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historical surrounding within
urban planning

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Method for preservation of historical surrounding within urban planning

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I do not intent to go into urban planning method for preservation of historical landscape employed at present or its extention or intensification. I would rather like to present a few points based on my opinion that fundamental conversion is in order regarding basic concept for the present method.

During past ten years since its inauguration, "Old Capital Preservation Law" has performed very useful role in several different areas in preserving historical surrounding. However, originally intended work of preservation of historical scenic appearance has not been handled satisfactorily. We should recognize the fact frankly and reconsider the significance of preservation of historical landscape to re-establish its method.

The community development method employed by so called "Urban Planning", set forth by law, includes, in general, construction of public facility as project pilot for its active phase and restriction of land utilization as passive mean.

I do not think "Preservation of historical scenic appearance" necessarily includes creative development systematizing something new into present system, and, generally speaking, it can be termed as preservation of what is there at the moment, meaning various restriction on the occasion of new development.

Present "Urban Planning" has such zoning system related with preservation of scenic appearance as Scenic Zone, Historical Surrounding Preservation Zone, Green Zone, Traditional Structure Preservation zone, etc. Such zoning action, either newly started or intensifying the present zoning, has been the conventional method.

The difficulty it is facing with can be described as follows:

Any zone or area assigned as such means a sort of restriction on development activity. Even in the case of "Agreed in general", each land owner does not wish any disadvantage imposed on his property in the form of reduced or restricted price. Especially in the sharp rising economic period after the war, land owners who experienced development boom can not easily be dissuaded. In practice, even in the case of little damage noted, restriction is being taken as disadvantage in long-run. Even with damage compensation provided, budgetary limitation or assessment of price can produce unsatisfactory result in a lot of cases. It becomes very difficult to force restriction

on land utilization against such resistance on the part of land owners who are liable to see only the restrictive side of the issue to reach the conclusion that no benefit can come out of restriction for themselves. Therefore, zoning with strong restrictive power becomes almost impossible and such is the case with present zoning system which is producing little effect.

According to Old City Preservation Law, in Historical Surrounding Preservation Area, application filing system is adopted for any change of present status which is producing practically no restrictive effect at all. For "Special Zone", purchase or damage compensation is authorized, however, such action is very much limited and most of it is being assigned on already existing area or zone duplicating each other.

Such confliction of restrictive method surfaces itself more clearly when zone border line has to be defined. When community development progresses, difference between either side of border line becomes more apparent. With no strong enough justification as to the location of border line even to the degree of one meter, zoning becomes more powerless inviting more resistance in return.

Problem of this nature has already arisen at Sagano near Kyoto or at the border between Asuka-mura and Kashiwara-shi, creating more difficulty for administrative authority. Multi level restriction or flexible application aiming to bring relief to border problem has already been considered to be proven as unpractical.

Even from completely opposite point of view, zoning emerged as unlogical. Scenic appearance through visual sense does not contain built-in cut-off phase reaching from ground into sky. Extreme case is the historically noted back-ground scenery, and, generally speaking, development of neighboring area can produce great effect on scenic appearance. As the price of land adjacent to a park is relatively high, development of area neighboring the restricted zone is more encouraged to produce eventual destruction of scenery. The example is more than plentiful.

It is far more desirable to have scenery preservation area surrounded by less restrictive area extending in its neighborhood, however, within the country where land is intensively utilized, we have no alternative but box garden type solution.

Since "Old Capital Preservation Law" has not cultural scenery as its preservation object, its restriction does not apply to urbanized area or the area where structure is sited, forming one of short-coming of the law.

4 years after the inauguration of Old Capital Preservation Law, in 1970, Asuka Area, originating site of ancient Japanese nation, started to attract public attention and was appointed as "Historical Landscape". However, with its entire national space becoming under development craze and its basis for the community life rapidly changing, even a partial freezing of scenery

becomes next to impossible.

Under such circumstance, overall philosophical planning for preservation and development aimed at better living for the local populace was expected to be established for the purpose of preservation of historical landscape.

Based on such plan, development or restrictive action was expected to take shape, but, "Preservation Plan" called "Old Capital Preservation Law" remains as a restrictive mean. Movement such as "Anti Asuka Restriction Association" in July 1970, "Association Against Enlargement of Asuka Special Preservation Area" in May 1971, was started respectively. Historical Material Exhibition Hall was planned as an investment for the community, however, it was taken as a piecemeal action by the government while much more significance could have been attached to it with the recognition of it as a part of overall preservation plan.

With the progress of improvement action, hordes of tourists start to invade the area who would signify rather as a public nuisance source than as a development symbol for better community life.

