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Basic ideas, principles for,
and definition of the Safe-
guarding of historic land-
scape

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Basic Ideas, Principles for, and Definition of the Safeguarding of Historic Landscape

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1. Basic Ideas

Let me first consider how the consciousness for the problems of the safeguarding of historic landscape should be situated in the present state of modernization which is presenting a crisis on the progress of civilization.

The economic growth supports, of course, the progress of civilization, but in the process of its rapid and gigantic growth we know, through experience, the terrible pollutions and the demolitions of natural environment which are resulted. Also we cannot overlook the fact that, under the waves of the rapid urbanization the beautiful countryside itself is being damaged by the urban sprawl, and valuable cultural heritages are being demolished.

Furthermore, there is even a trend to make light of the warm-hearted historical cultures, on account of the accelerating functionalism with the lack of human nature, caused by giving preference to the mental structure of the pursuit of profits by means of modern mass production.

We interpret these confusions of the modern mass society as the desolation of human spirit influenced by the environmental deterioration, and we begin to wonder what is meant by the progress of civilization. We also begin to fear that we cannot expect for sure a fruitful cultural environment out of an affluent society of mass consumption.

The modern crisis is not only the crisis of life caused by the destruction of nature or else by the pollution, problems of population, food, resources and others, it might also mean the crisis of the cultural decline through the loss of humanity and the weakening of the human spirit.

The basic ideas of the safeguarding of historic landscape must be deepened by the recognition of the status quo. It is true that the modern culture is sustained by the materials through the mass production, and is brought up and tinted by the flood of abundant information. It is needless to say that quantity does not necessarily heighten quality. The true culture would be supported by a desirable environment, and created by the flourishing of unrestrained personalities.

The concept of culture will embrace an extremely broad spiritual activities of man, ranging from the world of science and art to the inheritance of the traditional folk art with its native background as well as the diverse features of the nature conservation and the safeguarding for historic landscape. Such culture is fostered in the rich cultural environment which keeps the continuous relationship between the tradition and creation. Therefore the influence which the development of human spirits on the soil of culture inherited by way of the safeguarding of historic landscape is exceedingly important.

The historic landscape that amply fosters the human spirit has the function to influence on the deepening of one's own creativeness by way of one's actual feeling. Such function of historic landscape becomes quite effective through the retroactive and visual experiencing of the continuity of history.

Thus a well-preserved historic landscape will play an extremely important role in taking back the healthy human spirit from those suffering from the malady of the modern mass society, as well as escaping from the prevailing tasteless and empty modern functional space in order to regain the richness of the mind.

2. Principles

- (1) The safeguarding of historic landscape should not be the preservation of only the historic buildings and sites but it should be the landscape conservation of the special areas in which the core of such historic culture is unified with the surrounding natural environment.
- (2) Generally, except the wild regions every area has its own life history of the local inhabitants. We must understand that these local inhabitants have marked their life history upon the base of landscape through their land use, and thus formed their historic landscape.
- (3) Therefore, historic landscape should be recognized as a living landscape, and, in order for it to live forever as the continuation of history hereafter, a stabilized land use must always be kept on. In order to keep up this living landscape, some structural system of dynamically balanced order, which unifies preservation and development, must be introduced into the conservation plan of historic landscape.
- (4) The change of land use is invariably accompanied by the change of landscape. If we interpret the meaning of living landscape from the viewpoint of the life of the local inhabitants, it should mean for them a landscape filled with the vitality of their worthwhile living.

- (5) However, within the conservation area of historic landscape, arbitrary actions of the local inhabitants on land use changes are not permitted.

Since the independence of the historic landscape must be kept, control measures are provided for the changes of land use within its conservation area. Here lies a big planning theme of how to continue the life worth living and simultaneously keep the independence of historic landscape, while controlling the changes of landscape brought about by the land use. Concerning this changeability, however, some limitation must be set corresponding to the special character of the historic landscape.

- (6) It is of course impossible to measure the cultural value of historic landscape by figures. Therefore it is important for the local inhabitants to have their philosophy for the recognition of such value, whether or not their living environment is worth preserving as historical landscape.
- (7) Herein must be the first step to the basic principle of the inhabitants' participation in the planning of the safeguarding of historic landscape. The planning by people's participation means that the local inhabitants participate with their own responsibility for the evaluation, and that they cooperate from the beginning of the plan for its ultimate realization. From standpoint of the planning administration, this means that the realization of the plan may be frustrated without the cooperation of the local inhabitants.
- (8) As a rule, in the zoning system for the land use planning there are different stages of control based on the public principle in the land use planning. Concerning the point of how the local inhabitants conform to a certain control of land use, the possibility of such conformance must be sought in the balance of the interrelation between the zoning stages which include the productivity and the pursuit of convenience in the land use, and the limit of the volunteer patience on the part of the local inhabitants as regards the zoning. Therefore, the important point in the zoning system is that the actual social structure which gives the basic conditions for land use may set the limit of the patience of inhabitants. As the premise for accomplishing the aim of an adequate land use plan, it should not be overlooked that a reason of the social equity of a policy being after questioned lies behind the point discussed above.
- (9) Depending on each character, scale and contents, the historic landscape will be placed and evaluated under the respective levels of national, regional and local. Consequently, the degree of control based on the plan of conservation will be made stronger according to such level and the social burden also must increase accordingly.

