

6.

Other Japanese Case Studies

他の日本のケーススタディ

VI. OTHER JAPANESE CASE STUDIES/ 他の日本のケーススタディ

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FIBER CITY, TOKYO 2050*Hidetoshi Ohno*

The Japanese city has a number of serious problems. One of them is a declining population. If the birthrate remains at the present level, by the middle of the twenty-first century the current population of 1.26 billion people will have fallen to 90 million, and it will have been halved by the end of the century.¹ Although in Japan the metropolitan areas will probably be less affected, the entire nation will be unable to escape the effects of the declining population and the extreme aging of society.

At the same time, the people of Japan have the longest life expectancy of any nation in the world. Fifty years from now, senior citizens will make up one-third of the population. As for the aging of the population from a social point of view, due to the decrease in the ratio of the working to the total population, companies will not be able to employ a sufficient workforce, and it will become impossible to maintain the conventional quality of life within individual family budgets. Bringing in workers from abroad has been discussed, but as it would be impossible to compensate for the total decrease in population in Japan by foreign workers, the Japanese themselves will have to work more. Simply put, elderly people and women will be required to fully participate in production. In an “aged” society, economic independence will also be demanded of the elderly. Women will no longer be able to remain full-time housewives, and a diversification of labor types, for example in the form of job-sharing, will be required.

In the future, as elderly people and women are urged to work more, it can be easily predicted that demand for residences in the downtown area will increase. For example, commuting for two hours is uneconomical if one only works in the morning. If the children must be entrusted to others before going to work, a lengthy commuting time is also inconvenient. A conspicuous characteristic of recent purchasers of inner-city apartments is that they tend to be either dual-income households or senior citizens. Why senior citizens? The reason is that it is impossible to achieve anything in the suburbs without a car, especially in the newer suburbs. As the physical abilities of elderly people deteriorate, driving a car becomes difficult. After their children move out, they tend to sell their detached houses in the suburbs and live without a car by moving to an apartment in a downtown area equipped with cultural facilities and other amenities.

Some shrinkage will also be inevitable if the environmental problems are to be resolved. If we succeed in halting the system of over-production that stimulates endless consumption in the industrialized countries as well as the technical improvement of the facilities used to produce commodities, then we will reduce global greenhousegas emissions. If we can successfully manage our lives without automobiles, we will reduce the consumption of fossil fuel.

It is time for us to steer our ship towards an era when shrinkage will continue for a longer period than we have ever experienced in modern times, quite distinct from a temporary recession, and we must have our hands firmly on the helm. In such an era, we cannot navigate without a nautical chart. The problem is that the only charts available are old ones. Our intention is to take on the challenge of drafting a new chart. This means we will do more than merely accept a difficult situation; I believe it is an opportunity to improve the environment of Tokyo.



The present distribution of Tokyo's population (top: satellite photo, 2005) will be compacted into the catchment area circumscribed by local transport systems, whose accessibility will be improved by the construction of more stations. The result will be a lattice-shaped urban structure consisting of settlement belts.



The Ideal of the Compact City

Since the beginning of the 1990s, (mainly European) urban planners and architects have been proposing the “compact city” as the ideal city image. This is a city without an excessive dependency on cars, where one is able to walk, and where public transportation is profitable because of its high density. It is also an efficient city requiring a minimal investment for the construction of urban infrastructure, and has low maintenance costs and moderate energy consumption. The compact city is not simply environmentally superior in every technological respect; the small city is also considered to be preferable in terms of quality of life.²

Looking at the way human beings endlessly attempt to enlarge their range of movement, it is doubtful whether the idea that a small city = utopia, which has captured the hearts of so many contemporary urban planners, is really supported by the populace. In most of the world only

the big cities are thriving, even though most goods are available even in medium-sized cities, where living expenses are also lower than in large cities.

Urban Planning between Modernism and the Atomic City Model

In the twentieth century, many metropolises were afflicted by huge population increases. In response, one twentieth-century method of tackling urban planning was to use the satellite-city paradigm, based upon Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, to restructure growing cities. In other words, new towns were constructed in suburbia, which became the dormitory towns for people working in the downtown areas. The paradigm of the satellite city may also have a metaphysical connotation. As can be understood from the word "satellite," it is analogous to the solar system. A similar model is also used when explaining the structure of an atom. In other words, this is a model in which small planets or electrons revolve around a larger mass like a star or an atomic nucleus, and it can also be applied in relation to cities. It may therefore be considered to be a paradigm for describing the world. This paradigm can be called the Atomic Model. Might it be possible that the image of an urban area comprising a "mother city" and several satellite cities is able to combine the economic appeal of a big city and the humanistic environment of a small city?

This is the structural image that should be deployed when expanding cities generate new cities in vacant land. If such model is applied to an area that is already fully urbanized and the increase in population is held in check, it will not succeed because of the large discrepancies between the model and reality. The theories and images of space applied to existing cities will probably take another, more flexible form.

For organizational structures, modern architecture and urbanism used the image of a machine. The anticipated goal was to be achieved using precisely crafted components in intricate relationships. However, a real city is a coexistence between indefinite elements where interventions can only ever be partial, making such a precise assembly exceedingly difficult. A flexible and powerful model is required, one that permits contingency and heterogeneity among the components, and allows a variety of relationships between them without the loss of overall coherency. In areas such as those Japanese cities that completed their basic structures and necessary amenities during the twentieth century, the most important aspect of city planning has shifted from new development to the preservation of existing facilities, and it has become essential to reinterpret these in a new context. In a word: the role of city planning has shifted from creating a city to editing a city.

New city planning ought to edit surfaces by manipulating lines. Focusing on the manipulation of lines is also a natural outcome of the desire to edit the context without denying the existing environment. In other words, in considering the suppression of development costs for land purchases and attempting to minimize the destruction of the existing environment, one logically arrives at a linear intervention. In concrete terms, various strategies may be conceived, such as inserting a new border into an existing domain, substituting an isolating boundary with one that encourages exchange, or relaxing the opposition between domains by blurring their boundary. Examples of this approach have been implemented in real cities: the insertion of a public passage covered by a glass roof into a block to connect two major streets, the construction of a road which enables people to overlook the city from the edge of a cliff, the transformation of a road into a promenade, and the reduction of dependency on cars through the introduction of streetcars.

From Machine to Fiber

As a result, a model based on fabric can be developed. Fabric is different from a machine in being both soft and supple. Fabric is made of threads, each of which is entangled with other threads. It is not necessary for each of these threads to span a sheet of fabric from one edge to the other. Each scrap of thread is interlinked with others by means of tiny fibers projecting from its surface, and even when there is a hole in one part of the fabric, this does not mean the entire piece will tear. Partial repair is simple. Depending on the choice of thread and type of weave, the possible variety of fabric textures is infinite. Fabric has the characteristics of cushioning and of insulation thanks to the air trapped between the fibers.

If a linear urban intervention is attempted based on the machine image of the Atomic Model, the result will be unconvincing and haphazard. That is to say, an intervention based only on logical parts will ruin the consistency of the overall system. However, if an intervention is based on the fabric image of the Fiber Model, simply changing the texture of the fabric will not upset the overall system. My prediction is that the Atomic City will probably be succeeded by the Fiber City as an urban paradigm.

The Importance of Railways

Apart from the period spanning the Second World War, the scale of both the population and the economy has consistently increased. Suburban Tokyo has developed in accordance with the expansion of the railways. The railroad companies display a great deal of power in suburban development: the framework underlying Tokyo suburbia is the railway network. Both downtown and in the suburbs, the railway stations have become local centers and representative of their respective areas.

In big cities, particularly in Tokyo with its dense web of subways in addition to the above-ground railways, it could be said that the number of stations itself indicates the number of communities or districts. The cross-shaped space created by the perpendicular intersection of a shopping district and a railway line becomes the nucleus of a community. A map-like image of a city as large as the Tokyo metropolitan area, with its 80-kilometer diameter and its 30 million inhabitants, is impossible to understand geometrically; it can only be grasped topologically. Although difficult to understand when walking, it becomes comprehensible at the speed of a train. Because the railroads are lower in density than the roads, they are very convenient as structural elements for organizing extremely large expanses of urban space. These cross-shaped structures can be understood as the intersection of two fibers corresponding to two scales of the city: on the one hand, the shopping districts — local, linear, central, public open spaces — and, on the other, the railroad arteries points of reference positioning a community within the spatial structure of the metropolis.

Such a high-density railway network is unattainable in the low-density cities of the United States. It is only supportable in densely populated Japanese cities. Therefore, if the population density of Japanese cities continues to decline, and this smaller population becomes dispersed, the fear is that the railways will become impossible to maintain. In fact, in the suburbs of Japanese regional cities, some areas have already begun to appear in which it is difficult to profitably continue public transportation services (mainly bus lines, but also some railways). Not only does “suburbanization” progress further in regional medium-sized and small cities than it does in big cities, the former also undergo a decrease in population earlier than the big

cities because of the phenomena of social migration and the rising share of elderly people. They portend the future of Tokyo.



Tokyo's important monuments are already concentrated around the stations on the Yamanote railway line.

Consequences of Shrinkage

The declining birthrate and the aging population will render places that are inconvenient to transportation routes increasingly unpopular to live in, and the wealthy will move to suburban residences where transportation is near at hand, or to the downtown areas with their proximity to amenities and cultural facilities. The civic centers of the big cities, which are able to fulfill these two conditions, will probably continue to attract people. In this way, the residential density will drop in suburbia, particularly in distant suburbs, and before long it will become

economically difficult to maintain the various “infrastructures” of life such as roads, retail stores for daily commodities, and bus services. On the other hand, because land prices will also fall in places where conditions are poor, it will become difficult to sell residential land, and the social class that cannot escape the suburbs will surely be stuck there.

The Compact Fiber City

If we are to conceive of compact cities in the Japanese context, they should make use of existing railways, maintain their world-class high-density network, be sensitive to the environment, and ensure suitable mobility for an aging society.³ First of all, because it is fundamental to sustain the existing railroad network even as the cities shrink, maintaining passenger levels on the suburban railways is a priority. Concentrating residential areas along the railway lines is therefore necessary. More stations should be built on the existing lines in order to shorten the intervals between stations in such a way that they come to resemble streetcars. If this were achieved, train use would become more attractive and many people would prefer it to their cars. We therefore should consider altering our axioms: increase the number of stations, enlarge the residential areas from which one can walk to the stations, and create residential areas only in such places. A package of policy measures must be used to persuade people to move to residential areas adjacent to the railway lines.

Advantages of the Compact Fiber City

Fiber Cities make it possible to reduce car dependency. If a policy of increasing the number of stations- aimed at improving accessibility by foot from home to station - is extended to all residential areas, this will greatly contribute to reducing the environmental impact. Because in a Fiber City the suburban residential areas are grouped along the railroad lines, vacant land will then become available. The weakest aspect of the current suburbs of Tokyo is the fact that although they are called suburbs, the residential areas are located a long distance from green tracts of land. If this vacant land were converted into parks or agricultural land, it would be possible to provide nature in close proximity to the residential areas. Even if these areas were defined as residential areas for the wealthy, a positive effect on the environment could be anticipated from the greenery of their gardens. For similar reasons, the use of schools and cultural facilities is also possible. Depending on their location, these areas also lend themselves to facilities needing a very large site, such as factories or research institutes.

The Fiber City has high mobility in multiple directions. In the Atomic Model, travel time towards the preestablished center of the tree-shaped transportation network may be short, but going to other destinations takes far longer because of the necessary detours. A society with a declining birthrate and an aging population has diverse modes of living and working. It is a society in which it is difficult to establish a single center, which is why a semilattice network is necessary.

A Fiber City is not only aimed at following and reproducing a cross-shaped neighborhood community similar to those along the Inogashira line, but is also an attempt to allow the security of a small city to coexist with the fluidity of a big city.

The Fiber City possesses a high level of redundancy, which allows it to cope easily with urban transformation over long periods of time. The busiest streets of Tokyo have shifted to the west, from Asakusa and Ginza in the prewar period to Ginza, Shinjuku, and Shibuya after the

War. Precisely because a Fiber City is structured like a piece of fabric comprising mutually entangled fibers, it may easily respond to changes in urban metabolism. A tree-shaped system of transportation is an attempt to anchor hierarchical urban relationships. The Fiber City enables varied development of a city on the basis of its semilattice structure. This is the alternative image of a compact city - a new organizational model that attempts to meet the demands of citizens in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1 National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, "Population Projections for Japan: 2001–2050," <http://www.ipss.go.jp/pp-newest/e/ppfj02/ppfj02.pdf>.

2 See Mike Jenks, Elizabeth Burton, and Katie Williams, eds., *The Compact City: A Sustainable Urban Form?* (London: E & FN Spon, 1996).

3 Fiber City was conceived as a generic idea. The notion of fiber in urban design does not mean only the railway lines discussed in this article. Fiber could equally refer to shopping street, river, canal, boulevard with a row of trees, architecture, embankment, forest, lane, and so forth. Every linear space and structure can be a fiber that contributes to the organization of urban space.

Reference:

This text is an abridged version of *Towards the Fiber City: An Investigation of Sustainable City Form*, by Hidetoshi Ohno (Tokyo: MPF Press at the Ohno Laboratory, 2004).