If scenic appearance as historical landscape requires a careful response toward any change, a comprehensive plan for development for the entire area including historical structures and remains, surrounding urban and rural area, villages and cities, as well as business and industry of local population and their community life has to be established to give appropriate direction toward well balanced condition as far as the physical appearance of the community is concerned.

Based on the agreement with local population and supported by public opinion, such planning, which can be termed as philosophical plan since it still lacks in details and definitiveness, is a must in propelling each and specific action on national or local governmental level. Without it, we have to foresee resistance even against the governmental action. It is very hard for people concerned to take the stand of whatever the disadvantage can be compensated through the process of whole project and resistance is only natural. The entire project may end up as a disorderly repetition of uncoordinated on-the-spot jobs.

I believe that we are now facing the necessity to convert our conventional way of thinking so that we can come up with such philosophical planning for development of community space which is commonly owned property of local population.

I once presented a philosophical plan called "Ancient Yamato Plan" (1967) for the area including Asuka-mura. It is not my intention to table it again as an example of philosophical planning. I had very much limited time and resources at my disposal then and the plan did not go through the process of obtaining participation from local populace.

As long as we table the scenic appearance for discussion, we have to visualize physical

community development condition. Such trial planning can act as something to start the mechanism of forming consensus of local population. It can be one of approaches to successful materialization of philosophical planning.

The philosophical planning mentioned now is the collected consensus of local population regarding development of their community. Effort must be paid to enlarge the system on to all development and re-development of any community project. All contradictory advantage and disadvantage must be adjusted accordingly assisted by national or local government's administrative action.

This is undoubtedly a long range and time-consuming process, however, without which preservation of historical landscape becomes impossible. This is not a restrictive rule for preservation pressed from up top to bottom, but it is rooted in their own demand for better living and is initiated by local population aiming for better life environment, preservation of historical heritage, and preservation and development of the community. This is the sure way for the people concerned to protect and to grow their own beloved community and it is becoming more and more popular practice in community movement for better environment in various areas.

Originally, urban planning should be in such a way that the will of local population concerned can be collected and in turn backed by legislative action.

From this point of view, I listed five items as immediate problems facing preservation of historical landscape. Now, I would like to add further comments:

- 1) Historical landscape does not exist in a certain limited area only. Entire country should be considered as such. According to "Old Capital Preservation Law", historical landscape is taken to strictly limited to a certain area.

Of course it is necessary to freeze the scenic appearance of outstanding cultural heritage and national view for the purpose of preservation, however, it is more desirable to establish nation-wide system which allows each area to protect and to up-value accumulated natural and cultural surrounding, based on the concept that all surrounding can only exist on historical background.

- 2) Historical landscape is an indispensable factor of human habited community life environment. Accumulated historical landscape is not only a scenery pleasant for eyes, but it is an inseparable environmental factor for community life.

Community development plan must have preservation of such cultural scenic appearance and environment as its base and root. *We have to take of these two things*

- 3) Historical landscape always changes and develops itself. Its preservation does not necessarily mean freezing, however, it must be recognized that historical landscape does exist as the

base for better and more developed community life at the same time. Similar to the period immediately after the Meiji Restoration, in this fast growing economical period, we must admit that we have been too hasty with blinded eye in destroying our environment. We have to choose between something changing and something not to be changed. We must tackle the problem of community development keeping alive what is accumulated over past years. PRIORITY

- 4) Legislation for preservation of historical landscape has to be done not in the form of pressing restriction on local population, but it should be coming out of consensus of population to support its materialization. System to allow forming of philosophical planning with agreement of local population must be arranged.
- 5) Attention must be paid to the fact that each specific development and re-development project is destroying the scenery, however, at the same time, (duplicating with sub para(1) in extending historical landscape nation-wide), more attention must be directed toward large scale development project which may upheave the scenery of the area completely. Conventional philosophy of placing development on top of everything allows so many projects to destroy our own environment unconditionally. For instance, bridging project over Bisan-seto, ^{to build a bridge, one of the most beautiful, or the} unlimited reclamation of coast line. For last 20 years, we have made too many ~~of~~ such mistakes and now we are no longer in any position to do so. An intensive discussion as a national movement should be in order.

Five points listed above are related with each other. Their most basic condition is environmental preservation with agreement of local population, ⁺ who support the preservation action. Without it, effective preservation can not exist. Recent movement initiated by local populace in so many areas makes the belief firmer. It is the beginning of proper community development. Urban planning should have been formed in such a manner but, unfortunately, it has not been the case in our country. Rectification of concerned law since the end of the war voices the participation of local population, however, as a whole, prevailing feeling is that such thing belongs to government. We have to change that because there is no other way for environmental preservation. It may be difficult for Western people to understand, who have the well established concept of "Citizen". It may be a long process, however, and we have to take a starting step for such system. Otherwise, there will be no development for better community in true democratic society.