roughly 40 known to be still standing. These radio towers are a now rare material reminder of the largely ephemeral practise of radio listening, importantly they are a *public* resource available to anyone with an interest in prewar Japan's mass media, and to those involved in teaching the social history of the period.

This paper offers a brief description of the media landscape in which the radio towers appeared. documents their growth and spread and offers brief descriptions of several examples. We start by looking at some examples as it is best to establish exactly what kind of object, in what kind of setting, we are talking about here (see ??). The examples are all to be found in the Kyoto City area but can be considered representative of the typical types of towers found around the rest of the country.

References

1. For speakers of Japanese, the term used to refer to these objects is 'rajio-tō', however, confusingly, this may also be used to refer to the large metal towers used to mount broadcasting antennas, also referred to as 'tettō' (steel towers). [↩](#)