

D. Bas No = 001312

ser No = md1312

Concept and principle of
preservation of historical
landscape (from a standpoint
of city history and its pre-
servation landscaping plan)
/ Koji NISHIKAWA



ÇEKÜL KÜTÜPHANESİ

DEMİRBAŞ NO. 2445

SINIFLAMA NO. 711.4 /A/S /-

BAĞIŞCI

İLKAY BALIÇ

GELİŞ TARİHİ 15/09/2001

Concept and principle of preservation of historical landscape
— from a standpoint of city history and its preservation landscaping plan

Koji Nishikawa

Cities and villages where we are living now as a life space are encountering from severe difficulties, against the problem of preservation of historical landscape. There is a tendency of finding the traditional inheritances troublesome, and wants to replace them with new ones, without appreciating the old ones. Thus, historical landscape is destroyed and town and villages are becoming without individuality. For instance, if we go to a local town, we will be surprised at a big change of the town, where compared with the visit made several years ago. There was a characteristic individuality of that town available when visited some-time ago, but we find that town to have been changed to an ordinary one when visited several years later. This is a disappointing status and considered to be a crisis against our living environment. It is considered that such phenomenon was accelerated rapidly by the postwar recovery and the area development under economical high growth took place in succession. There was an unlimited belief towards technics, and they had no doubt about the progress of living environment, once developed technics were applied. It can be said that an easy application of technics brought forth a negative side against living environment.

Character and tradition of Japanese cities.

It seems that people's consciousness about "out town" has become rather faint under those circumstances. Meanwhile, it is said that there has been no tradition in Japanese towns, or there has been citizen's faint consciousness about their towns. We wonder these would be true or not. When we check our town constructions in ancient days in our country, or recent one's in castle towns, there was a tendency to build towns with authority, or to build towns to let citizens know military commander's power in recent days, rather than intending to build people's town.

The reason why there were few town constructions of people's own, is that geographically Japan is an island country and there was less sense of crisis against the outside. It is a contrast that there was a strong tendency to build majority of cities in the continent as castles, or to surround them with moats. In Japan, the nature has not been so severe as it has been in the continent. The earthquake could have happened when people dismissed it from their mind, and the typhoon could strike a path to the country, but when it was over, it came to an end. The nature has not been harassing people continuously.

These geographic and weather conditions have been one of the big sources to build Japanese towns very open. Therefore, there is a side effect that citizen's consciousness could not develop since their towns were not fortresses and protection against enemies was not necessary. In other words, there was a strong tendency that town construction in Japan was mainly to express authoritative power.

However, people were wise enough to replace some facilities in the authoritative town construction to people's own use, by adding new functions to previously constructed facilities, or by changing the value of those facilities. For instance, in the Heiankyo city, the authority owned market, namely East Market and West Market had become public squares, and the Byodoin at Uji had become people's meeting place, which was initially built for praying for Paradise by the aristocrats.

In the medieval times, village shrines and temples in towns and villages in Nara, Kyoto and Ohmi had become people's meeting place. In the recent age, people in a castle town signified their castle as a landmark in that area, and they recognized their castle town as their own town.

By the end of the medieval times, there was a new town construction, and although it could have been a special period in the Japanese history, in this special period, Japanese town construction was rather similar to those of continental countries, i.e. Europe, India and China. For instance, so called free cities such as Sakai and Hakata, a port town such as Kuwana, and a traditional town such as Kyoto were replaced by new towns and changed to people's towns. There was also a move of temple towns such as Yamashina and Ishiyama where people were tied up with religious belief. This sort of new and popular move, a positive attitude towards singing the joys of life, by protecting their own towns and building ideal towns and villages actually, must not be overlooked. People's interest in their own area was certainly fairly strong by the end of the medieval times.

In the recent ages, a popular town constructions were overwhelmed by the end of the medieval times by military power, and the castle towns were constructed by military commanders. Such castle towns were constructed with a strong social level system under military power. In the meantime, a move of changing the functions from castle towns to popular ones started and also another move started in local villages which were exceptionally available outside the castle towns. In these moves, a revival was made in the tradition of popular town construction which was once overwhelmed by the end of the medieval times, and towns with strong tie up between area people were built. A desire and interest for people's own life environment were strengthened. During the middle and the end periods

of the recent ages, a local culture was brought up in these tendencies. For example, at Takehara in Seto Inland Sea, a unique area culture was developed, and Rai Sanyo in the town gave a strong effect to the central culture. In a small castle town like Hida in Kyushu, many excellent people crowded under Tanso Hirose and Kyokudo from various parts of the country. Thus small local towns made an effect to the central culture. In these moves, the unique local landscape was proud of their culture against the central culture, and a positive local culture had grown up. For example, local towns like Ohmi Hachiman, Nagahama and Hino in Ohmi, and Imaimachi of Yamato Nara made a big progress. Simultaneously, there was a move of changing their functions in the three big cities, namely Edo where the central government was available, Kyoto and Osaka; those were affected by the move of local towns. When looking at these examples, I cannot certainly say that there was no tradition in Japanese cities, nor interests in local areas. I consider that we will have to appreciate the effort and the wisdom which our predecessors served for development of their own area and preservation of life environment under the special circumstances in Japan. It seems at the present moment that reassessment of valuable cultural inheritance and historical landscape is urgently required by the area people.

