

Outline of Uminonakamichi Seaside Park Development Project

- Urban Resort Area Development by the National Government -

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ABSTRACT

The Uminonakamichi Seaside Park is located in Fukuoka and extends over an area of 540 ha. This Park is directly developed and managed mainly by the national government for its use for recreational facilities serving a wide area. It is planned and developed as an urban resort-type park, exploiting the rich natural environment of the area, to serve urban residents in northern Kyushu. The management of the Park is jointly conducted by nine bodies, including the national government and private enterprises. The Park has several functions, ranging from an urban resort to conservation of the natural environment and education. The Park has so far been positively evaluated by its visitors. However, the social background for the Park is changing and the Park is now facing changing needs for this type of park, necessitating coordination with the development around the Park and a need to respond to the recent fiscal structural reform. Further improvement of the visitor services and the reconfirmation of the government's role in the development work are essential for the maintenance and enhancement of the attractions of this Park in the coming years.

Key Words : National government park, Conservation of the natural environment, Visitor services, Evaluation by visitors, Government's role

I. INTRODUCTION

In Japan, resort development is usually conducted by the private sector while the national government and/or local public bodies may provide assistance by developing such infrastructure as roads and the sewer system depending on their judgement regarding the need for such public assistance. Meanwhile, there are cases where the

national government and/or local public bodies are directly involved in the development of a resort through the creation of a park as a public facility.

The National Government Park Scheme officially introduced in 1976 enables the national government to be directly involved in the creation of a facility which can be used as a resort.

National government parks are those parks created and managed by the national government pursuant to the City Parks Act and there are two

importance of this unusual facility in sustaining local lifestyle and culture through becoming a symbol of the local citizens, a festival space and a place of social interaction should now be clear.

Key Words : Urban resort, World Cup Venue, Community, Hare and Ke, Local culture

I. INTRODUCTION

What is an urban resort? In society since the Industrial Revolution, cities have developed as places of production. In post-industrial society, however, the role of cities has certainly changed from being primarily places of production. In Japan this change is clear as well. Although, in a sense, the extremely productive society is a symbol of post-war Japan, that society which supported rapid economic growth began to become a consumer society in the late 1970s and Japanese began to seek lifestyles with more freedom. Since this shift, people have been thinking about places for recreation and leisure.

As a result of this, cities are also changing from places of intensive production to places of cultural service. In short, "service industries including tourism, education and leisure have become more important to the economy, extending it with extraordinary growth power through value added production"(TAKAYOSE, 1991). In this economic atmosphere, the idea of urban resort cities developed in Japan ten to fifteen years ago.

So, what is an urban resort? At that time the usual definition of an urban resort was a place vastly different from places of daily life such as a theme park or other tourist destination. For example, research by the Urban Resort Academic Society included "Preserves in urban and suburban areas" which simply compared them with more remote nature resorts and the "Appearance of urban recreation in combination, on larger scales, and

through improvement, specialization and direction" examining urban resorts from their formal elements(Urban Resort Academic Society, 1991).

At the same time, revival of the combination of usual and unusual spaces, in a way like the mixed "Hare"(Special occasion of public event) and "Ke"(Daily life) spaces of communities of old Japan, is part of the idea of urban resorts. "Reorganization should not be just the planning of culturally-related production in unusual, profit-making spaces and functions, but rather should be a combination and expansion of usual spaces that blend into the city and unusual spaces with the ability to draw people from both in and out of the city"(TAKAYOSE, 1991).

Regardless of the already outdated way of thinking about doing things on a large scale quoted above, the fundamental way of thinking about urban resorts, that they should be usual spaces that blend into the city, was already certain. Thus, if we are going to define urban resorts, they are places which start by making a comfortable urban environment for citizens, providing a daily life full of culture and promoting a city's identity to visitors.

II. STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF URBAN RESORTS

Urban resorts are a mixture of the usual and the unusual. There are expressions such as "lifestyle city," "interaction city" and "leisure city," but an urban resort city is made of a balance of these.

If we think about the kinds of structural

elements of urban resorts, the usual elements include community, local culture and industry, while the unusual elements include symbols, festivities and interaction.