ファイバーシティ 2050

大野秀敏（建築家）

20世紀は発展と膨張の時代でした。19世紀末に産業革命の技術的成果が出そろい、その果実が一般大衆にも分ち与えられ、人口が増え、生活水準も向上し、市民社会の理念は着実に現実化しました。エベネザー・ハワードやル・コルビジエなどの建築家は、20世紀のために都市の基本的な空間像を描いて見せました。続いて、先進諸国の経済は戦火で焼かれた街の復興と戦後のベビーブームによって活気づけられ、日本でも民主主義の自由な空気のなかで大建設時代が到来しました。建築家たちは都市ビジョンづくりに没頭しました。この時代の最後に、丹下健三が「東京計画1960とその構造改革の提案」として、東京湾という処女地に美しい機械のような未来都市を描いて見せました。

その後、オイルショックを挟んで、先進諸国が新自由主義的政策を採用するようになると、都市はますます巨大化し、さまざまな意志や力や投資を吸収してダイナミックでな変化を不断に繰り返すようになります。都市空間は流動化する資本の流れを加速させる市場経済の一部門に変化しました。そのような状況に、建築家や都市計画家はしらしらさと同時に、己の職能の無力を痛切に感じ、日本では都市の大きなビジョンを描くことから退いてしまいました。しかし、その間に都市では世紀単位の大変化がはじまろうとしています。情報革命も、政治経済のグローバルイゼーションも、環境問題も、超高齢化と少子化のいずれも、産業革命と同じように都市と建築におおきな影響を与えることは確実です。こうした問題群を扱うには膨張を前提としたこれまでの計画思想ではまったく対応できません。

新たな設計のパラダイムが求められているというのがわれわれの基本的考え方です。この提案は東京をケーススタディとした縮小の時代の大都市のあり方に関する普遍的なビジョンを示したものです。

人口減は都市を変えるか？

日本の都市を巡る問題群のなかでは人口問題はとりわけ深刻です。2004年日本の人口はピークを打ち、長期的な人口縮小が始まろうとしています。2050年には人口は現在の3/4にまで減ります。しかも、その時高齢者(65歳以上)は全人口の4割になっています(図1)。

都市を急速な人口縮小に任せておくとどうなるのでしょうか。まず、各地で廃村だけでなく廃市も続出するでしょう。何しろ50年間足らずに4,000万人弱の減少です。首都圏丸ごとなくなってもまだ足りない人数です。そこら中に空き家が増え犯罪の温床になるでしょう。都市の拡大に対応して伸びきったインフラストラクチャーはメンテナンスもされず放置されるでしょう。不便な郊外からは経済的に余裕のある層が都心に逃げ出し、採算割れした公共交通網を抱えた郊外には行き場のない低収入層が取り残されるでしょう。かつて地元の商店街を一掃した大型スーパーはさっさと店を閉め、日々の生活に困る地域が広がるかもしれません。労働力不足を補うために外国人労働者を多数呼び込めば、異国人と暮らした経験のない日本の社会は不安定になり、移民と日本人という人種間衝突も起こるでしょう。高齢社会では単身世帯が増え、世帯数で最多となる一方、さまざまな共同居住の形態が生まれるかもしれません。少ない年金収入を補うために老人が職の争奪戦に加わります。また、商品も施設も老人向けが標準仕様となるなど、若者と老人の世代間の衝突が先鋭化するのではないのでしょうか。社会の効率性は低下し、かつて世界第2位を誇った日本の経済力の存在感は低下していくでしょう。

先進諸国の都市は人口問題少子高齢以外にも、別の縮小にも直面しています。それは、環境問題です。環境問題への対応には、温室ガスの発生を大幅に抑制しなければなりません。地球の環境を維持しようとするのなら、現在先進諸国でおこなわれているような過剰消費によって過剰生産を維持するシステムを変えることが不可欠です。ところが、世界は、有史以来、緩慢か急速であるかは別として常に膨張し続け、特に近代になってからは爆発的な膨張を続けてきたので、長期的な縮小に

対応する術を知りません。縮小は放っておけば都市環境と社会を荒廃させ、人びとの希望を奪います。われわれの挑戦は、この災いを福に転ずることです。私たちは、空間と人間の専門家である建築家には縮小する都市の将来像を描くことが求められていると考えています。

都市のファイバーとは何か？

ファイバーシティ2050は、都市のファイバーに着目して、縮小の時代のメガロポリスのための都市モデルを組み立てようという構想です（図2）。

構想の中心に位置する「ファイバー」とは組織を作る繊維を意味する英語ですが、都市空間で言えばひも状の空間のことです。

現代都市はファイバーにあふれています。例えば、交通網です。東京の空中、地上、地下、あらゆる場所にファイバーが張り巡らされています。また、通信網もファイバーの形状をとっています。ファイバーは速度の空間です。

商店街もファイバーの一種です。東京にはおしゃれな通りがいくつもあります。郊外のどこの駅を下りても、そこには何々銀座という、もっと親しみやすいファイバーもあります。ファイバーはにぎわいの空間であり、交流と交換の空間です。大公園や大学のキャンパスや団地の中と外、地形に高低差のある上と下の地区、海岸などでは一本の線を境に場所の性格が変化します。ファイバーは境界の姿でもあります。伝統的な東京にもファイバーはありふれた存在でした。例えば寺社の参道や広小路も河川の堤などです。日本の都市には西欧の都市のような広場が発達しませんでした、その代わりに道がありました。

われわれが、とりわけファイバーに注目する理由として、現代都市が様々なファイバーによって構成されているに加えて、ファイバーの形態的な特性があります。面積が同じ四角形と細長い形状の公園を比較すると分かるように、ファイバー状の公園は同じ面積の四角形の公園より周長が長く、多くの人々が緑地に接することができます（図3）。これは線状の形態が都市の活性化に有利であることを示す好例です。

ファイバーシティは縮小の時代を前提とし、成熟した都市を改善する戦略です。もはや、潤沢な公共資金を投ずることを前提にできません。それゆえ、都市づくりにおいても経済的合理性を追求し、最小の介入で最大の効果を上げようとしています。近代都市計画のように都市を面的に改善をしようとするのではなく、線を変えて、面に影響を与えようとしています。

縮小の時代の都市モデル、ファイバーシティ

ファイバーシティを実現するための都市デザイン戦略である街の皺、緑の間仕切り、緑の網、緑の指のいずれもが、都市空間のファイバーを操作することで都市全体を変えようというものです。いずれの戦略も一つの都市計画的目標のためのものではなく、ひとつひとつが都市空間の再活性化、住宅地整備、防災対策、交通政策などが緑地整備と複合化されています。

ファイバーシティは平安京のように碁盤目でも、丹下健三氏の「東京1960」のように強い軸性があるわけでもありません。「東京1960」が幾何学的で機械のように精巧にできているのに対して、ファイバーシティは布のように柔らかで、テクスチャーに富み、目を寄せてみれば同じような構造が繰り返される、いわゆるフラクタル的性質を備えています。

ファイバーシティの特徴

縮小する都市の求めに応えられるように考えだされた都市像、都市戦略がファイバーシティです。その特徴は以下の通りです（図4）。

- 1) ファイバーシティは経済的合理性を追求し、最小の介入で最大の効果を上げようとしています。
- 2) ファイバーシティは現在ある構造物はむやみに壊さず、まずは再利用して活用する道を探ります。これまでの理想像の提示は現状を否定することから始めましたが、環境の時代の理想像は現状を受け入れることから始めます。緑の網/GREEN WEBは景観的に邪魔だとして一部撤去が議論さ

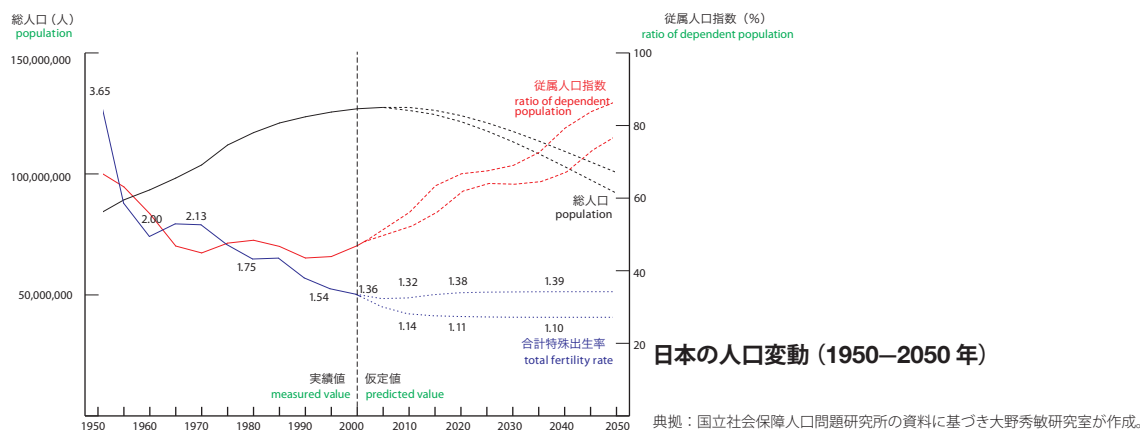
れている首都高をそのまま残して新しい生命を吹き込もうという戦略です。

3) 現状を受け入れることも線的な都市計画的介入も、場所の歴史性の重視に繋がります。ファイバーシティは歴史的継続の中に生きていくと考えるからです。街の皺／URBAN WRINKLEはまさに都市の歴史と地形と記憶との対話から生まれます。

4) ファイバーシティは、公共交通を都市の環境問題を解決する上で欠かせない戦略であると考えと同時に、交通弱者を生みやすい高齢社会では公共交通の利用を基本的な市民の権利と考えます。緑の指／GREEN FINGERは20世紀の遺産である郊外の再編成を企てるものです。

5) ファイバーシティは、また消費の重要性を認識しています。様々な価値の交換こそ都市の魅力です。それを支えるのが、密度とモビリティと境界だというのが我々の考えです。

この提案は、実現性を重視するとともに長期的視野に立ったコンセプト的原則論を示し、人間のスケールを扱いながらも首都圏全体を視野に入れます。ファイバーシティ2050は縮小の時代のメガロポリス像です。



GREEN FINGER／緑の指

GREEN FINGER緑の指とは、駅から歩けない地域は全部緑地にしようという戦略です。

このファイバーの主役は緑地とともに鉄道です。

首都圏3000万人の住民のうち、約87%の人は郊外に住んでいます。

東京の郊外化は1920年代に始まりました。その後80年以上たって、宅地は細分化を重ね、いつしか当初の何分の1かになってしまい、日本人は経済力だけは世界一流になったのに、住まいは三流という惨めな状態に陥ってしまいました。

人口が減ると、再び宅地が広くなると言われます。確かに、空き地はそこら中に発生するでしょう。

しかし、実際に一戸一戸の宅地の拡大には繋がらないでしょう。なぜなら、土地を拡大したいと考えている人の隣に都合良く空き地が出現するとは限らないからです。

一方、人口の1/3が高齢者となる21世紀の日本の社会は、男も女も、若い人も老人も働かないとやっていけない社会になります。そうすると、郊外住宅地でも、鉄道駅からバスに乗らなければたどり着けない住宅地は、徐々に敬遠されるようになるでしょう。高齢社会は、モビリティを必要とする社会です。GREEN FINGERによって都市を再編成すると、郊外はコンパクトシティの集まりとなり、それが鉄道によって相互に繋がれるようになります。

どうせ、宅地が広くならないのなら、いっそ郊外の住宅地を鉄道沿線の歩行圏内に集中させよと考えました。そして、鉄道駅から遠い場所は緑地にします。公園や農地、広い緑地を確保することを約束してくれる研究所や高等教育機関などです。

適切な誘導をすれば、このように、駅から近い住宅地の歩行圏内に豊かな緑地が誕生します。

GREEN PARTITION／緑の間仕切り

GREEN PARTITION緑の間仕切りとは、密集した住宅地を緑地帯で仕切り防災性と快適性を高める戦略です。

日本の都市の最大の脅威は地震です。確率的には遠からず大きな地震が襲ってきます。東京で地震時にもっとも危険な場所は、主に環状6号線と7号線に挟まれた地域に広がる木造建築密集地帯です。大地震時に大火災の発生と大量の犠牲者が避けられないと予想される場所です。

この地区の建物を全部耐火建築に建て替え、道を拡幅すれば良いのですが、途方もない時間と費用が掛かります。私たちの提案は、災害が起っても火災を拡大させず、安全に避難できるようにすることを優先します。そのために、この危険な地区を緑地帯で細かく仕切ります。緑の壁が火災の延焼を防ぎます。

間仕切りとなる線状の緑地は、時々出現する空き地を繋いで作ります、その一端を必ず地域の避難空地に接続することで避難路にもなります。同時に間仕切りの緑は緑の少ない地区に潤いを提供し雰囲気をはらりと変えるはず（図6）。

この計画を実現するためには、地区8%程度の宅地を緑地に変えなければなりません、その分地区の住宅地としての価値が上がりますので、総量では経済的にも見合います。

GREEN WEB／緑の網

GREEN WEB／緑の網は、都心の首都高を救援道路と緑道に用途替えする戦略です。

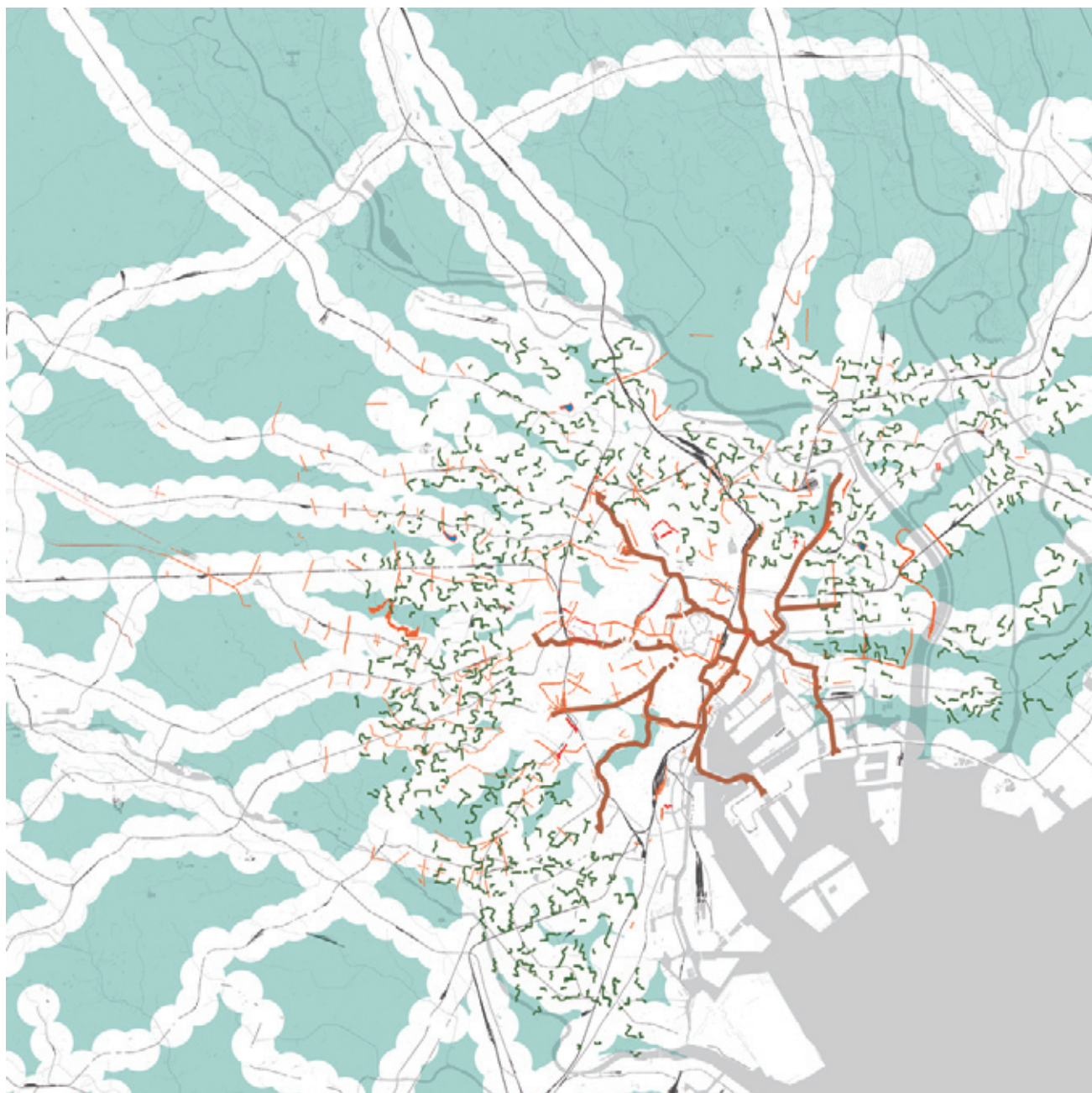
都心では建物の耐震化は進み、安全性が高まっていますが、まだ完璧とは言えません。都市基盤のほうは依然として脆弱なまま、大規模開発によって都心への活動の集積は続いています。都心の道路率をあと10%上げればという気の長い話もありますが、さしあたり手を打つべきことの一つは、大震災の被害を最小限に食い止めることです。その一つに、災害後の迅速な救援があります。被災地に救援物資を持って駆けつけ、都心に取り残された人達を自宅のある郊外に運び出すためには、被災地へのアクセス路が確保されなければなりません。もし都心が被災したら、たいていの道路は車で塞がれてしまいます。