(10) In order for the historic landscape to maintain its independent character, it must be evaluated under the land use plan of the total area concerned, which has its varying stages. This means that the rating of the character of the historic landscape is made in the planning concept of the city or region concerned, and its conservation plan should be unified under the master by means of the gradual system of zoning. The so-called borrowed landscape in the traditional Japanese gardens is an excellent technique for designing landscape. This technique should be esteemed in the conservation plan of historic landscape when preparing the master plan of the entire city.

Also, when the effect of the overlooking view or the landmark is emphasized, the pictorial aspects of landscape planning should be considered important and thereby woven into the master plan of the entire city.

(11) In the structure of landscape there is ecological aspect of natural environment. Historic landscape is landscape which inherits the weight of history. It is landscape formed through the continuous use of land. Thus the natural environment which surrounds the historic buildings and sites forming the core of the historic landscape has forests, agricultural land and villages for its elements, and it is no none other than a rural landscape being conserved by the hand of farmers. It should not be forgotten that farmers who continually conserve the healthy landscape from its deterioration play the leading role in the safeguarding of historic landscape. Careful considerations are required about the harmonizing of the new landscape, emerging particularly from the improvement of agricultural structure, with the old landscape.

(12) Concerning the aesthetic aspect of historic landscape, it is necessary to establish a visual design policy by the voluntary studies of the local inhabitants especially about the architectural design of private houses. Also local amenities must be maintained by the strict control of commercial outdoor advertisement and by other measures. We must be especially careful about the design of modern structures which fails to keep harmony in scale with the elements of historic landscape.

(13) In this modern age of leisure, there is a tendency that superior historic landscapes become objects of tourism, and the impact of their utilization is so intensified as to destroy their environments. As a countermeasure for the tourism in historic landscape, it is necessary to adjust the acceptance of tourism facilities to keep them strictly within the capacity of the environment so as not to impair the amenity as required in the conservation plan.

3. Definition

- (1) The word landscape became a legal term for the first time when it was used in the law "Special measures for the preservation of historic landscape in ancient capitals". The term is considered the generalization of the idea to unify the interrelationship between the climate and the condition of the land in the concerned area. While the word landscape resembles to such words as scenery, scene, and probably a few other words, there are shades of difference among such words. The term landscape includes not only the visual landscape but it implicates also a deeper meaning.

We must recognize the theory of the relationship of landscape and history. In other words, while landscape has substantially influenced the history of a people, formation of new types of landscape have been piled up through the history of human activities. In this sense, the expression of historic landscape that has become the fostering soil for an indigenous culture will be understood. Here we can also establish the concepts of historic landscape as cultural environment.

- (2) In the term landscape, there has been an implication of the geographic expanse of space. That does not mean the extent of area which can be grasped by the specific character of a landscape.
- (3) Historic landscape may be classed into different levels, namely national level, regional level and local level, depending on its character, scale and contents.
- (4) Historic landscape refers to the state of land which physically expresses the traditions and culture of a historic town wherein historic buildings and sites have been combined with their natural environment (Ref. Article 2 of the aforementioned law). Historic town, as mentioned here, is provided by the law as the specific historic city, town or village existing in the historic landscape. And the law limits the extent of historic landscape to the specific areas existing within the ancient capital.

However, the general concept of historic landscape is not confined to the extent of ancient capitals such as prescribed in the abovementioned law. Based on the logic of the relationship between landscape and history, the term historic landscape should be understood in a broader sense.

- (5) Landscape can be divided into 4 types, namely, urban landscape, rural landscape, natural landscape and industrial landscape. Historic landscape may be interpreted as the overlapping of urban, rural and industrial landscapes, except the modern city and industrial landscapes where history is still immature.

- (6) The term preservation includes various meanings such as freezing conservation, protection, restoration, rehabilitation, conservation, etc., thereby, in many cases, the term is understood in different ways by different persons making its meaning vague.

The meaning of "preservation" as used by the speaker will be explained as follows: so long as the independent character of historic landscape is not distorted, for the cultural asset which forms a historically important care by means of an elaborate land use zoning, the freezing preservation is implied. And, as for the "preservation" of its surrounding natural environment, the methods of conservation will be established according to the phased program.

The reason for above is that the contents of conservation will include the conservation of natural environment through agriculture and forestry, as well as the establishment of amenity which is derived from the harmony with the independent character of historic landscape, as in the conservation where the habitant style is concerned.