1. From past eras, community has been the connection between people in a cooperative entity, but is community really a necessary part of an urban resort? In modern urban society in which the connections between people have become weak, it is not too extreme to say that community is half collapsed. Still, after the experience of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake Disaster, witnessing the solitary deaths of elderly who had lived alone, people have reawakened to the importance of community. This "coexistence," based in helping and living with each other is a fundamental element of a comfortable urban life. Community rebirth in cities is the most important element of urban resorts.

2. Local culture includes a wide variety of aspects from history, religion, sports and health to daily leisure. In the past these were deeply connected to local industry, but now there are also many things from outside the local culture. The more of these elements there are, the richer the living environment and the more lifestyle choices people have.

3. Then, there is industry, which gives vigor to a place. Even if industry only occupies a small part of an area, it creates a lot of activity for the people who live there and are involved in it. Workplaces create an area's scenery.

4. Symbols give a city landscape its most distinctive identity. They are also the common spirit of the community. Modern urban resorts are the identities of city themselves. For citizens they provide strongholds for the heart and for visitors they provide the very meaning of the city.

5. Festivities are annual events that are indispensable to the community. They reawaken the

connection to community and are the most public events of "Hare". Even in present day cities, there are celebrations and festivals. New Year's Day and other seasonal celebrations are vital to the urban lifestyle. Yet, though the spaces and festivities themselves are transforming into urban shapes, urban resorts have a significant meaning in providing this element of "Hare" along with community ("Ke").

6. Interaction is generally included in the meaning of community. Urban resorts must also have interaction with visitors. While this is hospitality to the visitors, it is also creates a special public place for citizens.

A successful urban resort can be achieved if these elements are fulfilled.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE KOBE STADIUM

Kobe Wing Stadium is a venue for the 2002 FIFA World Cup hosted by Korea and Japan. This is one of many new field sport stadiums being built in the two countries. The stadium is being built in

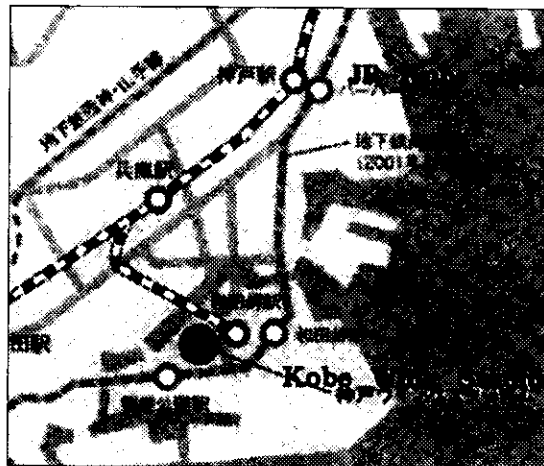


Figure 1. Location of Kobe Wing Stadium

the southern part of Kobe near the Hyogo-Tsu (Hyogo Port), which prospered through trade with China during the Sung Dynasty (Figure 1). After that the area experienced many ups and downs until the Meiji Period when intensive industry rapidly located in the area. Since the late 70s, however, with changes in the industrial structure, urban decay and problems associated with it became apparent and continue to this day.

In order to deal with local problems many local revitalization projects have been undertaken, including the construction of a subway line, streetscape improvement, residential environment improvement and redevelopment. Among these projects, the stadium is a major one and is expected to have a significant positive impact. Originally, a stadium was built in 1968 that included unusual features for the time including a natural grass playing field and lighting for night games. It was famous throughout the country and hosted many international events and such players as Pele and Maradona.

This magnificent stadium, however, was not very popular among the local residents. It was almost entirely used for professional events and the residents had no opportunity to use it. Furthermore, at popular events including the international games when the seats were filled, the noise of the fans, light pollution at night, illegal parking, littering and other problems caused the locals to think of it as an annoying facility. Over time the stadium decayed and suffered damage from the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake Disaster, so with the World Cup coming a replacement stadium was planned. While including hosting of the World Cup in the rebuilding statement of purpose, more emphasis was placed on use after the event is over. The stadium construction is intended to be a stimulus to revitalization of the whole area. The statement of purpose also proposes

transforming the stadium from being a local nuisance to being a facility that fosters the local area (Figure 2; Figure 3).