現在、環状6号線の地下で工事中のトンネルが開通すると首都高速道路網に中央環状線ができあがり、環状線内部の首都高速道路の役割が小さくなります。そこで、都心部の首都高速道路の一車線を災害時の救援専用道路にし、残りの車線を緑地にしてはどうでしょうか。平時は、緊急車の通路としても使えますし、常時は自転車などの軽車両と歩行者の専用道にします。沿道の敷地は、高度利用をはかり、直接、新しくできた空中歩廊に橋を架けることができます（図7）。こうすることで、防災性の向上だけでなく、自動車依存を改め、都心に緑地が増えて都心に生物の移動路が確保され、ヒートアイランドの緩和にもなります。

URBAN WRINKLE／街の皺

URBAN WRINKLE／街の皺は、街の一角を、場所の可能性を引き出しながら線状に改造して魅力を高める戦略です。

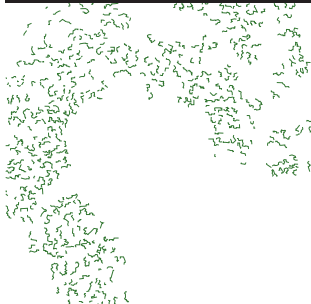
東京圏は3000万人もの人が住む世界最大の都市ですが、「あの場所」と言えるような魅力的な場所となると数えるほどしかありません。東京には、少し手を入れればもっと魅力的になるファイバーが多数埋もれています。かつては魅力的であったのに、いろいろな理由から醜くなってしまったファイバーもまた多数あります。たとえば坂道やお堀の岸、高架構造物の縁、並木道などですが、そこに近づきにくかったり、高い建物の陰になっていたりします。それらを顔の皺に喩えてみまし



緑の指



緑の間仕切り



緑の網



都市の皺

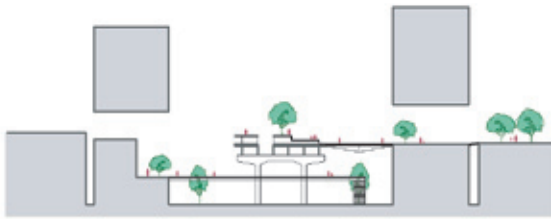


人口減少で大きな打撃を受ける郊外の再編戦略である。茫漠と広がる郊外住宅を鉄道沿線歩行圏に徐々に集中させ、それ以遠を緑地化する。これは鉄道路線でネットワーク化されたコンパクトシティである。

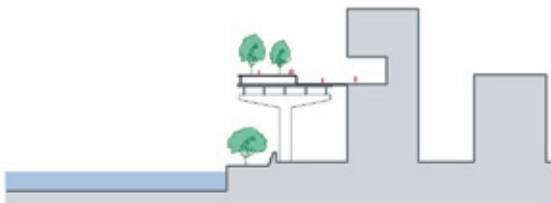
都心を囲むように広がる災害危険度の高い木造密集市街地を緑の防火壁で小さく分割して、火災被害を最小限にすると同時に緑地の増加で居住環境を改善する戦略である。

首都高速道路の中央環状線内側の交通機能を、災害時の緊急救援道路と緑道にコンバージョンする。あわせて沿道敷地の高度利用と地域エネルギーシステムの導入を図る。

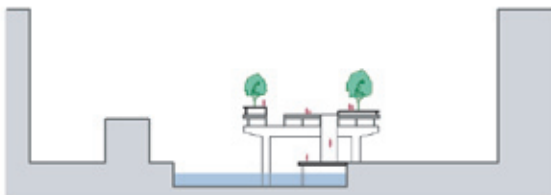
アーバンリンクルは、均質化し抑揚のない都市空間に、場所の風景と歴史を生かした特徴のある線状の名所をつくり出す戦略である。



立体的に広がる緑地 / 六本木
Green lots spreading three dimensionally / Roppongi



川岸の空中テラス / 両国
Riverside terrace in the air / Ryogoku



水面に親しめるデッキの増設 / 千鳥ヶ淵
Extension of decks approaching the moat / Chidorigafuchi



一般道と首都高の入れ替え / 半蔵門
Exchange between expressway and road / Hanzomon



surface 面

dynamics 構造力学

separation 断絶

machine 機械

inventing 発明

Modern city

計画対象

design target

システム特性

character
of the system

境界の機能

function
of the boundary

システムの
構造イメージ

image
of the system

デザイン戦略

design strategy

fibercity

ファイバー(構成単位) + ファブリック(組織モデル) = ファイバーシティ
fiber(element) + fabric(model/system) = fibercity

線 line

線を操作することによって面を構築する

editing surfaces by the manipulation of lines

流体力学 fluidics

移動と通信の民主主義

democracy of mobility and information

交換 exchange

都市は物と情報の交換の場であり、
交換は異種領域の境界部で起こる。
"city" happens as a place of exchange
for things and information
"exchange" happens on the boundary
of different kinds of territory

織物 fabric

ロバスト性、フラクタル性、冗長性

robustness, fractal, redundancy

編集 editing

縮小する都市のためのデザインパラダイム
Design paradigms for the shrinking city





THE RENAISSANCE OF THE CITY (TOSHI SAISEI) AND THE REDISCOVERY OF MICRO SPACES (ROJI) IN THE MEGALOPOLIS OF TOKYO – STRATEGIES OF INTEGRATING MARGINALIZED SPACES INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF URBAN DISCOURSE

Evelyn Schulz

Abstract

In *Revolution of city* (Toshi kakumei; 2006) Kurokawa Kishô states that the revival of the roji will be the key for the future of the city. The roji – unspectacular semi public respectively semi private spaces of everyday life that have laid the basis of Japan's premodern urban fabric – have become part of the current discourse of architecture and city planning. The discourse on roji is related to the notion of urban amenity, sustainability, machizukuri, community centered street space, and preservation of urban landscape. Such discourse surfaces in numerous recent publications, however, it forms a counter-discourse to modernist city planning since the late 19th century. In my paper I intend to trace the genealogy of such counter-discourse from the point of view of cultural and literary history. Starting with an analysis of Nagai Kafû's famous essay *Hiyorigeta* (Fairweather clogs; 1914) and ending with recent writings I want to show how the roji has evolved as a counter space of modernistic city planning on the one hand, and how the roji is recently being reevaluated and receiving attention as a new key concept for building both sustainable urban environment and community.

Keywords: critique of modernist city planning, roji(ron), revitalization of the city (toshi saisei), community centered street space, flâneur

Introduction

Japan's big cities are modern urban structures with complex and contradictory spatial realities. In particular Tokyo can hardly be categorized neither by the usual European standards nor even by Japanese standards. The Greater Tokyo-Yokohama conurbation with more than 35 million residents is one of the world's largest metropolitan areas. The 23 districts that actually form the city of Tokyo are home to 8.5 million people. Though Japan's overall population has currently peaked at nearly 128 million inhabitants and presumably will decline to about 100 million inhabitants by 2050, since the late 1990s' the population in the core areas of the metropolises is growing again. This trend is particularly obvious in Tokyo, where the 23 wards increased by a total of 163,000 inhabitants, or 2%, in the five years from 1995 to 2000.

To add to the geographical confusion there is also a multi-layered, historical complexity. Although Tokyo was founded at the beginning of the 17th century under the name Edo, today very little remains from that time – apart from a few shrines and temples. A continual process of restructuring and growth characterizes the history of Tokyo. In no other Japanese city does the cityscape change to such an extent, with buildings constantly being torn down and replaced by others. Tokyo's architectural fabric is said to be renewed on average every twenty years and that is why most of the city lacks any unity of style.

The reason for this on the one hand is the fact that Tokyo became the capital of Japan in 1868 and as the most important showcase of Japan's modernity had to be correspondingly designed to promote this image. On the other hand, disasters such as the great Kantô earthquake in September 1923 and the widespread destruction in the course of the second world war, as well as construction projects for the 1964 Olympics all paved the way for reorienting their approach to urban and architectural planning. Compared to Germany, for example, where great

emphasis is placed on preserving the architectural fabric of cities and as a result the image of the city, the Japanese approach to architecture and urban planning is marked by a tendency to radically modernize urban space – the same as in China, as is shown by the spectacular restructuring of Shanghai and Beijing. In the past few decades innumerable residential areas built with traditional wooden houses have been replaced by apartment blocks and large-scale construction projects that have added a concrete architectural note to Tokyo's image as a *global city*.



Tokyo (view from Mori Building, Roppongi): heterogeneous fabric of buildings

The basic tenets of the international discussion that is in process at the moment on the “renaissance of the city” centre mainly on the various forms of sustainability, the genesis of a “liveable city” and strategies for the revitalization of the urban community. In Japan the discussion is accompanied by criticism of large-scale projects that have a drastic effect on lifestyles and communication structures.

The Mori Building in Tokyo's Roppongi district is the latest example of this. In most cases projects like this can only be realized by demolishing small residential districts to make room for them. The people living in the small districts are forced out and this is the end of the neighborhood community that was so typical of old residential areas in Japan's cities.



The Mori Building – Tokyo's newest landmark

Typical roji-style neighborhood community in Tokyo (area: Tsukudajima)



Europe also in Japan the discourse on the renaissance of the city is accompanied by a rethinking of the role and function of public space and the nature of public interests. In contrast to Europe, however, where the notion of public space is associated with open squares and plazas, in Japan the discourse focuses mainly on the *machi*, on those small districts that in earlier times have been both, workroom and living space of the commoners, and possessed a certain amount of local power and authority.

The *machi* originally have been based on a mazelike network of *roji*, small, narrow lanes and side streets that are only wide enough for a person to either walk or cycle through. Very often they are dead-end streets. The *roji* with their little shops, inns and workshops have been far away of being mere transportation routes. They were part of the fabric of daily life and took the role of a space for communication. According to Kurokawa Kishô *roji* represent high-density communities in which different generations and classes lived together in symbiosis. They were intermediary spaces where there didn't exist a clear-cut division between private and public life.

Since the late 19th century Japan has been modernized along Western guidelines of city planning and architecture. Tokyo's population suffered from the lack of a sewage system, from overpopulation and diseases, and from the ongoing danger of fire. In the framework of Japan's politics of modernization *roji* have been regarded as an obstacle to modernist city planning, i.e., the civilization and enlightenment paradigm that has been associated with rational thinking, public hygiene, progress in technical and cultural terms, mass transport and the construction of wide roads, the so-called *omotedôri*.

Since the late 19th century countless *roji* have been torn down. They were a permanent source of fire, their infrastructure was regarded as insufficient and, as this picture clearly shows, seen from a modernist point of view, the lifestyle of its inhabitants was far away from being "civilized". Despite the disasters and fires that stroke Tokyo during the 20th century and despite the countless urban redevelopment projects in the past decades, however, until today numerous *roji* have survived, many of them are built with traditionally built wooden houses. As neither ambulance nor fire engine can pass through, most of the remaining *roji* are highly dangerous areas to live in the case of earthquake and fire. Even today these lanes have managed to retain their semi-public or semi-private character, as the case may be, and that is why they are so difficult to categorize or register with the urban planning instruments of the modern age.

Roji are considered as localities, that have either been spared from or were not directly threatened by the urban planning of the modern age with its ideas on technical and cultural progress, redesigning the space with an eye to nation-state representation and modern means of transport, as well as the economic promotion of (multi) national building groups. They are said to have positive effects on community life and to affirm local identities that feel threatened by the fragmentation and commercialization of urban space resulting from Japan's policy of modernization and the globalization of the Japanese economy.

In recent years, there is a tendency to rediscover and to document the remaining *roji*, and to think about how they can be modernized without knocking them down. The participants of such "roji revival movement" – as I would call it – are administrative institutions and citizen's action groups as well as writers and photographers. For example, with the intention to document Tokyo's indigenous urban structures the urban planner Tateno Mitsuhiro maps Tokyo

with roji designated by him. Rojiron (discourse on roji) thus may give the impression to be a rather new phenomenon, however, it is no exaggeration to state that it forms a counter-discourse to modernist city planning since the late 19th century. This discourse can be traced in the countless publications that describe the drastic changes Tokyo has undergone and testify to the enormous interest in the topography, history and future of this city.

The literature of urban walks

Today only a small part of Japan's urban population lives in roji. When it comes to all the information available on Tokyo there is a remarkably large number of essay-like guides and cultural topographies in the form of a description of a walk through the city. As the walks lead the reader primarily to small districts and roji, such books are of crucial importance for the mediation and representation of the roji. The walk serves on the one hand as means of slowing down the pace and, on the other, as a way of giving the reader a more private and personal access to the history of Tokyo. In this respect, walking is a kind of ethnographic activity to reshape urban knowledge and to experience the city's multilayered time. Titles such as *Tôkyô nijikan wôkingu. Aruku, kanjiru, egaku* (Walking in Tokyo for 2 Hours. Walking, Feeling, Drawing) or *Watashi dake no Tôkyô sanpo* (Tokyo Walks by Myself) indicate that the focus is on leisurely walks through both the city's past as well as its present

In Europe it was Charles Baudelaire (1821–67) and in particular Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) who developed the figure of the “flâneur” into the archetypal image of the modern city dweller. In such works as the *Arcade Project* (*Passagen-Werk*), a comprehensive, unfinished study of Paris in the 19th century, as well as in his essay on Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin portrays the “flâneur” as a lone, urban wanderer who drifts through the crowds without any particular direction, reflecting often on all the little things he notices. In order to better understand the Japanese version of the “flâneur” it is helpful to consult Benjamin's memories of his childhood in Berlin in his works *Berliner Chronik* (A Berlin Chronicle) and *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert* (Growing up in Berlin around 1900). It was in these books that Benjamin introduced the “diachronic flâneur”, a sort of amateur archaeologist who roams through the city exploring the past in the present.

The „diachronic flâneur” and the re-discovery of the small districts: Nagai Kafû's Hiyo-rigeta

In Japan the equivalent of Benjamin's “diachronic flâneur” is the multitude of walking guides who are to be found in all the literature available on Tokyo and on other cities. The first publications aimed at helping individuals to accept the city they live in and search for the right approach to city life were the works of the passionate city wanderer and writer, Nagai Kafû (1879–1959).

Kafû, who named himself “Kafû sanjin”, literally meaning “Kafû, the gentleman of leisure” or “Kafû, the man about town” has become famous for his lifelong habit to undertake daily walks through Tokyo and to write about his experiences. He often added photographs and sketches to his reports. Kafû depicted many of his main figures as “flâneur” who leisurely wandered through the city, reflecting deeply on the past when faced with the present. The main element in this approach to Tokyo is the fact that it has an in-built intention towards being critical of the modern age and towards being nostalgic about the indigenous housing and ways of living that were lost in the wake of Japan's modernization.

