

Citizens Organization and Participation to the Process of the Regional Planning and Design

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with “Citizens Organization” and “Citizen Participation” to the process of the regional planning and design not only in urban areas but also in rural residential areas with regard to the range of topics, such as its planning, partnership, environmental study, exchange, training of talented persons and NPO.

Even though many attempts on this issue have been developed in various parts of Japan, I examine in this essay especially the case of citizens in Hyogo Prefecture.

As regards a case in urban areas the various movements set after Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake are introduced. As a case in rural residential areas with abundant nature, the activities of “Tamba-no-Mori” in Tamba District and a concept for “the Idyllic Landscape Museum” in North Harima district are introduced.

Key Words : Citizenparticipation, Regional planning, NPO, Tamba-no-mori, Association and idyllic landscape museum in north Harima

I. INTRODUCTION

The specialized field related to greenery widely covers the conservation and construction of biotope, Satoyama (artificially conserved hills or woods especially in urban areas), Tana-da (rice fields on sloping land) as well as parks and green tracts. Moreover, new categories such as “Citizens Activities and Organizations”, which enables “Participation and Independence” of regional citizens, have been added and are about to be established their position in the greenery fields. The concept of the regional planning has been expanded.

Not only does this means the land for the regional design have been physically expanded, it

also implies: 1) the planning needs to be considered together in the whole region or valley; 2)relationship with a regional community such as the participation of its citizens needs to be regarded as the fundamentals of the regional planning; 3) a view of regional management also needs to be attached greater importance in the planning. In addition to these three points, a concept of the regional planning integrated with such issues as decrease in the birth rate/aging, health, welfare and the regional economy has been more essential.

This essay deals with “Citizens Organization” and “Citizen Participation” to the process of the regional planning/design in rural residential areas with regard to a range of topics, such as its planning,

partnership, environmental study, exchange, training of talented persons and NPO.

II. CITIZEN ORGANIZATION

1. What was Learned from the Great Hanshin and Awaji Earthquake

Much about citizen organizations was learned from the experience of the Great Earthquake which struck Hanshin and Awaji district five years ago. For one instance, immediately after the quake, the space practically used as shelters for victims was not only school grounds but greenery parks and green tracts which had been close to the neighboring residents in their daily lives (JILA, 1995).

The revival plan of Hyogo Prefecture and Kobe City mentioned such phrases as co-existence between "person and person", "person and nature", "person and society" or co-work among citizens, enterprises and the governmental bodies. That is, this plan emphasized the prominence of citizens participation and management as well as concrete projects. In other words, the revival plan suggests the importance of the exchange, cooperation, participation, and management among citizens in ones own regions or in wider areas.

2. Citizen Organization

I would like to survey two ideas that suggest the direction of citizen organization. The first idea appears in the strategic promotion guideline named "the National Ground Design in 21st century" (NLA, 1999). This guideline suggests that the development of the rural residential areas aims at the following three points: ① to construct the attractive regions in various cooperation with cities and farms, mountain and fishing villages; ② to realize the new

lifestyle and to mature the pride of regions; ③ to construct the new relationship between human beings and nature. The guideline also mentions the importance of "training of talented persons", "foundation of organization" and "information sharing" to manage the rural residential areas.

The second idea occurs in "the Sanda International Conference on City Planning in the 21st century". In this conference, "Hyogo Sand Declaration in 98" was announced and its main points can be summarized as follows:

1) Autonomous citizen organization needs to be promoted with the intention to establish the partnership among citizens, enterprises and the administration.

2) It is essential to construct "the community economy" which enables to link the needs of citizens and communities with economical activities.

3) The enduring city planning is required in which greenery and natural environment can be utilized.

4) The universally-designed environment is vital which offers citizen-friendliness.

5) "The face of city" beloved by the citizens and the opportunity of environment study are important.

6) The regional communities need to be founded which can be mutually interacted and developed in cooperation among regions.

7) It is necessary to introduce a new concept of citizens participation.