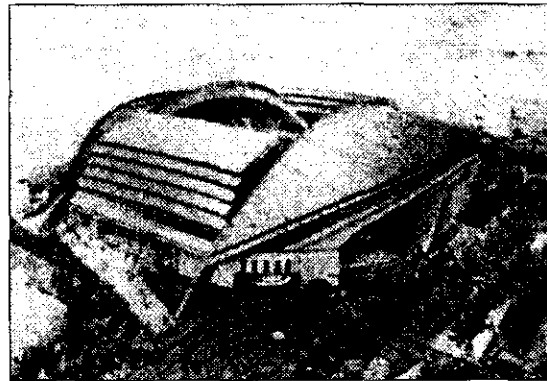


Figure 2. Perspective of Kobe Wing Stadium

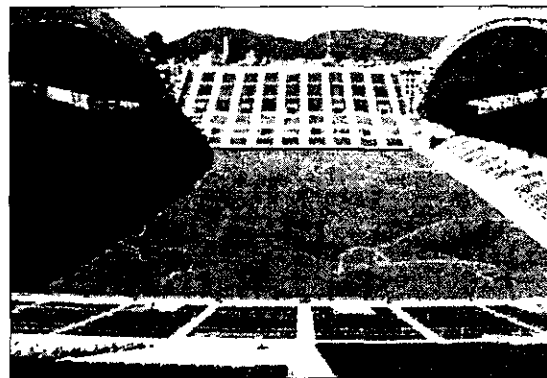


Figure 3. The inside of Kobe Wing Stadium

For that purpose, the methods chosen by Kobe is not the so-called PFI(Private Finance Initiative), but a public people's method. The city will build the stadium, but after construction management will be given over to private enterprise, hoping to utilize that sector's business know how. It is believed that in order to strive for management in which the stadium and the local area become unified, the government should not stand in between them, instead encouraging the maximum activation of the people's energy.

A competition was held to determine the private

executor who would be entrusted with the planning, design, construction and management of the project, considering the conditions of the area, the stadium's relationship to it and local revitalization. The competition was won by a private enterprise (Kobe Steel Obayashi Group). The theme of "Creation of a Sports Community Park" grapples with the large issue of the facility's relationship with the community.

They proposed a facility which not only includes a stadium for big events, but facilities under the stands including a pool, jacuzzi, fitness gym and studio that can be used by anyone regardless of age for health maintenance. In addition, a restaurant under the side stand provides a place for relaxation for local residents and will include a healthy menu. As far as programming is concerned, a local general sports club will be established with a system that allows locals to join sports and other healthy activities easily. Furthermore, consideration is being given to the possibility of management of the stadium park being entrusted to local citizens. Already local volunteers have gathered to discuss the way the park should be managed. A non-profit organization should be established to deal with these programs.

Already many sports groups are supporting the management of the general sports club, established with the name SCIX (Sports Community Intelligence Complex) and local volunteers are investigating the possibility of establishing an NPO for the management of the park.

IV. CAN THE STADIUM BECOME AN URBAN RESORT?

American geographer Yi-fu Tuan coined the word "topophilia" to indicate love of a place (John Bale, "Sport, Space and the City," Japanese

translation, 1993). No other word could better describe the desired urban resort nature of the stadium.

Looking at the history of soccer stadiums, we see that the sport was originally a type of competition between neighboring cities. In that sense, we could say that the cities were the stadiums. Over time stadiums came to be viewed as just facilities, but under the surface they are still sacred places, symbolizing their cities and becoming places of civic pride. The space of a stadium has the latent potential to become a place that inspires affection and familiarity. From this historical perspective, it seems that stadiums have great potential as urban resorts. The factor that will determine their success is the attitude of citizens toward them, in short whether they develop topophilia for them or not.

