

Construction of Kobe's World Cup Venue and the Development of an Urban Resort

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ABSTRACT

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. 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. And 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. 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. Kobe Wing Stadium is a venue for the 2002 FIFA World Cup hosted by Korea and Japan. 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.

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. American geographer Yi-fu Tuan coined the word "topophilia" to indicate love of a place. No other word could better describe the desired urban resort nature of the stadium. 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.

We examined the urban resort nature of Kobe Wing Stadium. Regarding daily life, we saw the attempts to revive the local community, the possibility of deepening the local culture and the weakened state of local industry. As a place that is for more than daily life, we saw the certainty of the stadium's symbolism, its potential as a place for festivities and the test it will face as a space for interaction.

Even though several issues are left for future resolution, evaluating Kobe Wing Stadium through these elements of an urban resort, it is clearly founded in the daily life of the community while providing a venue for "Hare" occasions. Fulfilling the roles of an urban resort, it provides many opportunities for local residents to enjoy their lives and gives visitors a reason to come repeatedly.

An urban resort is a form of urban community based in the enjoyment of culture. Moreover, the

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

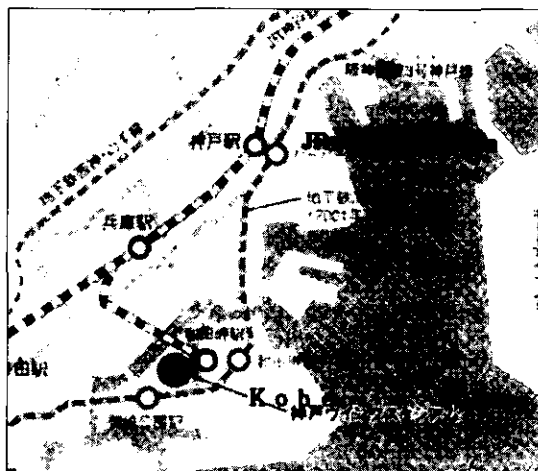


Figure 1. Location of Kobe Wing Stadium

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).

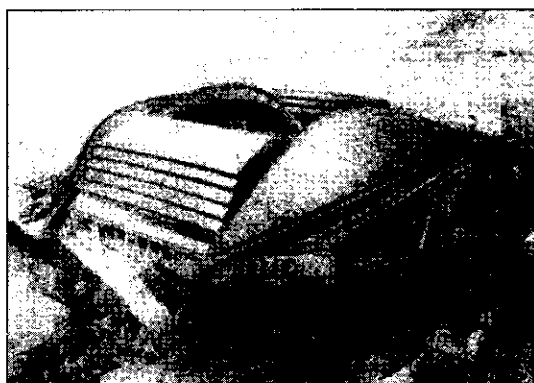


Figure 2. Perspective of Kobe Wing Stadium

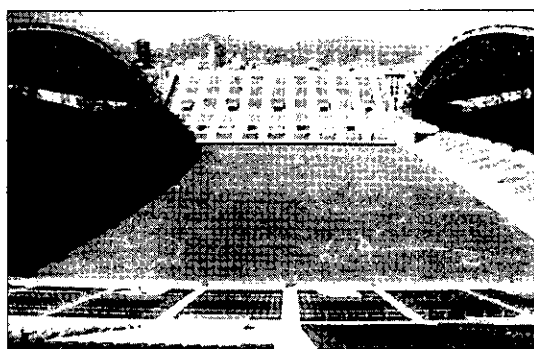


Figure 3. The inside of Kobe Wing Stadium

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, and a community of supporters of the professional

soccer team, Vissel Kobe, which will make the stadium its home. All of these local communities, big and small, are focused on the stadium making it a good example of an urban resort with community as its foundation.