The tradition of coexistence and its loss

As previously mentioned, we consider that it has a fairly large significance that we had a few experience of invasion by the outside enemies and that is one of the reasons why destruction of the natural circumstances and destruction of cultural and historical environment took place during the post war development. In the Western countries, cities became fortresses, and the people were aware of protecting their cities themselves, and they were always aware of threat of enemies. In a sense, cities in the continent were posturing. They were also posturing against the nature. In Japan, they produce living space by introducing the nature into the space. As you can see in the Shakkei gardens and the fire in "Daimonji", they introduce the nature in the gardening and city designs and try to harmonize them. In the continent, when organizing the life space, they made every effort how to separate the life space from outside. People in the continent were posturing against the nature and the enemies, but Japanese had no such experience, and in the belief that the green of the nature would return within a few years, they destroyed the nature. In the case of environmental pollution, they might have thought that the nature would work on self cleaning action, since the nature has a big capacity. However, people in the Western countries and in the United States were fully aware that the nature is essentially severe and had an experience of posturing against the nature, therefore, they may have made a careful check in order not to have the nature destruction and environmental

pollution. Japanese did not have such an experience.

As regards culture, we accept foreign culture quite freely. We accept foreign culture positively and with discretion, and we have an attitude that traditional culture and foreign culture will be coexisting, so that a new culture will be born.

For instance in the case of letters, Chinese letters were accepted and on the basis of those letters, we made an effort to produce Kana letters. However, in the continent, such countries as China and India are very cautious about receiving foreign culture. Because it is rather rare that foreign culture comes in alone, but from their historical experience that foreign political power or military power would come together with their culture, they are cautious about accepting foreign culture. This fact would be contributing towards preservation of traditional landscape and historical landscape of their own. The anger to foreign enemies who destroyed the streets of historical cities and the hate against the enemies who hurt the prestige of the city, changed to a strong intention to reconstruct war ravaged cities.

In reconstructing war ravaged cities in Japan, we replaced them with completely new streets. Our positive attitude towards accepting foreign culture worked negatively and the city character is lost, and also the feeling of solidarity is being lost. Under these circumstances, we will have to look over again how our predecessors made efforts to build area traditions and cultures.

Preservation and restoring plan of historical landscape

At the moment, surrounded by environmental pollution, destruction of the nature and destruction of historical environment, people's concern and desire for the area are elevated even before. This is more than expected and people's concern about the area where they live, and intention of preserving cultural assets are elevated in any towns or villages. It seems that the administrative guidance and the financial consideration towards people's concern are rather left behind. It also seems that there are certain delays in city planning and area planning. Appreciating and recollecting citizen's traditions which have been cultivated by Japanese villages, towns and cities, we will have to make new town constructions, characterizing the area. In order to do the above, we must stop an easy attitude which was the previous approach that our life environment would be improved when new development technics were applied, and make a unique area development, utilizing the cultural assets in the area, the historical landscape and the character of a particular city. The aforementioned cultural assets in the area mean an inherent cultural assets available in the area and a question is posed against the designated cultural

assets. The designated cultural assets have been designated and preserved by the men of learning and experience in either the Nation or the Local Self-Governing Body. However, it seems that such a method for designated cultural assets is no longer applicable when looking at the recent question of street preservation. There is an area character in cultural assets. Cultural asset must be based on a deep interest by the area people, and it must be people's cultural asset originated in the area.

For example, a stone image in a field would be not so important from a point of artistic value, but it is valuable as an area cultural asset, because it has been inherited from parents to children and grand children, as they have been living in that village. I am of the opinion that such a thing must be positively appreciated. Therefore, in order to retain designated cultural assets under severe circumstances, it would be necessary to look over again designated cultural assets as area cultural assets which exist in a local community. By looking over again a designated cultural asset as an area cultural asset, a firm basis in retaining a designated cultural asset would be found. In making a new town, we must make our own town which we could feel from our skin, and people's memory must not be lost or thrown away. Historical landscape and area cultural asset would play an important part there. If such an effort is not made, although population is concentrated in big cities, citizens may feel very uneasy, aspect of loss of home country is deepened, and towns will be covered with sense of alienation, as Ogiyu Sorai said "without home country and as if they left from the root of a cloud".

Development again will be necessary for us in the future, by reconstructing towns to a very lively ones, as we see in the history of Japanese cities in the early days. For example, there are historical landscape and area cultural asset left without enough preservation, in Kyoto and Nara. One example would be Horikawa. Horikawa is a very important area cultural asset in Kyoto. Although Horikawa may have not been the designated ruins, it is still available which was considered to be a hub of city planning in Heiankyo in the ancient days, which becomes now a root of city progress for Kyoto citizens. However, it is left without water and is not in a good condition. Therefore, we should confirm again the value of Horikawa as an area cultural asset, and if we planted rows of willows and produced a unique water's edge space there, Kyoto will become much more familiar to the citizens. Furthermore, I consider that we could add one more lively space to other cities which citizens there will be proud of.

I took Horikawa as an example, but similar ones to Horikawa in Kyoto are available in any towns or villages. In order to activate living spaces in villages and towns at the present and in the future, we will restore those elements which form the historical land-

scape, preserve them carefully, and we must consider the method of how to utilize them in new town construction.

By adhering newly signified and reassessed historical landscape and area cultural asset closely to citizen's life, the town construction from now on should improve physically and mentally.