The fundamentation of "the Hyogo Sanda Declaration" from the viewpoint of citizen organization can be defined as the necessity to establish the organization;

1) in cooperation with the whole regions or valleys;

- 2) in every aspect of citizen daily activities;
- 3) promoting a new communities or citizen groups like NPO;
- 4) through the mediation of “the community business” accorded to the regional needs such as the supervision and management of Satoyama;
- 5) with the intention to integrate with the regional planning, health, welfare, and economy.

3. Cooperation among Citizen Organizations

After the earthquake, the city planning or the regional design were and have been put into practice in many regions as well as in the stricken areas. For an instance, the city planning has been promoted by the foundation of “Flowers for rubble” or the other supporting organizations through “co-work” between residents and the administration. In the process of restoration and reconstruction after the earthquake, flowers and greenery gave refreshing feelings to the victims or the stricken areas. In some ways, the revival of the cities and the recovery of ones mind were encouraged through the mediation of flowers and greenery.

Organizations with a nature of NPO have become active in the process of the reconstruction. “Hanshin Green Net” or “Association of Green Mantle” were among such organizations. The city/regional planning has been developed until now

with the assistance provided by both the town planning conference and the regional residents.

In rural residential areas with abundant nature such as Tamba and Tajima Districts, the regional planning has been promoted which covers the design of forests, villages and cities under the plans of “the Tamba-no-Mori Masterplan”, “the Shiso Forest Park” and “Idyllic Landscape Museum in North Harima”. Similar to the case in urban areas, a variety of organizations relating to the regional planning have played active parts in the process of practicing these plans such as the town planning conference, a neighborhood self-governing body, NPO, and volunteers. It is essential to encourage the cooperation and network of these organizations in the regional design.

Under the theme of “Aiming at the renovation of big cities by the foundation of new communities and surroundings through the mediation of greenery”, the investigation into the formation of environment lead by city residents was conducted in the fiscal 1990 to 2000.

Comparison of citizen organization in urban areas and rural residential areas was examined in this investigation which showed the idea of “sharing the space and mobilizing the activities on diversified levels” or the notion of “Green Cluster”.

Organizational activities of citizens participation includes the tree-planting campaign by

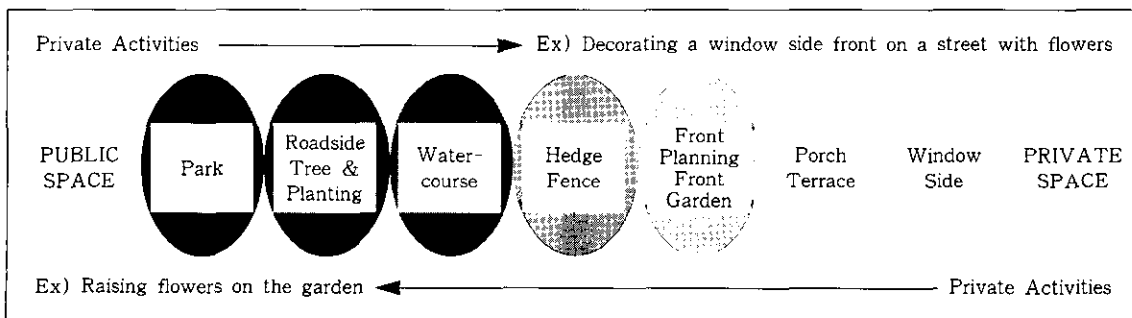


Figure 1. Open Space Jointly process / Citizen's Activities Switchover on Various

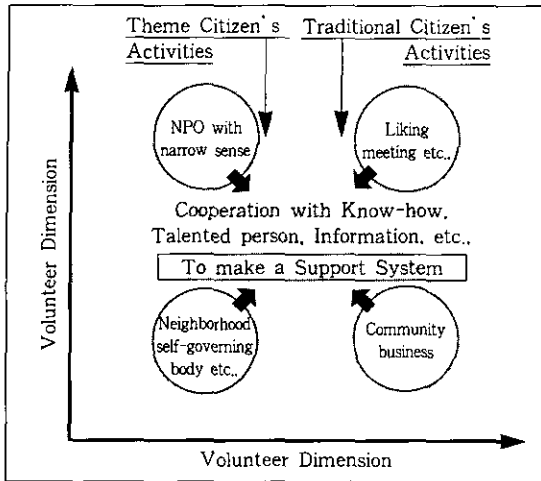


Figure 2. Green Cluster
- Image of support System by Cooperation and Growth with Neighborhood Organization -