The next aspect is local culture. A stadium is, of course, going to have sports as its central function and the activity of the community general sports club has a very meaningful role. In addition, the city of Kobe seeks to become an "athlete town," and the stadium's after sports care facilities will be at the core of the health development program. The park also has greenery, flowers and open space as well as historical remnants from the era of the Hyogo-Tsu (Hyogo Port). Finally, the canals and lumberyards in the landscape can be thought to have a deep connection with the area. A place rich in local culture seems to be promised.

How about industry? Even though heavy industry is still located in the area, the town itself has already broken away from this kind of industry and is looking for a new direction, but has yet to settle into a new one. Problems of the inner city are also deeply rooted. Given this condition can the stadium be of use? It is asked if the attraction of visitors to the stadium can have an effect on the local economy. Rather than occasional events, however, it is the daily activity of the stadium and the local area together that should be grappled with as a common issue. It must be said that this issue still includes many unknown quantities.

The symbolism of the stadium is without a doubt. To the community is both a place that inspires topophilia and its reverse, but as long as it is "our stadium" it will be a significant symbol of the community and the city. The design, lighting and the facility itself has symbolism and it can be said that it succeeds fairly well with its unique self-assertive form being visible from a distance that

blends into its surroundings as the viewer gets closer. How locals relate to the stadium and how it becomes their own symbol remains to be seen.

What kind of festivities will there be here? Big events that use the stadium for a "Hare" occasion are one type. Whether or not it becomes a sacred space, festivals can be expected to draw in the local community. If Vissel Kobe really blends into the local community, days with their matches will become local festival days. Furthermore, seasonal community festivals will use the park as a stage for "Hare" celebration (Figure 4).

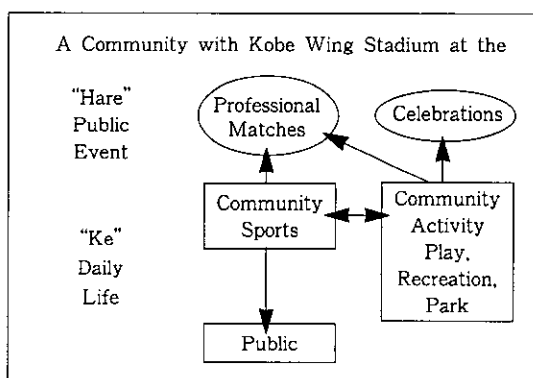


Figure 4. The urban resort quality of Kobe Wing Stadium and Misaki Park

If the community becomes more active, interaction will become prosperous naturally. Here interaction with people from outside the community will also be important. How visitors to the stadium are treated will determine whether they return for repeat visits, a key to make the community more active and prosperous. For community development it is important that visitors should not come just for a sporting event, but also to see the neighborhood and enjoy interacting with the local residents. Interaction increases the depth of the local culture and enhances the sense of hospitality. If interaction with outsiders is lively then it will really become an urban resort. Even now this has already begun.

Even though several issues are left for future resolution, evaluating Kobe Wing Stadium through these elements of an urban resort, it is clearly founded in the daily life of the community while providing a venue for "Hare" occasions. Fulfilling the roles of an urban resort, it provides many opportunities for local residents to enjoy their lives and gives visitors a reason to come repeatedly. The urban resort quality of Kobe Wing Stadium and Misaki Park is depicted in this diagram(Figure 4).

V. CONCLUSION

We saw how an urban resort is a form of urban community based in the enjoyment of culture. Moreover, the 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. Furthermore, we examined the urban resort nature of Kobe Wings Stadium as a venue for the

world's biggest sporting event, the World Cup.

Regarding daily life, we saw the attempts to revive the local community, the possibility of deepening the local culture and the weakened state of local industry. As a place that is for more than daily life, we saw the certainty of the stadium's symbolism, its potential as a place for festivities and the test it will face as a space for interaction. While contending with many issues still, it can be said that it is ready to become an urban resort. As you think about the relationship of the many new stadiums that have been built with their cities and their potential as urban resorts, I hope that you will think about the example of Kobe Wing Stadium.

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