An important example of Kafû's writings about Tokyo is Hiyorigeta ("Fairweather clogs" or "Wooden clogs for good weather"), a collection of essays about strolls through Tokyo, published in 1914. Similar to a guidebook, Hiyorigeta offers a simultaneous approach to both the spatial as well the temporal aspects of urban space. This work convincingly shows that Kafû's Tokyo is a discursive structure based on the binary opposition of Edo and Tokyo. Hiyorigeta leads the reader to the cultural and spatial margins of the city. The title itself refers to Kafû's intention to report about the "other", the non-modernized, the authentic Tokyo. In the Edo period hiyorigeta were wooden clogs worn by men strolling through the pleasure quarters and by prostitutes. Hiyorigeta is far away from simply being a record of walks through places of scenic and historic interest. It is much more an exploration of Tokyo's multilayered, historical topographies, thereby focusing on the transformation of urban landscape and with it of the people's lifestyle.

Hiyorigeta consists of eleven chapters; each of them discusses topographical features and natural elements of Tokyo such as trees (ki, chapter 3), water (mizu, chapter 6) and slopes (saka, chapter 10). All of them have existed long ago before the city has become the center of the nation and form its basic layer. Symbols of modern Tokyo such as the Western-style parliament, the imperial palace or train stations are only mentioned in order to explain what has been located there in the past. Hiyorigeta starts with reflections about the advantage of exploring the city on foot and to have a look at those places where people actually live.

In this respect, the chapter about roji is very revealing. According to Kafû, in the Edo period the vitality of the city was to an important part located in the teeming back alleys, which were lined with shops, small houses, restaurants, and brothels. At the time of writing Hiyorigeta, the roji still were major spaces of everyday life, but were at risk of being knocked down and replaced by more modern houses.

In the following years, Hiyorigeta has become a canonical text of walking literature and starting point for similar accounts of Tokyo. Many writers followed in Kafû's footsteps. One of them was Kimura Shôhachi (1893–1958).

Kimura Shôhachi's writings on Tokyo

Kimura wrote numerous essays on Tokyo in which urban space is explored at street level and city history, personal memory and reflections about the passage of time as embodied in the transformation of meisho are neatly tied together. Kimura was born in 1893 in Ryôgoku, a central part of Edo's Shitamachi (low city) located by the Sumidagawa. When he died in 1958 this area had been completely rebuilt several times. Kimura's writings cover a period of more than thirty years. Focusing on the transformation of Tokyo since the Meiji Restoration, Kimura devoted his work to the investigation of spaces of everyday life of the past and their remnants in modern Tokyo and their respective lifestyle and customs. Some of his works contain illustrations he painted himself. Taken all together, his works can be read as a chronicle of Tokyo.

Several of his essays about Tokyo are based on strolls through the city. His conception of Tokyo is reminiscent of that of Kafû. Both authors were looking for the old in the new. Kimura, too, acted like a diachronic flâneur. Kimura's best-known essay about Tokyo is Tôkyô han-jôki (Report on the prosperity of Tokyo), published in 1958. Because it is a highly personal account of a tour around Tokyo in the 1950's and appeared soon after his death, it is regarded

as his legacy. In the 1950's, Tokyo as a whole was going to be redesigned along a system of roads and railways and most of the city's waterways had already been buried or bridged in the name of public sanitation, economic efficiency, and flood control.

Kimura's Tokyo mainly consists of areas such as Nihonbashi, Shiba, Asakusa, Fukagawa, Mukôjima and Tsukudajima, which all were famous meisho of Edo and even today are often depicted in the literature on Tokyo. Kimura looks very closely at the roji in these areas and investigates the elements of the material culture and lifestyle of Edo that still have been preserved there, but which are at risk of being unable to withstand the impact of both industrialization as well as modernization.

In search for the roji of one's life – Kobayashi Nobuhiko's „Tokyo Trilogy”

In recent years, the term autotopography has been coined in order to think more generally about the interweaving of autobiography and place. Such texts are centered on an intense relationship between the built environments, personal and collective memory, and history. In present-day Japan, spatial autobiographies constitute a major genre in the writing about Tokyo. A representative example of such writing is the so-called Tokyo trilogy (Tôkyô sanbusaku) by Kobayashi Nobuhiko (born in Tokyo 1932). Taken together, these works cover a period of nearly seventy years.

Of particular interest for the issues to be discussed here is the Shisetsu Tôkyô hanjôki (My Interpretation of the Account of Tokyo's Prosperity), published in 1984, a second edition followed in 1992. This work is a joint work of Kobayashi and the well-known photographer Araki Nobuyoshi (born 1940 in Minowa / Tokyo). Both artists strolled together through Tokyo, each of them documenting his experience in his own way. Kobayashi was writing essay-like reports, to which Araki added photographs. Araki published numerous picture books on Tokyo, most of them depicting scenes of everyday life in the little lanes and the small districts.

Kobayashi's and Araki's joint work documents the changes of urban life during the period of economic high growth of the 1960s and 1970s. During these years, existing city fabrics that have acted as containers of history and social bound values and cultures were systematically removed or destroyed. Countless old quarters and with them roji were torn down and replaced by apartment buildings. To the second edition of 1992 a new chapter entitled Hachi nen nochi (Eight years later) was added. In particular the 1980s are remembered as an era in which an unparallel construction boom extended from central Tokyo to its hinterlands. The construction frenzy testifies to the fragmentation and commercialization of Tokyo's urban space resulting from the globalization of the Japanese economy. Tokyo was becoming a global financial center and attracted a huge influx both of Japanese and foreign corporate headquarters, financial institutions etc. The keen shortage of office space created a collective need to meet the demands and make profits by re-developing Tokyo's urban structure. Kobayashi reflects in Hachi nen nochi on these changes Tokyo has experienced since the first edition in 1984, and Araki took new photographs for this edition in order to document these changes visually.

The „Renaissance of the city” and the flâneur

There is little doubt that the practice of walking and the reflection on urban walks contribute to a counter-discourse of the urban. This discourse finds its power in relational oppositions to modernist conceptions of city form and changing structure that have been motivated by the

master narrative of capitalist urbanization. Mori Building in Roppongi Hills is a recent example of such urbanization. In Roppongi, too, small residential districts have been demolished to make room for this glittering skyscraper.

This background, the effects of an ever-ageing society, as well as the fall in population in many places (shrinking cities) has induced Japan to search for alternative forms of urban planning and spatial arrangements that are often linked to its own cultural roots. This is why it is not particularly surprising that the specific urbanity of such small housing structures has been rediscovered and reassessed. Kurokawa Kishô, one of the leading representatives in the field of Japanese architecture, goes as far as to claim in his latest publication – *The Revolution of City* (Toshi no kakumei; 2006) – that the revitalization of the roji is the key to the future of Japanese cities. Value is thus placed on the discarded, seemingly unimportant spaces that are rarely seen to hold significance in conventional urban discourses. This rediscovery of the roji is not just being promoted by experts, but has also been accepted by a broader public. The roji is insofar a very democratic spatial concept as everybody can explore it on his own terms. Animated by the city-walks found in literature, more and more people are starting to enjoy these nostalgically inspired walks through the narrow lanes and districts that are still rather untouched by urban development projects.

Expressions such as sanponian サンポニアン (stroller) and machiaruki 町歩き (city walking) belong to the vocabulary of the contemporary discourse on Tokyo. Many literary works and also films address the politics of walking. We also see a thematic diversity of strolls: People explore the city in order to discover “their” Tokyo. The film and literary critic Kawamoto Saburô wrote numerous essays about Tokyo. For example, Kawamoto’s *Watashi no Tôkyô machi aruki* (My Walking of Tokyo’s machi, 1990) is an account of his exploration of Tokyo’s remaining roji (Kawamoto, 1998). Or, they go out for “literary strolls” (bungaku sanpo), following footsteps of famous writers.

Another way of exploring Tokyo’s history is to go out for “literary strolls” (bungaku sanpo) and to visit both the areas where famous writers actually lived as well as major scenes of their works. Numerous canonical works of modern Japanese literature such as Higuchi Ichiyô’s and Nagai Kafû novels were staged in roji areas. In recent years, stimulated by a renewed interest in Kafû’s relationship with Tokyo and in particular in Hiyorigeta it has become popular walking practice to draw on Edo kiriezu in order to explore Tokyo’s roji areas. Publications such as *O-Edo burari kiriezu sanpo* (Leisure kiriezu Walks through Greater Edo) and *Kiriezu - gendaizu de aruku Edo Tôkyô sanpo* (Walking Edo Tokyo Using kiriezu and Present-day Maps) have in common that they guide the reader to spaces of everyday life, in particular those small-scale areas and alleyways that are still untouched by urban development projects. In this respect, value is placed on the discarded, seemingly unimportant spaces that are rarely seen to hold significance in conventional urban discourses.

The roji seems to be a particular urban space where particular images of the past find their place, and where the past can be explored through walking. The discourse on the everyday as located in the roji points to an aesthetization of local, indigenous urbanity. Roji are alternative, globalized spaces to the globalized zones of Japan’s big cities; the roji can even be a wasteland.

Conclusion: Broadening the view

Rapid urbanization, particularly in the Asian region, has necessitated the physical extension of cities with strategies based on modernist planning theories. At the same time, over the last decades, conservation of historical areas has gained increasing acceptance. Tokyo, as many other cities in the Asian region, has become a global city. Much of Tokyo's space was rendered to serve capital accumulation on the one hand, but on the other this process also requires the inhabitants to identify with the drastically different city at the cost of losing more and more of their concrete space of everyday life. I think that both the popularity of the roji as well as its aestheticization has to be seen in this context.

It appears to me that in China, in particular in Shanghai and Beijing, both cities being epitomes of Chinese urban modernity, similar discourses are going on. As the other side of large-scale modernization projects there can be observed a revival and nostalgia for indigenous lifestyles and their respective urban space. The Chinese equivalent to the roji are the lilong (Shanghai) and the hutong (Beijing).

Whether roji, lilong or hutong – and one could also add the Korean golmok – all these street spaces have in common that they are associated with the notion of the old, the traditional, the indigenous and the backward, as well as the marginalized. They point to glocalized everyday lifestyles, and to patterns of community that are at risk of going to be lost in the race for becoming global.

Cities such as Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing are caught between forces of global capitalism and national interests. The literature of walking reveals the temporal and topographical complexity of such cities. Such texts address aspects of their past, present and future through „pathways“ which lead the reader through the city's history as well as its contemporary culture and concerns. The walk on the one hand has become a means of delving into local roji history and, on the other, an important medium for organizing and focusing resistance to large-scale projects of the kind mentioned. In this way residents are also made aware of how important it is to take part in urban planning processes, even in cases when it is more or less clear that the voice of capital is going to win the day. However, wandering through the roji is one way of mapping these things out and to make these cities home.

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MUKOJIMA - URBAN METAMORPHOSIS IN TOKYO'S LOWER TOWN

Titus Spree

Abstract

Taking Mukojima, an area in the northern part of Tokyo's Sumida ward, as an example, the article reflects on the character and the driving forces behind the transformation process of the Japanese urban context. Starting from a historical review, specific as well as representative features of urban transformation and shrinkage in the Mukojima area are examined and put into perspective with the social as well as the administrative context of urban development in Japan.

In particular the article shows how cultural factors such as the tradition of detached wooden structures and the strong stance of non-public individual players and business enterprises as well as administrative conventions, such as the rather rudimentary character of urban planning tools, create the base for a extremely flexible and organic form of urban transformation that displays axiomatic differences from the western situation.

Mukojima

Name: Mukojima/Tokyo

Country: Japan

Population 1963 – 384000 (population whole Sumida ward)

Population 2004 - 225000 (population whole Sumida ward)

Population Loss: 40 %

Period: 1963-2004

Mukojima¹ is an area in the northern part of Tokyo's Sumida ward and taking it as an example I would like to illustrate the character of urban transformation and shrinking in Tokyo. The Sumida ward is one Tokyo's 23 central wards and belongs to 'Shitamachi', the lower town, a term that opposes 'Yamanote', the upper town, and refers to the former working class and craftsman district that existed since the beginning of the Edo era about four centuries ago. Yamanote used to be the area where Aristocrats and Samurai had their residences and where the better-off temples and monasteries were located.

Not surprising for fast developing Tokyo Mukojima, one of the neighborhoods that now appears to be rather traditional, isn't a very old part of the city. The actual urbanization in Mukojima started with the construction of the first train line in the second decade of the 20th century. The great earthquake in 1923 boosted this development as many people who lost their homes further to the south, came to Mukojima to rebuild their homes there. The neighborhoods townscape, that here and there reminds us of a shabby quarter, is partly a result of this invasion of often rather poor people that had to build their homes from scrap. The maze-like layout of the small alleys is a remainder of the swamp territory. Roads were initially built along the edge of swamps, small rivers and the field's in-between.

In the postwar era Mukojima, much like most of Tokyo's Shitamachi, became a production center for small and middle size workshops and factories. Small family business were producing a variety of goods such as parts for the big car makers, for the electronic market, as well

as toys, fashion and shoes mostly in a kind of subcontractor system. As probably every second house was home to a tiny workshop, sometimes the size of an average North-American bathroom, it must have been quite busy there. During this period several of Mukojima's neighborhoods ranked amongst the highest population density areas in the whole of Japan.

What we see nowadays in Mukojima can only be a vague reminder of this 'golden age' of industrialization, as the area couldn't manage to follow the second to last turn of Japanese society; a turn towards the west of Tokyo, and towards a society ruled by the 'sarariman's dream' (salary man) – a small one family house in a suburb usually dreamt of by the typical male white collar office worker. Population in some of Mukojima's neighborhoods has shrunk to one third compared to the peak in the 1950ies and 60ies.

Mukojima, much like many other places in working class Shitamachi, was not compatible with the Yamanote dominated white collar world, and now seems everything but vital. We can find vacant houses and workshops and young inhabitants try to get away if they can, mostly following the current trend towards Tokyo's young west. But even though for Japanese standards Mukojima is a slightly deteriorating neighborhood seen with western eyes it would probably be considered a better residential area. Deterioration here is very gradual and appears rather diffuse and often hidden. There are hardly any run-down large-scale structures and wherever possible redevelopment of smaller units is carried out by individuals. The scattered examples of local deterioration are often redeveloped after a few years of vacancy. For example, take a former amusement and bar district made up of small wood houses that were joined to a kind of mall by covering the street they faced with a roof. As amusement priorities have changed the complex has been partly vacant for years and was torn down recently. It has since been replaced with industrial one family housing. A number of vacant wood houses are slowly deteriorating as building regulations, small lot size and land ownership problems make it economically unattractive to redevelop them.

More than in other areas close to the center of Tokyo the neighborhoods in northern Sumida district have resisted urban redevelopment. This is partly due to the complex and micro-scale urban fabric with tiny lots and roads that are so narrow that even lax Japanese planning law wouldn't allow for redevelopment. Another point is the often complicated ownership situation. It used to be common to lease land, then build on leased land and rent the apartments away, in which case there are three parties involved, land owner, building owner and tenant, in any attempt to redevelop the land.