the window, trimming of hedges, making gardens, distribution and planting of flowers and trees or tree-planting and maintenance of parks. These works give support to the maintenance of the fields and Satoyama in the towns around a large city. This movement makes it possible to diversify and expand the greenery activity. The activity itself varies from the fundamental greenery activity to the activity related to the structural aspects of environmental study intended for the training of talented persons and diffusion of public relations. Moreover, there are diversified forms of activities from the one which closely relates to an institution or a region such as parks, public halls and residential districts to the one that occurs in a wider area as the networking activity.

Distribution of flowers and trees to citizens is lead to the adornment by the window and the hedge making. This shows that the public activity to adorn the private space with greenery can add the liveliness to the public vista including streets. On the other hand, the private activity of tree planting or flower garden making in public space like parks and green tracts results in the decoration of public space.

This mutual interaction especially with regard to the relationship between human activity and the space can be well illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the idea of "sharing the space and mobilizing the activities on diversified levels". The relationship mentioned in Figure 1 seems to be promoted according as the greenery projects of citizen organization is activated.

To encourage the citizens activity citizen organizations are diversified. Among such organizations are; citizen organizations which roots are based on the regions that have worked actively for the tree-planting campaign in the regions (a neighborhood self-governing body, womans group and the aged groups); clubs which hold a variety of activity subjects; citizens organizations which fundamentals are found in the themes of their activity that have been formed especially after the earthquake (conference volunteering and community business). The conception of "Green Cluster" in Figure 2 shows how the citizen organizations involve the ideas of volunteering and marketability. "Green Cluster", the greenery-rooted activity, seems to offer the structure to share and exchange the knowledge, skills, talented persons and information that promote the regional planning with citizens participation.

The ideas of "LETS (Local Exchange Trading Scheme)" and "Eco-money" examined and introduced in many regions of Japan are expected to become a part of the new structure to bolster the regional planning through the greenery activity of citizens.

In the studies of the regional/city planning, it is essential to secure cooperation between citizens and researchers and the feedback of the practical management of regions to the academic studies.

III. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

1. Survey

The regional planning in rural residential areas differs considerably from the one in the cities or suburbs. Remaining the original tradition, history, and culture of their own, rural regions gradually change the aspects. Therefore it is required to find the enduring city planning based on the potential resources of their geographical features, vegetation and views.

Many rural regions are confronted with the following structural problems; depopulation; the progress of excessive aging; decline of primary industry of agriculture; forestry and fisheries; shortage of successors; and lack of employment opportunity. In such regions, it is significant to maintain the productivity, to conserve and transfer the environment and views, to preserve and manage the precious resources such as forests and rivers that produce oxygen and secure water not only for the residents living in the region but also for the prefectures and the nation as a whole.

Regarding to the regional planning in rural districts, the policy to activate the regions is vital that: ① utilize the common environment resources such as forests, rivers and fields (including Tanada) ② is linked with national, quasi-national or prefectural parks which are publicly administrated. In order to realize the policy, it is the time to consider how to practice the new regional planning that requires the close relationship among residents in cities or local regions, and the participation and independence of citizens. Embodied attempts have been carried out in some regions: For an instance, citizen organizations were established to become

active in the regional planning. The ideas of "Eco-tourism" or "Idyllic Landscape Museum" have been proposed and planned, which need the participation and management of citizens.

In Hyogo Prefecture, this movement is already visible as in the following plans;

"the Chikusa Valley Regional Design"

"the Prefectural Oasis- the Shiso Forest Park"

"the Harima Satoyama Park"

"the Amenity Masterplan for Ichi Valley"

"the Highland Design in North Harima"

"the Tamba-no-Mori Planning"

All these plans were settled on under the participation of residents. In order to promote the plans, organizations under the leadership of region have been established including the Tamba-no-Mori Foundation.

