

Between The Symposium in 1970 and The Present One

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From 7th and 13th of September 1970, "Symposium on preservation and development of historical area at Kyoto and Nara in relation with their urban planning" was held in Kyoto under co-sponsorship of Japan UNESCO Domestic Committee and Culture Agency, with the assistance from UNESCO.

The symposium was organized according to the suggestion made at the International Congress on Study for Japanese Culture in 1968, two years prior, which pointed out the importance of study with international vision on problems arising out of destruction of cultural heritage at Kyoto and Nara through modernization, including not only its relief but also preservation and harmonious blending of modern urban life and traditional culture.

The movement has, as its background, "Recommendation on preservation of beauty and character of scenery" passed at 12th General Assembly of UNESCO in 1962 and "Recommendation on preservation of cultural assets which may be sacrificed through public or private constructional process" adopted at 15th General Assembly in 1968, international-wise, and legislation of "Old Capital Preservation Law" in 1966 marking a certain progress in administrative action regarding the preservation of historical surrounding in this country.

The symposium was attended by 4 Japanese and 4 foreign professional experts, an UNESCO representative, 9 Japanese and 2 foreign observers.

The three day discussion was targeted mainly on preservation of historical area within a city since it was held in Kyoto.

Points covered regarding preservation included external freezing of historical structure which forms nucleus for historical area, consequential relation with way of daily life and business of occupants within, fast deteriorating wooden buildings, telephone poles and loud neon lighting which shock the eyes of foreign visitors, invasion of automobiles into streets which were not designed for their acceptance. Discussion was also extended into cultural complex composed by Kyoto, Nara and their surrounding area and its rural scenery which has been furnishing the background and is being destroyed by development project with little attention paid to visual appearance. Meanwhile, "Historical area" is not a well established and definite concept from administrative or legal point of view in this country and absence of effective means to prevent unsuitable new construction from emerging in the area was pointed out.

After such discussion, the symposium adopted recommendation covering 56 items, including, that Japanese Government should pay serious consideration for UNESCO recommendation in 1968, and each public offices and agencies in charge of each item should consider acceptance of concerned item, the gist of which can be summarized as follows:

Ruins, monuments and historical structure groups, and the surrounding scenery are related with each other in forming any important historical and cultural heritage. Occupant of such area and their welfare are dependent on desirable and stimulating development of the area. Human life is evolving around historical monuments and buildings on unseparatable basis physically and symbolically. Therefore, national and local government is to be held responsible for their preservation through continuous up-valuing action and by making personal or private preservation action possible.

Based on such principle, the recommendation states, as basic rule, that not only ruins and monuments but their surrounding area and other historical area and rural zone must be covered by the cultural assets preservation policy, and the present preservation law and ordinance must be invigorized for this purpose.

Main theme of the symposium, preservation method for historical area, was taken up next. Limit and expanse of area, adaptation toward urban function, preliminary survey by a team of scientists and professional experts, experiment on up-valuing and preservation of area, economical effect of tourism movement, preservation of background scenery, preservation of wooden structure, restriction on automobile traffic, and advertisement, preservation of monuments and financial aid from government were mentioned.

Furthermore, it was also discussed that, in relation with urban planning, public works and housing development, preservation of both Kyoto and Nara area is to be included into National planning, and a well-extended long range preservation plan is called for with close coordination among appropriate authorities concerning specific public work, and that listing of all cultural assets and archaeological remains, their location map and constant up-dating thereof, and appropriate restriction on new housing area is necessary.

As for administrative action, the necessity of coordinating body organized by administrative and academic personnel, recruiting and training of professional experts, coordination between preservation organization and related governmental department and establishemnet of archaeological reservation were pointed out.

For research and training, cooperation among concerned departments and organization, cooperation with international organizations, research not only from physical but also from sociological, biological, human behaviorological and economical point of view, publication of

research result, improvement on understanding on the part of local population, encouragement for preservation action, participation in international research for the purpose of formation of professional experts, intensified public relation action, integration into school curriculum, preparation of material for adult education were tabled.

For legislative action, increased authority in purchasing and restriction for scenic or green zone, re-checking and reinforcement on present regulation, flexible application thereof including tax exemption system and financial aid for emergency equipment purchase, preliminary protection prior to legislation and penalty for violation against preservation rules were mentioned.

As for financial action, budget securing at national and local governmental level, establishment of financial foundation, budgetary action to purchase for important cultural assets and preservation of scenic zone, financial aid for owners and users for their own preservation activities, financial guarantee for buried cultural assets were pointed out.

After the 1970 symposium, a major step in preservation of historical area was taken by rectification of "Cultural assets protection law" in October 1975 to enable establishment of "Traditional structure preservation area". With rapid up-ward curving economy since the end of the war, this country has been faced with also rapidly changing traditional urban appearance through the process of urbanization and high speed community development which completely ignored cultural stock-pile of the past. Under such circumstance, love for remaining historical scene on the part of local population was heightened to such national standard as to form "Preserve our town" movement to protect their own environmental condition from further desolation both in natural and cultural ways. The legislative action was the result of such movement.

Beside, "Urban green zone preservation law", passed in 1973 and "Protective green zone system", brought forth in 1974 as an additional legislative action for preservation of urban scenery can be pointed out as further steps.

For international action, International Congress on Monuments and Remains (ICOMOS), originated in 1964 for the purpose of preservation of historical surrounding on international basis, was held in Budapest in 1972, declaring "Historical environment is the basic factor in human environment". In 1975, International Human Environment Preservation Congress (HESC) was held in Kyoto, in which academic research on environmental problem from cultural, social and natural scientific view point was publicized and exchanged with the understanding that environmental problem is one of the gravest human is facing at present. During the Congress, problem of scenery was taken up as a theme, it being one of the important factors in human environment.

With such background history, "International symposium on the safeguarding of historical

landscape" is now being held in Kyoto once again with the assistance from UNESCO.

The word "Historical landscape" is legally defined in "Old city preservation law" or "special disposition law on preservation of historical surrounding in old cities" formally Law No. 1, 1966, however, in this symposium, we would not be bound by the legal definition, taking broader interpretation of the word as scenic appearance with historical significance. I do not intend to go into the matter any deeper than it is now since there will be other reporters touching on the subject. The theme this symposium is following is to be decided from new point of view based on the result of effort paid by local population and administration alike to counter the change brought to the scenic appearance of our country in the last 7 years due to development of national and international circumstance.

Fellow reporters will be making detailed suggestions, however, if I am permitted to state my own personal opinion, following new points should be tabled for discussion:

1. Historical landscape should not exist in a limited area. Entire country should be the object.
— Historical landscape as life environment.
2. Recognition of historical landscape as an indispensable formative factor in community life environment. Preservation action must be taken based on this concept. — Historical landscape as life environment.
3. Apart from special remains or cultural assets, historical landscape will develop itself and change its form. Its preservation should not be of physical freezing type but be preservation of historical accumulation as the base of enriched life. — Preservation of historical accumulation.
4. Preservation of surrounding should be started from agreement with local populace, and not be forced on them through legislative restriction or its intensification.
— Preservation based on agreement with local populace.
5. Preservation should not concern only with individual specific development or re-development, but also with huge development project which may capsize the surrounding completely. Preservation of historical landscape should have wider vision. — Keep an eye on huge development project.