A phenomenon rather specific to Mukojima is the willful creation of vacancy by the town planning authorities in order improve the environment and widen roads. The local government purchases mostly very small lots and keeps them as vacant with a fence surrounding and mostly asphalt covering them. Strangely enough there seldom is a clear perspective for future usage of these lots, except for a number that are going to be used to widen roads. This approach shows the helplessness that local planning authorities seem to feel towards the highly complex and difficult to manage urban structure they're facing. So it appears that they wish to prevent the continuation of such a structure wherever possible.

By looking at the material structure of Japanese cities, it is easy to understand that we are dealing with a very 'soft' system. Japanese building derives from a way of thinking based on wood architecture and this is apparent even in the steel and concrete reality of modern townscapes. The 'success' of the scrap-and-build approach towards urban renewal has been further

reinforcing this tendency. The detachment of the single units (this is not only to be seen space-wise, but also in terms of urban planning rules) makes it possible for the Japanese city to change in completely different ways than western cities could. Each unit is developed almost without any restrictions except for the few binding rules of urban development that restrict building height according to three different categories (low rise residential, middle-rise mixed use and high-rise business) and regulate natural light conditions.

There are hardly any of the master-planned townscapes that make up a substantial part of the urban fabric of western cities (for example, tenant housing districts in major European cities) and there have been only a few new-town experiments (that usually didn't fail in the same way as in the west). The main driving force in the urban development of Japanese cities is the individual, be it in form of the single family house-maker or of the business enterprise creating residential, office or retail space. And any major shift in urban development is carried out by these individual players in a very flexible manner. Change of usage of urban areas is dealt with in an almost organic and often incremental way which is less defined by planning, but rather by individual initiative driven by simple economic intentions.

The pressure created on landowners by land and inheritance taxes in most cases insures a highly efficient usage of land especially in dense urban areas. As soon as a certain form of usage is outdated, new ways are sought in order to utilize land and in most urban areas around Japan there still is enough market pressure to not let property deteriorate as in many western cities. From the western point of view, it is very interesting to study the flexibility and the role that individual, small scale initiative plays in urban shrinkage processes in the Japanese city of the future.

1. The way I use the term 'Mukojima' differs from the official usage as I'm not referring to a certain neighbourhood as defined by the local government, but to an area that roughly refers to the Mukojima ward which was consolidated with the southern Honjo ward to form today's Sumida ward in 1947. In my eyes the Mukojima area forms a natural unit as its various neighbourhoods all share similar features such as small winding alleys that form a mazelike urban fabric, low-rise townscape and a similar history of social and urban transformation.

SENRI NEW TOWN

Kenji Tsutsumi

Abstract

Senri New Town (SNT) was the first big “new town” in Japan. It was opened in 1962 during high economic growth, at the northern part of Osaka prefecture. Many nuclear families (parents and children) became the residents in SNT. But, about 40 years after, the generation of the parents still stays there but some of their children moved out. Then because of concentration of aged people, the area now has another name: “Senri Old Town.” And in SNT, several regional urban problems flow now: rapid aging, decrease of population, degradation of regional security, town renewal, several conflicts and so on. In spite of the difficult situation, citizens’ power and social ties (“Social Capital”(SC) in a new meaning) have key roles to the solution. That means, in order to sustain daily life, social ties give a driving power to the residents.

Key words:

Senri New Town, aging, decay of regional functions, conflicts, citizens’ power, social capital (SC), town renewal, urban social sprawl, scape

「千里ニュータウン」

堤 研二

千里ニュータウン(SNT)は、日本で最初の大きな「ニュータウン」であった。それは大阪府の北部において高度経済成長期の1962年に開かれた。多くの核家族(親と子ども)がSNTの住民になった。しかし、約40年の後、親の世代はそこにとどまるものの、彼らの子どもたちのうちのいくばくかは転出していった。それゆえ、老いた人々が集中しているために、そのエリアは今、別の名を持っている。すなわち、「千里オールド・タウン」である。また、SNTでは、いくつかの都市地域問題が生じている。つまり、迅速な老化、人口の減少、地域的安全性の低下、マチのリニューアル、その他いくつかのコンフリクトなどである。こうした困難な状況にもかかわらず、市民の力および社会紐帯(新しい意味での「社会資本」：SC)は解決に対して重要な役割を担っている。すなわち、日常生活を維持するために、社会紐帯は住民に推進力を与えるのである。

キーワード

千里ニュータウン、高齢化、地域機能の衰退、コンフリクト、
市民パワー、ソーシャル・キャピタル (SC)

(1) Introduction: The Aim

Senri New Town (SNT) was the first big “new town” in Japan. Here, with the example of SNT, the author shows some problems occurring in the “old new town”, or “Senri Old Town.” With this example, the author reflects on regional urban problems in an aging society as he recognizes the importance of social ties and the concept of social capital in the community of SNT.

(2) The History and Outline of Senri New Town (SNT)

Senri New Town, which was planned by the Enterprise Bureau of the Osaka Prefectural Government and opened in 1962, was the first big new town in Japan. It has an area of 1,160 ha and is located in the northern part of Osaka prefecture (Fig1, Fig.2). The area contains some parts of Toyonaka city and Suita city. Its planned population was 150,000 and it takes about 20 minutes to Umeda, one of the CBDs of Osaka city. The residential areas consist of detached houses, flats (condominiums), and apartment houses which were/are developed by public corporations or private companies (The Senri Center, 1973. Katayose, 1979. Yamaji, 1982. Yamaji, 2002).



Fig.1 Location of Osaka and Tokyo

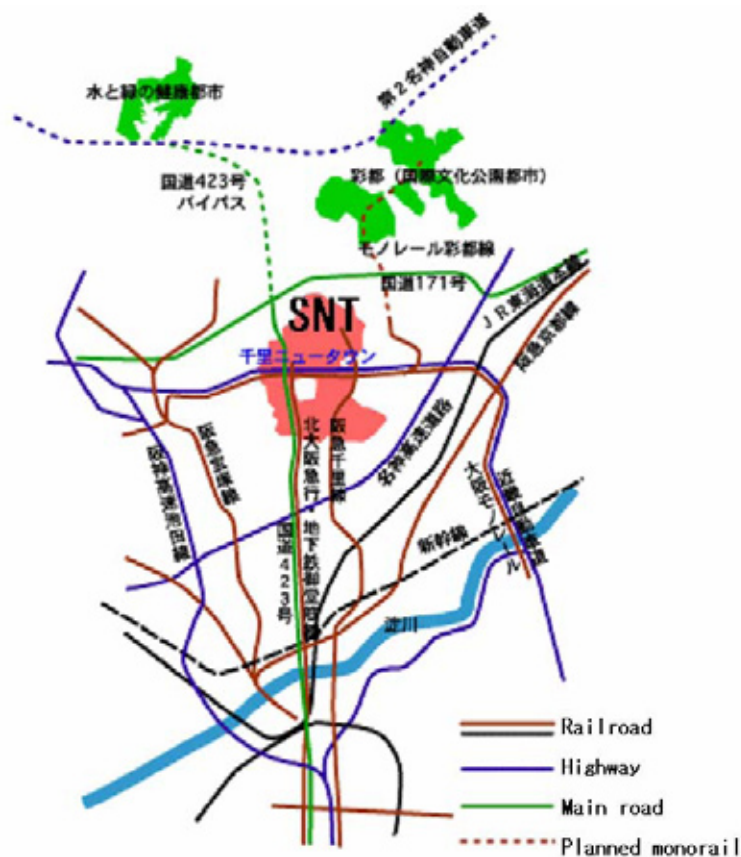


Fig.2 Location of SNT

SNT has twelve zones, four in Toyonaka city and eight in Suita city (Fig.3). The zones for daily life in SNT were planned for units of population of ten thousand each. Another two zones are circumvallated by the twelve zones and are not registered as part of the SNT area: the wider one is Kamishinden where local landowners (former farmers) were averse to absorption by SNT in the 1960's. The narrower one is Kosaiin, which contains a hospital and welfare facilities run by Osaka city and which lacks constant residents.



Fig.3 Twelve Zones of SNT
 ("Green" is a green space plenty of trees or plants
 "Park" is a larger green space or it contains of small
 playland with jungle gym etc.)

Twelve zones in SNT contain residential areas, parks, schools and neighborhood centers. Residential areas occupy 43.1% of the area of SNT, followed by parks at 23.8%. Neighborhood centers consist of small shops, post offices, dentists, clinics, and other related services. As mentioned above, the residential areas contain detached houses, flats, and apartments. Generally, the apartments are divided into four categories: apartments offered by the Osaka Prefectural Corporation, the Osaka Prefectural government, the Urban Renaissance Agency and company apartments. Thus, residents in SNT are of several kinds of social classes. At the planning stage, the park area was decided to be 18.1 square meters per one resident, a rate higher than that in the city of London (10.5 square meters per resident). It has been more than 40 years since the opening of SNT in 1962, so several trees has grown to form plenty of green spaces and small woodlands. Thus, recently SNT has claimed another name, “Garden City.”

The central place of SNT is Senri Chuo (Fig.4, Fig.5), which plays a core role of commerce, transportation and administration. Especially important are its commercial functions, which attract female shoppers and groups of shoppers, especially from the northern part of Osaka prefecture, Hokusetsu.



Fig.4 Senri Chuo, the Core of SNT (1)



Fig.5 Senri Chuo, the Core of SNT (2)

A branch office of Toyonaka City Hall, a municipal library, other public facilities, and branches of banks are also located in Senri Chuo. The west side of the area is home to many office buildings of big companies. Also, in Senri Chuo the number of entering commuters exceeds that of exiting commuters, making the daytime population greater than the nighttime one.

There are two stations in Senri Chuo: a subway and a monorail station. The subway connects Senri Chuo to Umeda in only 20 minutes, whereas one can go use the monorail train to go to Osaka Airport (Itami) in thirteen minutes.

(3) Old People and Old Houses

Recently SNT has seen a clear and rapid aging of the population (Fig.6), particularly because since the 1970's influx of large numbers of nuclear families. Many of the couples in these families remained in this area and have now aged another thirty or forty years. Many of the apartments have become decrepit, and some public apartments were designed without elevators. So, older people who become bed-ridden cannot leave their houses. It is a kind of “space packing” (Harvey, 1973) of the aged into restricted spaces. In addition, there are few facilities for taking care of the aged, because of high land prices.

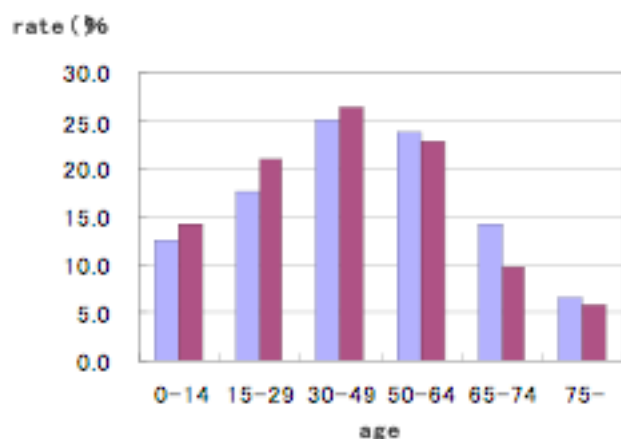


Fig.6 Population by Age in SNT (left) and Osaka Prefecture (right), 2001

The ever-declining quality of houses, buildings and facilities has been exacerbated by scanty investment in the improvements that would provide comforts for the elderly, such as barrier-free facilities or universal designed environments (Fig.7) (Tsutsumi, 2003). The administrative authorities, private developers and citizenry form a structure of tripolarity of development here; all of them are agents for redevelopment in SNT, debating on the reincarnation of this “Old New Town.”

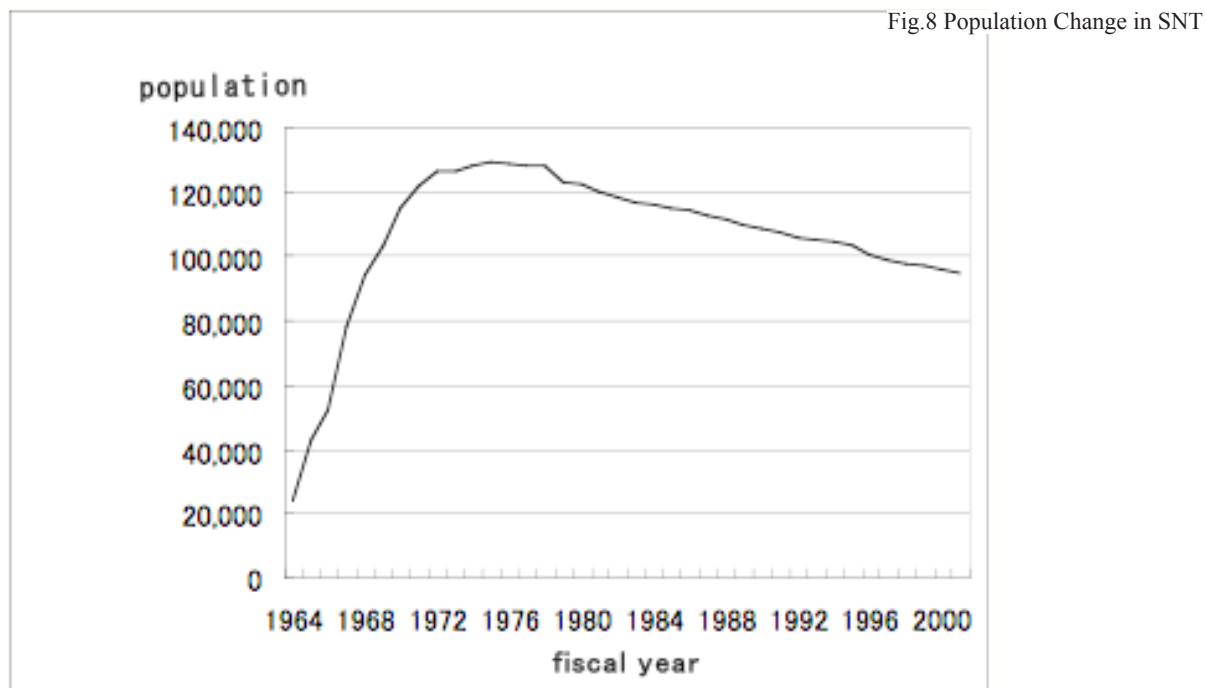


Fig.7 Aged People in Non-barrier-free Environment in the SNT

In 2004 Toyonaka City Hall introduced a new development plan of Senri Chuo. This plan emphasizes privatization of a part of the core area, which has brought severe argument since then.

(4) Decay of Some Functions and Amenity

The population of SNT has decreased since 1975. Failing its original goals, SNT never attained a population of 150,000 (Fig.8).



The twelve zones have neighborhood centers, schools, and parks. Nowadays, following the decrease of the population, neighborhood centers have especially decayed (Fig.9).



Fig.9 Neighborhood Center: Some Vacant Shops and a Public Room for Local People Ran by Volunteers “Machikado Hiroba”(street plaza room)

Regional public security in SNT is also declining (Tab.1). However, SNT is safe relative to Osaka city, in spite of its figures.