Let us now take a look at Kobe Wings Stadium. If we examine it for the urban resort elements mentioned above, its urban resort qualities will become clear. The first aspect is connection with the community. The previous stadium had a very thin relationship with the community, which is a reason why it got branded with the image of being a nuisance facility. The kind of functions that the stadium could have in daily life as a part of the local area has been considered and the result should unify the community. Furthermore, it is important that people think of it as "our stadium and our park." At present, as the stadium is under construction, the local community is examining the potential for community development with the stadium at its core. Although there are several neighborhood stakeholder groups, a community development association was formed which seeks to bring out the spirit of the area through pursuit of the ideas of a healthy community which uses the stadium and park, a community which manages the park itself,

visitors have expressed a desire to join the volunteers (particularly in the animal and plant-related fields).

IV. SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE PARK

1. Visitor Needs

The opinion survey conducted by the Cabinet Office found a strong need among the general public for recreational facilities near the place of living. There is also a strong call for the conservation of the natural environment.

The same tendencies are shown by the findings of the questionnaire survey on visitors to the Park. A closer look at the visitors reveals changing age groups and reasons for visiting the Park. One example is the increasing number of visits by disabled people. With the arrival of an aged, welfare-oriented society, the need for safe, pleasant spaces is expected to increase in the coming years.

2. Development Plan of Fukuoka Municipal Authority

The Fukuoka Municipal Authority is implementing a new urban development project by reclaiming part of Hakata Bay.

The site for this urban development is called "Island City" and covers an area of 400 ha. As it is planned to construct an industrial park together with many houses in this Island City, the Park may face different needs.

The construction of an access road to the Park via Island City is planned, significantly improving the access from central Fukuoka to the Park.

3. Administrative Reform and the Fiscal Structural Reform

Administrative reform has been in progress in Japan since the 1990's from the viewpoints of decentralization, deregulation and public enterprise evaluation.

1) Decentralization

Review of the divided roles of the central government and local public bodies and also the roles of the public and private sectors

2) Deregulation

Relaxation of regulations which impede economic activities in the private sector

3) Public enterprise evaluation

Cost benefit analysis of public projects

In recent years, the effects of public projects are strictly assessed from the viewpoint of facilitating the fiscal structural reform. Cost benefit analysis is usually conducted prior to, during and after a project. In the case of a park project, however, there is currently no viable technique to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of park use and its existence. Although many people question the usefulness of an attempt to quantify the effects of a park project, it is necessary to conduct such an exercise, i.e. quantification of the effects of a park project, against the background of the ongoing debate on the curtailment of public projects.

V. FUTURE TASKS

Given the social situation of the Park and the evaluation of the Park's performance so far, the following tasks are identified for the survival and further development of the Park in the future.

1. Consolidation of Visitor Services

1) Maintenance of its attractions and creation

of new attractions

- At present, the Park attracts a large number of visitors and is favourably evaluated by its visitors.

- Wider and well-planned publicity will be required together with the maintenance and enhancement of the present service standards.

- And new attractions should be added to the Park to respond to visitor needs

2) Steady number of visitors

Even though the number of visitors does not entirely determine the value of the Park, it is one of the most important evaluation factors. The existing attractions of the Park should be properly maintained and new attractions should be added to increase the number of visitors.

- Given the involvement of private enterprises in the management of the Park, the securing of a steady number of visitors is important for the business viability of these enterprises. Regular investment of a certain size into the Park will, therefore, be essential to create new attractions.

2. Role of National Government

The basic requirements of a national government park are that 1) it is beneficial from the viewpoint of the public, 2) it is worthy of preservation as a national asset and 3) it deserves to be carried out as a national policy. These

requirements are described in more detail below.

1) Continued conservation of the natural environment of Uminonakamichi

- The conservation of the natural environment is an important policy theme for Japan. The Park owes much of its attraction to the local natural environment and, therefore, the conservation of such natural environment is of critical importance.

- From the wide area viewpoint, the Park will occupy an important section of the greenbelt along Hakata Bay and the conservation of the natural environment of the Park will also be important to sustain the network of the local ecosystem.

2) Diversification of the Park's use

- The Park can be used in many different ways. Its use should be diversified in consideration of the various policy requirements of the national government to deal with such issues as lifelong education, an aging society and the expansion of public welfare.

3) Reduction of the development and management costs

- In the midst of the ongoing debate on the fiscal structural reform, a reduction of public investment is a major challenge for the present government. Further efforts will be required to reduce the development and management costs of the Park in the coming years.

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