2. Case of the Tamba-no-Mori Foundation

Tamba District consists of one city; Sasayama and four towns; Kashiwabara, Ichijima, Kasuga and Aogaki. In this district, "Tamba-no-Mori Planning" is proposed to succeed to its tradition, views, fields and fertile environment and to activate the community and industry. The definition of Mori (forest) in this plan covers forests, fields, rivers, villages and the region as a whole. The design of "forests in zones", "forest of symbol" and "forests of network" was defined on in "Tamba-no-Mori Masterplan" and is about to be realized. Citizen organization called "the Tamba-no-Mori Foundation" has been established to promote the plan, and the prefectural park of Tamba-no-Mori was founded as a foothold of this project.

The activity, including the art creations with citizens participation, the community forestation, regional planning, etc. has been promoted in the whole region as its stage. "The Tamba-no-Mori

Foundation” is the organization under the leadership of regional community and is established with the active participation of citizens. In addition to the artistic and cultural activities, the foundation offers the opportunity for the environmental study. This is a case that citizens organization results in the close relationship and the opportunity of study which promotes the residential participation in the region.

As an example of the activities of the Tamba-no-Mori Masterplan, I would like to mention about the year-round project called “Satoyama Club” which is cosponsored by “Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Nature and Human Activities” to which I belong. The club aim is to help people and community experience and know more about Satoyama as the neighboring nature through playful activities or charcoal making and so on. In this project, more than 100 participants have joined in with the museum researchers and the park staffs, gather around the Satoyama in the Tamba-no-Mori park and enjoy the activities such as “playing in the forest”, “preparations for charcoal making”, “making charcoal”, “cooking and making crafts in Satoyama”. We can regard this project as the preparation step of the training of talented persons or foundation of organization for the administration and management of Satoyama.

In Hyogo Prefecture, the total planning under the leadership of citizens participation has been attempted in many regions. In Tamba district, citizen participation is discussed in the form of “Dream Vision in Tamba-no-Mori” in which the establishment of Eco-money or NPO is proposed by the residents.

3. Case of the Design for “the Idyllic Landscape Museum” in North Harima District

North Harima District, which is located in the

upper reaches of Kako River, consists of one city; Nishiwaki-shi and four towns; Naka, Kami, Yachiyo and Kurodasho. Its geographical use is mainly limited to the fields and forests. Last year, “the Basic Plan of the Idyllic Landscape Museum in North Harima”(Nishiwaki-shi, *et al.*, 1999) was proposed through citizens participation. Even though the realization of the plan needs much time, the preparation, like establishing the management groups, has been made in order to carry out the plan.

The concept of the “the Idyllic Landscape Museum” in North Harima is set in regard to the understanding and degree of establishment among citizens and is examined how the museum appeal to the regions outside of North Harima District. In addition, the idea “what will be found and amused by the visitors to the museum” is another issue to be considered. “There are similar museums everywhere but this is the museum where I can find exactly what I need to.” “I can appreciate the real affluence which is hard to be found in the city.” In this point, “the Idyllic Landscape Museum” is the Eco-museum that allows the independence of visitors: “It is you who find what you are looking for.” In other words, the museum encourages citizens to love and feel pride of their regions.

The following five points were discussed in the process of planning the ecologically-friendly museum:

- 1) The process through partnership needs to be emphasized.
- 2) The importance of the relationship between agricultural regions and cities is reconsidered in hope of making it enduring.
- 3) Continuous self-development system to be secured.
- 4) Eco-museum with broadband relationship” which allows such multiplex structures as Ichi-North Harima cooperation must be established.

5) The plan should cover not only the agricultural resources and measures but the regional resources including cultural and historical assets.

IV. CONCLUSION

There still remain problems in the regional planning. Restoration of reduced community relationship needs more attention and should be brought up to the environmental issues. On the other hand, the rural residential regions are confronted with the issues of the conservation of environment, activation of the community, aging, depopulation. It is impossible to consider the citizens organization and participation separately from these problems. Under the partnership among citizens, the administration and enterprises, it is essential to promote the close relationship between cities and farming areas and the measures to encourage the regional activation including economical aspects.

I would like to expect that such issues as community business and regional activation will be discussed more attentively and the emergence of

community organizations represented by NPO contribute to the citizens participation to the process of the regional planning.

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