A r e a	C r i m e R a t e
Japan	1709.3
Osaka City	3248.0
Toyonaka City	1734.0
Suita City	1803.9

Tab. 1 Crime Rate* (1999)

*numbers of crime per a population of 100,000

(5) Conflicts in SNT

Presently, several kinds of conflicts are seen in SNT, which are caused by reform of the built environment, changes of landscape, financial crisis of the Osaka Prefectural Government, and mental contrast between residents in “village” and those in “town.”

Rebuilding old apartment buildings is one of the most important problems in SNT. There are a few successful examples of rebuilding. In one case an apartment building could be rebuilt higher gaining more new residents for the increased space. The rebuilding cost of the case had been covered not only by the original residents but also by the new condominium residents and by some bounty from the municipality. In that rebuilding case social ties and agreement among the residents, budget authorization, planning, and support from the municipality and developers were indispensable elements. But in other cases conflicts among residents, or between developers and residents, occur, for example, about the landscape and environment. In a few of new rebuilding cases we can see some original residents resisting against higher buildings saying that higher ones give damage to landscape and to environment for daily life (Fig.10, Fig.11).



Fig.10 New Buildings in SNT Generate a New Conflict (1)



Fig.11 New Buildings in SNT Generate a New Conflict (2)

Another conflict has arisen in SNT due to financial restrictions. Because of a financial crisis in the Osaka Prefecture, the prefectural government plans to abolish the Senri Center, which performs administrative functions for SNT. Also, a redevelopment plan of Senri Chuo area offered by Toyonaka City Hall and the Osaka Prefectural Government is to sell public sites which now contains of facilities such as citizens' hall, library, parking lots etc. Privatization of space by redevelopment in SNT is now being accelerated.

Before the development of SNT, the area consisted of hilly forests, bamboo forests, ponds and farmlands. Most of the landowners were farmers. They had conservative views and resisted any development of their land, which was passed down through their ancestors for generations. But Osaka prefecture bought most of the lands as part of its development policy procedure. Surrounding by the zones of SNT, Kamishinden area contains of a traditional settlement (people still call the area “mura” (village)), remained for the former farmers' basic home settlement area, and they denied Kamishinden to be registered into SNT. The Senri Center strictly controls redevelopment in SNT zones, but Kamishinden is relatively free from its control, so now private companies are constructing many small and medium-sized apartment buildings there. Today, this is leading to a “sprawl” situation in the built landscape. And also in Kami-

shinden we can feel a silent mental conflict between traditional native people (land owners and former farmers) and newcomers, who live in apartment buildings and new flat houses (“town” residents).

(6) Social Capital and Citizens’ Power in SNT

Once Bourdieu (1977, pp.171-183) established four categories of goods; economic capital, social capital, cultural capital and symbolic capital (Jenkins 1992, p.84). And Putnam (2000, p.22) added a new concept to social capital under a crisis of democracy; “...it is important to ask how the positive consequences of social capital – mutual support, cooperation, trust, institutional effectiveness – can be maximized and the negative manifestations – sectarianism, ethnocentrism, corruption, – minimized” (see also Miyakawa and Ohmori, 2004. Westlund, 2004). The Putnam’s concept of the social capital is almost synonymous with the term “social ties” which has been often treated in rural sociology in Japan. But the usage of the term “social capital” (here the author expresses it “SC”, too) by Putnam sounds new in an age of restructuring in Japan now, because in this country social capital has mainly been meant as for social common capital such as social infrastructure or so. In that meaning, the usage by Putnam is new and old in Japan.

By the way positive and energetic groups of citizens have gathered to tackle some of SNT’s difficulties. These groups, many of which are composed of elderly but active people, hold some of the keys to the community’s development, reform and sustainability. Many of the groups are NPOs, such as the “Senri Shimin Fouramu (Senri Citizens’ Forum).” These groups grapple with the community’s problems, such as trying to create barrier-free environments, “parenting” (bringing up) local children in a community, a “garden city” to preserve and enjoy wide green spaces there, a livable environment that encourages pedestrians and so on. These new developments for daily life in community in SNT show some examples of how SC (or social ties) is incorporated by the citizen groups for their benefit in life.

(7) Town renewal and urban social sprawl

From 2005 on, in SNT, discussion of town renewal project has been keener and keener. Especially general constructors wish to undertake the big project. So the renewal means privatization of redevelopment in SNT. In 2006 partial demolition and reconstruction of a core part of SNT in Senri Chuo began. Some buildings of administrative office or of a bank were destroyed and now a high tower building which will contain of residential parts is under construction on some part of the site. (Fig.12).

As mentioned above in (5), privatization is proceeding also in residential areas. In some parts of the residential areas in SNT, apartment housings of public corporation with lower rent changed to residential buildings of private sector with higher rent. Then gentrification occurs in a sprawling way. So we can see, as it were, urban “social” sprawl in SNT.

Such urban social sprawl can be seen in Kamishinden. Recently land owners there tend to sell their land to make money ready for inheritance tax. It leads to construction of small apartment houses and detached houses there (Fig. 13).

We must continue to observe that urban social sprawl in and around SNT is whether just in a process on a way to meaningful and fruitful renewal or a starting point of deathless confusion. In spite of being in such a difficult situation citizen's power in SNT is forming a new social "scape" for sustainable community life there. According to Urry, in a society of mobility "scape," is much important. Scape is network which consists of machines, technology, organization, texts, actors, etc., and which reconstructs the dimensions of time and space. Scape is structurized one. Once quantitative geographer Peter Haggett and others showed 1) interaction, 2) network, 3) nodal points, 4) hierarchy, 5) surface and 6) diffusion, as phasis which catch development of geographical phenomena (Haggett et al, 1977). It is just the "scape" that is the network accompanied by self-organization where the reality of social practice was put further. And through a way how a subjective and contingent individual concerns to a scape, citizenship may play a role to be some important buffer.

(8) Closing Remarks: Experiments Again

The construction of the first New Town in Japan, that is SNT, was a magnificent experiment. Now there is a need for its reincarnation, which may mean that SNT becomes a new field of another experiment.

Regional functions such as "Grunddaseinsfunktionen"(to reside (Wohnen), to labor (Arbeiten), to be supplied (Sich-Versorgen), to be educated (Sich-Bilden), to recreate (Sich-Erholen), to take part in traffic (Verkehrsteilnahme), and, to live in a community (In Gemeinschaften leben)) (Maier et al, 1977) are decaying in SNT as mentioned already. They cannot be sustained only by the Senri Center, Osaka prefecture, Toyonaka city, or Suita city because of each administrative unit's financial crises. In order to reconstruct a comfortably livable SNT, people there cannot depend only upon private developers. Social ties and the use of SC will be valuable tools in reincarnating the community of SNT.

In residential communities SC can be a key concept to think about the reincarnation of an area, so further examination of it is needed. In this case, it is also useful to study the importance of a leader, an actor, Träger, or an "agent" that means a man who has a high ability of activity for some movement in an area, having rationality but partly with passion and obduracy (Tsutsumi, 1995). In SNT most of them are mainly people who are 60 - 65years old or more, just retired from their jobs. Several kinds of movements in SNT as mentioned are leading by them.

At the last of this article the author sums up three vital points for the reincarnation of SNT: (1) regional functions in daily life, (2) social ties or social capital (SC), and (3) residents or citizens as agents. In order to study independent sustainability in a community, especially in an aging society, we would pay attention to these three points. In addition, study of *Passiv Raum* (that means "non-active space"), peripheral space and the spatial configuration of such spaces from the points would override the differences between a rural study of a community and an urban one, which leads to a new horizon in the combined and contrasted study of rural and urban communities in an aging or depopulating society.

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SHRINKING SADO - EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND THE DECLINE OF JAPAN'S RURAL REGIONS

Peter Matanle



Photo: The view over the Japan Sea towards Sado Island at sunset. Taken by the author from the campus of Niigata University in November 2004.

Abstract

In 2005 Japan's population began to shrink and, according to the government's own research institute,¹ is scheduled to drop by approximately 30 per cent within the next 50 years. Although this fall is considered to be a rather recent phenomenon, what is less well known is the fact that Japan's rural regions have been steadily declining, perhaps even collapsing, since as far back as 1950. This population shrinkage, and the inevitable decline in socio-economic vitality that accompanies it, has been taking place as a result of an excessive concentration of economic opportunity and political power in Japan's urban centres. Japan's cities have grown in the post-war period, in part, at the expense of a long-term decline of the countryside. This article uses Sado Island as a case study in rural decline and argues that a chronic and structured out-migration of younger people from the island to urban areas in search of education and employment opportunities has been a major cause of this decline. To the extent that what has already taken place in Japan's rural areas may be indicative of the shape of things to come for the country's provincial towns and cities, as the population fall begins to bite more deeply, the article then goes on to systematise these processes within the larger context of the acceleration and intensification of the processes underpinning Japanese capitalism. The article will propose that, in addition to its ongoing exhaustion of nature, Japanese capital is exhausting the country's labour power and, consequently, its population. Part of the solution to the exhaustion of labour and nature may be for us to think beyond modernity into a post-capitalist order. Thus, rather than being seen as a dying relic of the country's past, this article will suggest that the society of Sado Island may assist us in imagining and planning a new direction for Japan.

Introduction

Japan's demographic decline is sometimes assumed to be a rather recent phenomenon, or at least is thought to be something that did not become a pressing issue until the late 1990s and 2000s. Yet, if we start to disentangle the relationship between society, nation, and country, what will become apparent is that Japan's rural society has been steadily declining, perhaps even collapsing, for several decades already. Thus, despite the fact that many Japanese towns and cities have only recently started to suffer a hollowing out of their social and economic vigour as their populations shrink, many rural areas have been experiencing such difficulties for several decades. In this sense, therefore, it is essential that we study and analyse the post-war experiences of Japan's rural areas, since what has already happened there may be an indication of the shape of things to come for the country's provincial towns and cities as their decline deepens in the coming decades. This article will argue that, to the extent that population shrinkage in Japan has sociological roots, a major cause of rural decline has been the structured subordination of rural life to the demands of the urban centre. In this respect it is no exaggeration to suggest, as John Knight (2000: 341) does, that Japan's rural areas have been, at least during the post-war era, a mere 'derivative space wholly subordinate to the megalopolis'.

One such rural area, Sado Island, lies approximately 20 kilometers off the north-western coast of Honshu in the Sea of Japan. Part of Niigata Prefecture, it is Japan's sixth largest island, though it is now considered by most Japanese to be a remote, forgotten and rather inhospitable corner of their country. However, this was not always the case. Possessing what was for the time the third largest gold mine in the world, during the Edo period Sado was one of Japan's most dynamic regions and was the source of much of the Edo government's wealth. Thus, whereas in 2005 there were just 8,599 people living in the village of Aikawa (Sado-shi 2006), where the mine is located, there were more than 100,000 residents during the height of the mine's operations.² Many of these were criminals and vagrants transported forcibly to Sado in order to work in the mine's appalling conditions. Some, however, were professionals and artisans, such as temple priests and makers of clay ventilation pipes, who had migrated there to take advantage of some of the opportunities that the mine afforded.

Although the gold mine has long since ceased production, contrary to many people's assumptions, today Sado possesses a large historical, cultural, and economic endowment, and once one is made aware of just how abundant this inheritance is, it becomes puzzling as to why the island's population and society have declined so precipitously since the 1950s. This inheritance includes a rich arts and crafts heritage, including ceramics, that has consistently been recognised as being among the finest in Japan; an internationally renowned performing arts culture, including the highest density of Noh theatres in Japan and the world famous Kodo taiko drumming group who are resident in Sado year round, and who have performed in and organised the Earth Celebration festival in the town of Ogi every August since 1987; stunning natural scenery, including dramatic coastlines, mountains, and forests; and some of the highest quality agricultural and marine produce to be found in Japan. It is remarkable, therefore, that in the post-war period, the population of Sado has steadily fallen from its peak of 125,597 people in 1950, to the 2005 figure of 67,384 (Sado-shi 2006a), representing a drop of 46 per cent in the intervening 55 years. Furthermore, if we extrapolate from current trends, it is likely that Sado's population will fall to around 35,000 people by about 2030, which would mark a total decline of approximately 75 per cent within the space of three generations; a collapse by anybody's standards.

Before proceeding to describe the rest of this article, I wish to make clear that this article does not argue against population decline per se, since throughout human history populations have increased and decreased and this is an inevitable consequence of changes in their circumstances. Certainly, and in concert with radical changes in consumption behaviour, a population decrease has the potential to place fewer pressures on an already depleted natural environment (Caldararo 2003 and Economist 2006). Thus, it is not the decline itself that is problematic but, first, the imbalances that it is causing in Japan's socio-economy and, second, what the current decline indicates about the long-term sustainability of capitalist modernity in Japan and the rest of the post-industrial world. Accordingly, what I wish to argue here is that, by combining Japan's continuing low birth rate with the exhaustion of domestic rural labour power, Japan's demographic decline is now at a more radical stage in its progression and that this has profound consequences for the future capability of the Japanese people to sustain their way of life and, at the same time, deal successfully with the increasingly severe consequences of the worldwide exhaustion by capitalism of nature's ability to reproduce itself.

Although the sources of demographic decline are notoriously difficult to disentangle, after first presenting the extent of Sado Island's population shrinkage, I will argue that the major reason for Sado Island's population decrease, and the erosion of the island's vitality, has been a chronic out-migration of younger people to Japan's urban centres in search of educational and employment opportunities.³ I will follow this by describing and analysing Sado's circumstances in the context of Japan's overall shrinkage. I will argue that Japan's, and Sado Island's, demographic decline is a consequence of the exhaustion of Japan's labour power by the continued expansion and acceleration of the capitalist process. The article concludes by suggesting that part of the solution to this problem may be to start to think beyond modernity and to imagine and plan for what a post-capitalist society might look like. In this sense we might want to think of Sado Island, and its historical and cultural inheritance, as an example for Japan's future rather than, as is more commonly the case, a dying relic of its past.

Sado Island's Population Decline

Figure 1 below plots Sado's population from a comparatively stable pre-war level of approximately 110,000 people, through its post-war peak of 125,597 people in 1950, to the 2005 figure of 67,384. The graph shows that the population decline since 1960 is partly due to a decrease in the number of younger people, while the decline among middle aged people also shows a long term fall which has accelerated in recent years. Whereas Sado's decline has its roots both in a declining birth rate and a chronic out-migration of younger people to urban areas in search of educational and employment opportunities, it is the latter which has the most serious consequences for the future since, even if the birth rate can be raised, it is only by younger people remaining can there be any hope of the island's society regaining its vigour. Indicative of the significance of this out-migration is the steepness of the main curve below, which showed its most rapid decline during the 1960s. This was the decade often referred to as the *keizai kodo seicho-ki*, or era of high speed economic growth, when Japan's economy was expanding at its most rapid pace and when Japanese companies were recruiting entry level employees most actively from rural areas like Sado. Figure 1 also shows that, currently, the over-65 age group is the only one that is increasing and from 2007, as the post-war baby-boom generation retires and passes away, this group will reach its peak and begin to turn downwards. Indeed, the slight downward steepening of the Sado population curve between 2000 and 2005 may be a forewarning of the effects of this expectation on the whole island's future demography.

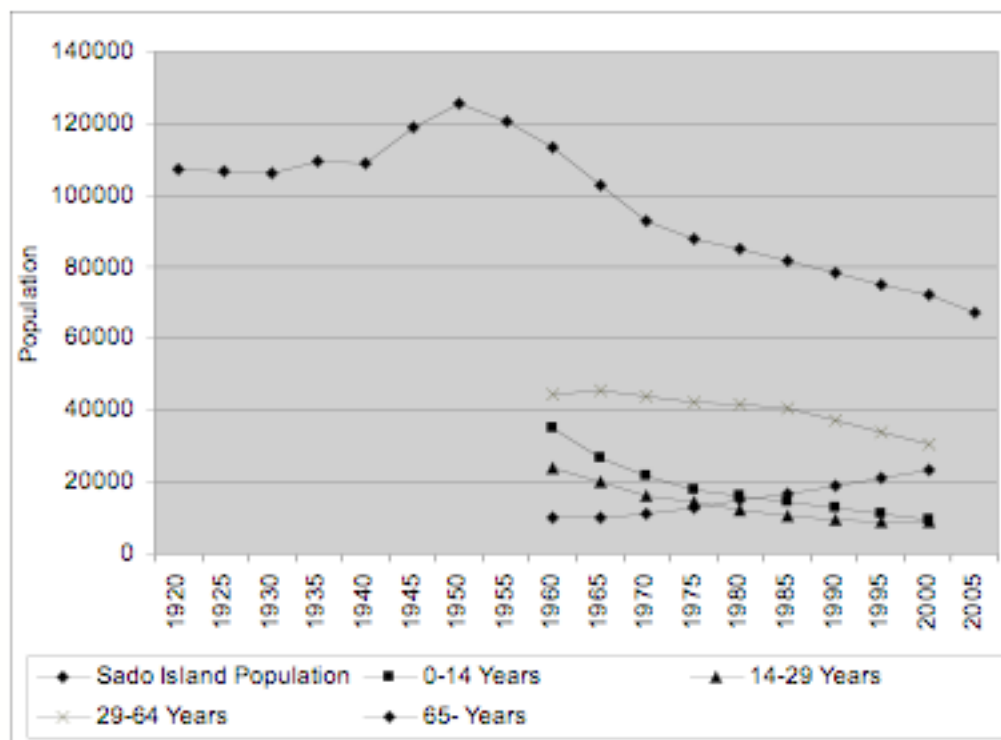


Figure 1: Population of Sado Island 1920-2005 (Total population and by age group) (Sources: Niigata-ken (2005a) and Sado-shi⁴ (2006a). Note: Figures for the 29-64 age group were calculated by subtracting the 14-29 age group from the 14-64 age group in the Sado-shi data. The population of Sado Island at the time of the national census in 2005 was estimated to be 67,384, a drop of 4,789 (6.6%) people from 2000 (Sado-shi 2006a) (Sado figures taken from the National Census).

To put the above figures into their national context, we should note that the 46 per cent decrease in Sado's population from 1950 to 2005 occurred at the same time as the population of Japan as a whole expanded by 51 per cent, from approximately 84 million to 127.5 million (Statistics Bureau 2004: 11 and 2006). Given that the birth rate in Japan was either higher than or equal to the population replacement rate throughout the long post-war economic expansion, when the national population was climbing and rural population declining, we can deduce that while Japan's urban areas increased dramatically in their size and vigour, they did so partly at the expense of a long term contraction in the vitality of Japan's rural areas. Why did the rural population contract so sharply over the post-war era? In the next section I will argue that one major reason for the decline of Sado Island's and rural Japan's populations has been a chronic out-migration of younger people to the urban centre in search of educational and employment opportunities.

The Push and Pull of Rural Out-Migration

Local education and the national economy

It has been well known for some time that, in the delivery of curricula, education at all recognised pre-tertiary institutions in Japan must conform to strict instructions issued from the Ministry of Education in Tokyo. All classroom textbooks must be pre-approved by the ministry and then selected from a group of approved texts by local boards of education. These texts are national in scope, sometimes nationalist in tone, almost invariably focus on modern and national developmentalist objectives, and hardly address issues specific to Sado Island in particular or rural Japan in general. In addition to formal control by the ministry, subjects available

for study and their content are heavily prescribed by the structure and content of university entrance exams and, thus, time available for digressing from teaching to the text-book in order to focus on local issues is restricted by Japanese schools' exam preparation centred pedagogy. Although attempts to encourage a greater rootedness in time and space amongst the children in rural schools do appear from time to time, these are few in number, are isolated and disconnected from one another, and remain peripheral to the mainstream of education policy and practice in Japan.

It is also well known that, where employment is concerned, Japanese society has for many decades placed a strong emphasis on educational credentials in preparation for attaining secure jobs under the so-called 'lifetime employment system' (Ishida, Spilerman, and Su 1997; Okano and Tsuchiya 1999; Takeuchi 1997; Yano 1997). This emphasis has been strongly bolstered throughout the post-war era by the Japanese government through its education and employment policies and by Japan's largest employers, who have been keen to recruit the best and the brightest from Japan's schools and universities. Although regional artists and craftsmen entrepreneurs, for example, correctly occupy a distinguished position in Japanese material culture and are well known and admired worldwide, on the whole Japanese society has preferred to guide children towards being accepted into what are regarded as the best universities and thence secure employment in the most prestigious work organizations, nearly all of which are located within the vast megalopolises of the Kanto and Kansai plains. In this way, younger people's lives are structured towards following this normative pattern from an early age, wherever they come from, and each new generation of parents, teachers, and students then reproduces and reinforces, or structurates, this life-path for the succeeding generation. Research produced by the Niigata Prefectural government bears out these arguments. Since 1980, the two principle reasons cited by younger people for leaving the prefecture have been for reasons of education and employment, with employment being the reason cited by more than 50 per cent of respondents in recent years. The prefecture cites both harsh employment conditions in the prefecture and better employment conditions in Tokyo as the principle push and pull factors (Niigata-ken 2005b: 10-11). Indeed, Suda, Ohtsuka and Nishida (1988) in their research described how rural-urban migration in search of salaried employment has been the principal reason for outward migration from Japanese rural areas since the 1960s. This process is both a consequence of and a contributory factor towards an over-concentration of socio-economic opportunity and political power in two or three urban centres, that itself is dependent upon the continued supply of labour power from the regions.

One manifestation of this extreme concentration and dependency has been that rural societies have been denied access to the resources they need to be able to develop socio-economic and political independence from the centre such that indigenous forms of human and social capital can reproduce themselves sustainably. While local and regional efforts at independent identity creation through the laying down of cultural markers abound,⁵ all too often local educational institutions fail to capitalise on these and continue to emphasise national developmentalist goals at the expense of cultivating local socio-economic and cultural autonomy. An example of this can be found in the relative roles of educational, familial and community institutions in the reproduction of Sado Island's ceramic arts industry. Many ceramic artists in Sado Island reported to me in interview that over the course of the long population fall in Sado Island, families and communities involved in the ceramics industry have found it difficult to pass on their skills, knowledge and networks to succeeding generations because the local educational regime focuses on national developmental objectives rather than local sustainability. Rather than invest resources in assisting students to gain viable employment in indigenous occup-

ations, local schools concentrate on teaching standard academic subjects as preparation for entering universities and achieving secure regular employment in urban industrial, commercial and professional roles. It is a strategy which simultaneously requires younger people to move away from Sado in search of opportunities to sustain themselves, and excludes them from being able to take up challenging and fulfilling jobs in their local areas, even if they wish to. Consequently, fewer and fewer children possess the motivations, aptitudes, and knowledge necessary for inheriting the accumulated capital of previous generations of ceramicists in order to carry on the island's industry.

However, educators at local schools, when challenged about the potential for educational institutions to assist families and communities in preparing younger people for the reproduction of the indigenous socio-economy, admitted that they did not feel a sufficiently deep sense of responsibility to the island's heritage, by responding that it remained the role of families to prepare children to carry on what are essentially family businesses. Thus, again in the village of Aikawa, since the 1970s the number of ceramic kilns has dropped substantially, falling from more than 30 kilns to just 17 still in operation today, with many of these teetering on the brink of closure because there is no-one presently in place who is being groomed to inherit the business. A teacher at a Sado middle school had this to say about ceramics education in Sado.

No, I don't think there is a kiln [at any of our schools]. At least, I think one or two schools may have a small metal [electric] kiln for occasional use, but there isn't one ... a climbing kiln [norigama]. ... Pottery needs an enthusiastic teacher to teach it and our school is very small. We have only 20 or so students [in the school] and this has dropped from more than 50 students about ten years ago when it was built. There is only one technology and one art teacher. It depends on who we have as to what we can teach. ... Yes, I think that it is odd [not to have a kiln], because pottery has been important in Sado for a long time. ... pottery is a family business and families train the next generation in the traditional manner. Also, this is not a pottery making area like Aikawa. However, I hear that in Aikawa [middle school] the students study woodcut printing rather than pottery in their art classes because there is a famous teacher there. Come to think of it, that is a bit strange. ... We have not yet started work experience classes [shokuba taiken] but we are going to start that from next year. I hope that we can take some students to a pottery at that time. In the meantime there are one or two places where students can experience it for a day. ... Yes, I agree that it is not really long enough for students to get to know it.

Local employment circumstances

In almost every interview I conducted in Sado with local residents and workers I was told that there are few local employment opportunities awaiting the younger people of the island as they grow up and graduate from the island's schools, and that this was the main reason for out-migration to urban areas. Yet, as I show below, the unemployment rate on the island is lower than both the regional and national averages. This is what a local man says about the employment situation.

Everyone always says that there is no work in Sado Island, but most of them have a job [laughs]! ... I am a car mechanic and I really love fishing. I am 30 years old and I worked for a few years in Naoetsu in the south of Niigata. But it wasn't interesting. I wanted to come back to Sado as I really love this island. So I bought a fishing boat and now I have two jobs. I have recently taken on an apprentice [deshi] on my boat. ... winter is the best

season for fishing as the fish are especially tasty at this time. It's very cold at sea and I can understand why few people want to do it. You have to really love it. Most of my school year group went away to the big cities. Some come back for the summer obon festival and for New Year, and they say how they miss living here and how they don't have good jobs ... but they don't want to do this work either.

A local official has the following to say about younger people's employment prospects, and their attitudes towards the jobs that may await them.

The reason that most young people leave to go elsewhere is that there are very few jobs in Sado Island for them these days. They don't want to work in agriculture, forestry and fishing because these are hard jobs which produce only a low income. Young people think of these jobs as being like the famous '3K' jobs, which means jobs that are dirty, difficult, and dangerous.⁶ If they could gain a higher income, maybe some people might do it. ...

As of 2000 there were 62,702 persons over 15 years of age resident in Sado Island. Of these, 64.1 per cent (62.4% for Niigata Prefecture) were counted as being active. Of the latter, only 1.9 per cent (3.8%), or 768 persons, were completely unemployed, 82.8 per cent (83.2%) were working in the formal economy, and 13.6 per cent (10.9%), were involved in home-making or other types of informal work.⁷ Of those actively engaged, 7,626 people, or 22.7 per cent (12.0%), were self-employed and the rest were employees (Niigata-ken 2005a: 317). Employment in the primary industries of agriculture, forestry, and fishing halved between 1980 and 2000, while employment in secondary and tertiary industries has remained fairly steady. This reflects the fact that a large number of people involved in primary industries on the island are older people and they are retiring and passing away now in greater numbers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that since 2000 there has been a fall in employment in secondary and an expansion in tertiary industries, as the population falls and ages, and the continuing harsh local economic climate bites more deeply.

While manufacturing employment in Sado did not decrease between 1980 and 2000 the number of manufacturing establishments fell steadily over the period 1991 to 2001 by a factor of 26 per cent (Sado-shi 2006b). Figures for all industries show that between 1994 and 2002 the number of small businesses on the island fell by 18 per cent to 1,436 establishments, and the number of people employed at these fell by 11 per cent to 5,705 employees, showing that employment is gradually becoming more concentrated in larger businesses, with many of these headquartered outside the island. Over the same period turnover had fallen by 12 per cent (JPY86 million or USD750,000) to an average of 123.5 billion yen per business. The number of small retail stores also fell by 19 per cent, while the number of retail subsidiaries and franchises dropped by only 9 per cent, leaving the total fall in retail stores at 18 per cent, with retail subsidiaries, again with many of these headquartered outside the island, increasing their proportion. One consequence of this gradual shift in business ownership from Sado residents to those outside of the island is that a steadily increasing proportion of employment opportunities are in low-wage, low-skilled, insecure temporary and part-time employment with few prospects for onward progression.

Push and pull

Given the evidence and arguments presented herein, rural out-migration might therefore more usefully be seen as a combination of both push and pull. The former is represented princi-

pally by an education system that fails to encourage sufficient numbers of younger people from taking up employment in the region, as well as declining employment opportunities in occupations in which younger people wish to be employed, and the latter by more numerous and more attractive employment, education, and lifestyle choices being available in Japan's urban centres. Unsurprisingly, it seems that younger people are not happy to engage in work that they feel requires hard physical labour in poor conditions for poor financial returns, work that provides few opportunities for personal growth and independence, or work that involves working long and inconvenient hours.

More alarming still, younger people migrating from rural areas have recently begun to face more difficult employment prospects in regions they wish to move to. Stable and skilled manufacturing employment has been fast disappearing in Japan's urban areas as China becomes the centre of world manufacturing, and is being replaced by unskilled, insecure, underwhelming, and sometimes nocturnal service employment, often in the retail and restaurant trades (Honda 2006; Genda 2005; Genda and Maganuma 2004). In this respect it is significant that, in addition to there being almost no tertiary level education in Sado, investment in pre-tertiary education is running at about half the average for Niigata Prefecture as a whole. In 2004 public investment in education in Sado stood at 586,621 yen per primary level child and 507,395 yen for middle school, as against 1,023,423 yen and 1,063,588 yen respectively for the prefecture as a whole (Sado-shi 2006c).

Thus, in addition to local opportunities for younger people becoming increasingly unattractive as rural society declines and disintegrates, since the graduates of Sado's schools are among the least likely to have the background and resources to be able to enter Japan's elite higher educational institutions, and the structure of the labour force has been changing rapidly in favour of a more precarious, globalised, and service oriented employment system, in all likelihood the employment prospects awaiting many of the young people who move away from rural areas are not what they used to be. In the next section I will put the above described developments within the context of the demographic decline of Japan as a whole.

The National Context

In her bold critique of modern capitalism, the late Teresa Brennan (2000) described an entrenched system in which the cultures and psychologies of modernity and capitalism are the principal obstacles to achieving human and environmental renewal and, consequently, a sustainable future for the world. In this description, capital cannot wait for either labour power or nature to reproduce themselves before they are alienated, transformed, commodified, and sold, thus progressively depleting the world of the means for its long-term survivability. Accordingly, once local sources of labour and nature become exhausted, or are rendered too expensive to generate exchange value, capital reproduces itself either by importing materials and labour from afar, or by shifting production to where materials, labour and product markets are available, until these sources also become exhausted and the process begins anew.

Similarly, Immanuel Wallerstein (2001) describes a world in which profound transformations are taking place in the material conditions of life and the structures of knowledge that underpin it. Like Brennan, Wallerstein is not optimistic, demonstrating that capital will eventually exhaust the earth in its pursuit of more competitive cost regimes, both by driving down the conditions necessary for sustaining life within its own domain and by bringing previously unexploited domains under its regime. Wallerstein's thesis is that this process is finite and ne-

aring its end, as human society's and the earth's capacity for absorbing capitalism's contradictions are stretched to their limit. For Wallerstein, the fundamental problem that we face is that of the probable and eventual 'end of the world as we know it'. Published in 2001, the book predicts that we will reach this state within the next 50 years, or by 2051.

Brennan's examination of the deep psychology and structure of modern capitalism is especially insightful because of her development of the concept of 'energetic' channels existing at all levels of human activity; within the human mind; in social, political, and economic institutions and structures; in the geography and history of capitalism and modernity; and the accelerating speed with which negative energy flows down those channels. Brennan shows how hard it is to carve new channels to successfully challenge the accelerating mechanisms of world capitalism and, simply put, for us to slow down, down-size, and change direction. In short, we are stealing from our descendents in order to maintain our present way of life and, eventually, either we will have to change, or the earth will become, in the words of James Lovelock (2006: 147); 'Hell: so hot, so deadly that only a handful of the teeming billions now alive will survive'.

While efforts at sustainable living are taking place in Japan, they are few in number and are isolated and disconnected. Laudable though these are, they have little effect on the direction of development of mainstream society. The majority of Japanese continue to live a conventional life according to the normative cultures of modernity and they remain comfortably corralled within the institutions of Japan's post-war capitalist regime. Yet, as we have seen above in the case of the severe socio-economic imbalances being created by demographic decline and rural-urban migration, it is here where reform for positive generativity is most urgently required. In this sense we can talk about the existence in Japan of a national developmentalist regime, what Chalmers Johnson called the 'developmental state' (2001: 10), whereby Japan's post-war elites sought to include the whole nation under a long term umbrella strategy of national economic development in order to 'catch-up' (Katz, 1998) with the advanced western economies. Rural areas such as Sado Island were brought within this regime because they could supply large numbers of literate, numerate, diligent, and disciplined – some would say docile – young workers to Japan's burgeoning corporations and factories on a regular basis. During the post-war decades, normative understandings of the relative roles of siblings, and having multiple children families, made sure that the demands of this national developmentalist regime could be satisfied while preserving much of the social capital and cohesion of local areas, because the eldest sons, or daughters, would be available to remain at home or would return after being recalled to take over the family land or business on their parents' retirement. Even as the population of Tokyo and other urban areas expanded greatly during the long post-war economic expansion, the population of Niigata Prefecture remained steady at around 2.4 million people (Niigata-ken 2005a), thus enabling at least the appearance of a stable rural-urban migratory relationship to develop.

However, the stability of this relationship and, especially, its long-term sustainability has always been illusory. For, if we adopt the dominant neo-liberal narrative that describes labour power as a resource (to be exploited), as capital likes to do by adopting the term 'human resources', when we look at the population statistics and examine the state of rural society we can see that this resource bargain between urban capital and rural labour has all but been mined out by Japan's huge corporations. Even the eldest sons and daughters now leave Sado permanently for elsewhere, the remaining residents have few or no children, and native Japanese labour power becomes more costly to urban employers due to its increasing scarcity. The

accelerating rate of capitalist expansion in Japan means that Japan's corporations cannot wait for rural human resources to reproduce themselves and they now concentrate on shifting their production facilities overseas in search of lower cost regimes; a process that has recently been termed 'globalization'.⁸

It can be said, therefore, that Japan's post-war modernity has served as a giant mechanism for corralling younger people away from local sources of knowledge and skill, and then herding them into the urban centre where they can be sorted for employment within the country's vast industrial and commercial complex according to their perceived academic status (McVeigh 2000 and 2002; Okano and Tsuchiya 1999; Takeuchi 1997; Yano 1997). However, while serving the needs of the elites' national developmentalist project well throughout the post-war period, especially since generations of rural young people were able to gain secure, skilled, and well paid employment in manufacturing industry, these institutions may not be so well suited to the problems being experienced in local areas, as well as the transformations occurring in the urban labour force. While local family systems appeared resilient enough through the early post-war decades, and were the central institutional mechanism for the reproduction of the rural economy, this resilience has now become seriously degraded by the centrifugal economic forces emanating out of Tokyo and other areas, which continue to draw in the energy and vitality upon which rural economies depend for their survival and reproduction. Add to this an educational system that has consistently focused on national developmentalist objectives at the expense of rural sustainability and has failed so far to replace the decline of the family as a mechanism for local socio-economic reproduction. Finally, the urban employment opportunities that rural migrants could rely on are declining year by year as Japan's economy restructures and manufacturing employment is out-sourced to China and the rest of Asia. The result is that many younger people from rural areas such as Sado Island are eventually compelled to take up employment within the postmodern netherworld of service stations, roadside convenience stores, and fast food outlets that characterise Japan's vast suburban sprawls.

Conclusion

I started this article by introducing the society of Sado Island as an example of rural population decline and then went on to show the extent to which the population has fallen since its post-war peak in 1950. In this way I was able to show that Japan's demographic decline is not a recent phenomenon, as it is sometimes considered, but is something that has been going on for many decades already. I then went on to show that a major factor in the decline of the island's population, and erosion of its society's vigour, has been the outward migration of younger people to urban areas in search of educational and employment opportunities. Lastly, I drew these issues together, and explained their significance, by locating Sado Island's situation within the context of Japan's overall demographic decline and through a theoretical discussion and analysis of the role of Japanese capitalism in exhausting the nation's labour power.

A basic condition for any society's stability and continued prosperity is its ability to reproduce itself biologically such that succeeding generations may support both their children and elders through their labour power. This condition is disintegrating in Japan as its population decline enters a new and more radical stage in its progression. This can be characterised by combining the two processes of demographic exhaustion, a low birth rate and outward migration of younger people from rural areas, within a single conceptual framework. In this way, Sado Island is an example, by no means unusual in Japan, of the steady exhaustion by capital of rural society's ability to sustain itself and provide the surplus labour, or 'industrial reserve army',

on which the modern centralized industrial state depends. The increasing cost and scarcity of domestic labour is a significant underlying cause for inward migration from overseas and for the outward globalization of Japanese industry as it seeks to drive down the costs of maintaining domestic structures and to bring lower cost regimes in other parts of the world under its control; a process that has recently been termed ‘globalization’. However, this process is finite and will reach its limits within the coming decades. Under current trends Japan’s demographic exhaustion will continue such that population decline on a scale similar to that already experienced by Sado Island is a realistic probability for the country as a whole, and is indeed already happening in many of Japan’s regional towns and cities. Coming at the same time as Japan and the world are threatened by some of the most serious existential crises in history, in the form of climate change and increasingly dangerous global political and ideological divisions, together these problems represent the beginnings of a systemic tilt that will see enormous stresses being placed on Japanese society. To the extent that the experiences of Japan’s rural areas are the shape of things to come for the country’s provincial towns and cities as they too suffer a hollowing out of their socio-economic vitality as their populations shrink, it is worth studying and analyzing the causes of rural decline in order to understand its underlying dynamics and to work towards discovering ways of mitigating or, even, reversing them.

Rather than taking the conventional approach and appreciating Sado Island as a dying relic of the past, the island and its society may have the potential for being the quintessential post-modern society, and an example for all of our futures. In this sense, there may be two routes available into the future for Japan. One is the continuation of rural society’s surrender to the dictates of the centre; in other words a capitulation to the demands of an ecologically unsustainable and resolutely modern model of capitalism. The other is to transcend, or even overcome, capitalism and modernity, and for regional societies to revitalize themselves as independent, self-sustaining, and sustainable post-modern communities. Currently, either scenario is still possible for Sado Island’s society, since opportunities for the deployment of organic cultural markers and for generating sustainable socio-economic structures with independence from the urban centre abound. We can hope that the latter outcome will eventually transpire and, in so doing, Sado’s experience may make a small contribution towards both the stabilization of Japanese society and the emergence of sustainable ways of life worldwide.

Notes

1. The National Institute for Population and Social Security Research estimates that Japan’s population will fall from 127.7 million in 2005 to approximately 89.9 million in 2055, representing a fall of 29.6 per cent (Kokuritsu Shakai Hoshi Jinki Mondai Kenkyujo, 2006).
2. The figure for Edo period Aikawa was quoted from an interview with an official of the prefectural branch office in Sado Island.
3. A more comprehensive account of the circumstances surrounding the decline of Sado Island’s population can be found in Matanle (2006).
4. Sado City is the English translation of Sado-shi and refers to the local administrative entity of Sado Island. In 2004 the 10 local authorities of the island were merged to form a single Sado City. The word ‘city’ does not refer to the place’s character, but to the local administrative unit.
5. See, for example, Rausch (2004).
6. 3K refers to kitanai, kitsui, kiken; or dirty, difficult and dangerous.
7. The data does not add up to 100 per cent. It is possible that the remaining 704 people who are active but not included in the more detailed figures are so-called NEETs, or those Not in Employment, Education, or Training (See Genda 2004).
8. See Bunker and Ciccantel (2005) for a more comprehensive exposition of this theory.

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GUNKANJIMA - VIEWS OF AN ABANDONNED ISLAND

Yuji Saiga

Off the westernmost coast of Japan, is an island called „Gunkanjima“ that is hardly known even to the Japanese. Long ago, the island was nothing more than a small reef. Then in 1810, the chance discovery of coal drastically changed the fate of this reef. As reclamation began, people came to live here, and through coal mining the reef started to expand continuously. Before long, the reef had grown into an artificial island of one kilometer (three quarters of a mile) in perimeter, with a population of 5300. Looming above the ocean, it appeared a concrete labyrinth of many-storied apartment houses and mining structures built closely together. Seen from the ocean, the silhouette of the island closely resembled a battleship - so, the island came to be called Gunkanjima, or Battleship island.

I was twenty-two when I first visited the island I had dreamed about ever since childhood. Much like a fortress built upon the sea, surrounded by high walls, the island possessed an air of a small kingdom, where its denizens boasted „There is nothing we don't have here.“ They were right. They did have everything within their miniature kingdom - except a cemetery. But, the irony of it was proven by the passage of time. Already, the island had been doomed to turn into an enormous graveyard.

Eventually, the mines faced an end, and in 1974 the world's once most densely populated island became totally deserted. The island, after all its inhabitants departed leaving behind their belongings, became an empty shell of a city where all its people disappeared overnight, as if by some mysterious act of God.

Ten years later, I returned to the island, equipped with food and drinking water. The island was devastated, with the smell of people gone. Inside the buildings, however, evidence of people's lives remained strongly. The strange atmosphere led me to wonder if island had remained in sleep ever since all its inhabitants left.

As days passed on the island, my impression of it began to change greatly. The innumerable articles left behind, all shrouded in dust, rusted, to me at first seemed merely drifting toward death. Yet, from one point in time, they started to look vivid, and beautiful. I thought perhaps the island, while appearing to fall deep asleep, had gradually commenced to awaken, the day it was deserted.

Order and value that only prevailed through human existence had long been disrupted. Items were scattered here and there with no context, no ranking. Everything had equal value. The sight I saw spoke of the relationship of the master and servant that had vanished at the time these items were discarded, which liberated them from human reign. To be abandoned meant freedom from all. The items left behind on the island lost their names, their given tasks, even the meaning of their existence. They laid there, as mere „objects.“ Books and clocks and empty bottles were no longer books and clocks and empty bottles. Things that had been domesticated by humans no longer existed on the island.

Just as the inhabitants started their new lives by leaving the island, these things too, left behind on the island, shed their identity once forced on by humans, to start their lives as „pure objects.“

A voyage to the Gunkanjima-island is prohibited currently.

軍艦島-棄てられた島の風景

日本列島の西の果てに、日本人でもほとんど知らない軍艦島と呼ばれる島がある。むかし、島は小さな岩礁に過ぎなかった。だが1810年に偶然に発見された石炭が、岩礁の運命を大きく変えることになる。埋め立てが始まり、人が住みつき、石炭の採掘を契機に岩礁は拡張の一途をたどってゆく。そしていつしか周囲が1キロメートル余り、人口が5300人の人工島へと成長し、高層住宅や鉱場の建築物がすき間なく建ちならぶ、コンクリートの迷宮が海上に出現した。海から眺めるそのシルエットは軍艦に酷似し、いつしか島は「軍艦島」と呼ばれるようになった。

少年のころから想い続けた島に始めて渡ったのは、23歳の冬だった。周囲を高い岩壁に取り巻かれ、海の要塞にも似た島は、小さいながらも国と呼べる雰囲気漂わせ、<この島にないものはない>と住民は豪語した。確かにその狭苦しい土地には何でもそろっていた。ただひとつ墓地を除いて。ところが時の流れは皮肉だった。そのとき島は、巨大な墓場となる運命を宿していた。やがて炭鉱は終末を迎え、1974年、世界一の人口密度を誇った島は無人となった。さまざまなものを残して住民だけが消え去った島は、一夜のうちにすべての住民が神隠しにされた、抜け殻の都市そのものだった。

10年後、水と食料を携えてぼくは再び島に渡った。島は荒れていた。人の匂いも失われていた。しかし、建物のなかには人が暮らした痕跡がまだ濃厚に残っていた。島は人が去って以来、眠り続けているような、不思議な雰囲気に包まれていた。しかしそこでしばらく暮らすうちに、島の印象は大きく変化した。島には様々なものが残されていたが、埃をかぶり、錆びつき、死に向かっているだけに見えたものが、あるときを境に、生々しく、美しく見え始めたのである。島は深く眠っているように見えながら、本当は無人となった日を契機に、何かに目覚めていったのではないかと思われた。

かつて、人の存在によって成立していた秩序や価値観は、島では完全に崩壊していた。そこかしこに散乱したものは脈絡も秩序もなく、すべてのものが等価だった。その光景は、棄てられたことによって、人ともとの間に成立していた主従関係が消滅し、ものは人の支配から解き放たれたことを物語っていた。棄てられることは、あらゆることから自由になることだった。島に残されたものは、与えられた名前も、宿命づけられた使命も、そして存在する意味すら喪失した、ただの「物体」としてそこにあった。本や時計や空き瓶は、もう本でも時計でも空き瓶でもなかった

。人によって飼いならされたものは、すでに島には存在しなかった。住民が島を出て新たな人生を歩み始めたように、島に残されたものたちは人の手垢にまみれた観念を脱ぎ捨て、「無垢な物体」となって生き始めたのだ。

島は現在、立入りが禁止されている。

images / 写真: Yuji Saiga/ JAPANSICHER NAME
from <http://www.ne.jp/asahi/saiga/yuji/gallery/gunsu/gunsu-html/01.html>

Gunkanjima / 軍艦島 1986





