

The New Public Realm Shaping Street Landscape

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To compare with the European cities, the consciousness of the private land owners is rather forcing private freedom right than contributing public landscape. This is the reason why the Japanese townscape is in the chaos. In this case study at Kogane, I want to focus on the private garden contributing for street landscape. The idea of new word “Niwaroju” is to use the landscape of the private garden of the view from the street more attractive in place of planting trees lining a public street.

According to the trees growing, there are branches of trees hanging over the fence and sidewalk. The trees of plum and cherry blossom show the pleasant landscape in spring, the green leaves of big trees give the shadow on the side walk in summer, the leaves of ginkgo and maples show the colorful pictures as like as gallery corridor, together with persimmon and other fruits, and oranges gives mellifluous scenery in the dry winter season. From the interview research, the maintenance of the garden is not so easy for aged owners nowadays and costs lot, but the owners have pride to keep it beautiful and are honored if the people watch their garden from the street. There are several cases of the garden playing a role of extending human communication.

Gradually the idea of “Niwaroju” **has been** accepted from the people, through the interview research and workshops. The first case of making a pocket park using the private car port has also played a great role to encourage the people to contribute for the improvement of the townscape by using their private properties, as reported at last Pacific Rim conference.

In 2006, we had tried also the workshop to extend the idea of “Niwaroju” with children and land owners. In this session, I want to discuss about the process to encourage the land owners to be conscious of the border area between the sidewalk and private garden as a new public realm, and the issues for involving private gardens into the new public realm.

1.Introduction

The typical Japanese townscape of residential area is composed of private single houses and gardens along the street making some fences or walls stand between the street and private lands. The edge of the private space facing the public space has a meaning of a kind of public role. Even though the fence is standing at private area, the surface of the fence has a public meaning to consider that it shapes a part of the public street landscape. It may be a common idea in European historical towns that the façade of the building has the public role for shaping townscape. To compare with the European cities, the consciousness of the private land owners is rather forcing private freedom right than contributing public landscape.

This is the reason why the Japanese townscape is in the chaos. However there was an old traditional common sense to make a harmony with neighbors as the way of

community lives. But this kind of community mind became weakened under the modernization age for rapid economic development which brought a kind of material consumption society. And also the residential site has changed from open to **close**, like enclosing by concrete blocks wall which is seen everywhere. According to this transformation, the communication between neighbors has been decreasing and as a result it brought some other issues such as weakness of defense ability against crime, mutual support for social welfare, etc.

Is the public realm limited within the street area? Is there any function concerning the public issues from the private land along the street? What would be the role of the edge at private land facing the public space under today's situation? Is there any function as a middle area between public and private land such as semi-public or semi-private? May we consider these semi-public and semi-private area as a new public realm? To think about these issues, I will focus on the area between street and private land using the idea of "Niwa-Roju".

2. The idea of NiwaRoJu

"NiwaRoJu" is the new idea which was created through the students studio works of community design at the field of Kogane District where we have been working for several years as a field study¹. "GaiRoJu" in Japanese means "trees lining a street". "NiwaRoJu" is a kind of words play, in contrast to the word "GaiRoJu", "NiwaRoJu" means the idea to using the trees ("Ju") at private garden ("Niwa") along the street ("Ro"). It is actually not only trees nor gardens but also other plants like flowers and vegetables at private lands which may include also car parking place, to contribute improving town landscape. For instance, according to the trees growing, there are branches of trees hanging over the fence and sidewalk. The trees of plum and cherry blossom show the pleasant landscape in spring, the green leaves of big trees give the shadow on the side walk in summer, the leaves of ginkgo and maples show the colorful pictures as like as gallery corridor, together with persimmon and other fruits, and oranges gives mellifluous scenery in the dry winter season. These greens have the function contributing for shaping street landscape.

There are many streets which width are not enough for planting trees lining a street. Then in place of planting trees on the street, if we could use such a contribution composing townscape from private land along the street by trees, hedge, flowers or any vegetation, it would be a kind of new public realm as a landscape replacing trees lining a street.

However there are still some barriers to use the private landscape for public realm, such as concrete blocks wall and other hard and high walls standing between the street and private gardens. The idea of the "NiwaRoJu" is to break through the barriers, such as opening a hole in the wall, making it transparent, lowering the height of the wall, etc. to empower the relationship between the street and private greeneries.

This idea means not only the physical environment, but also the idea to involve people and empower the relationship of the people to the public realm.

都市建築の原型『庭路樹』とは

現在の都市は、発展効率のみ考え都市化が加速し利便性、合理性、機能性のみを追求することを重視した計画により、均一で画一的なものとなった。
 その解決の方法を、街路樹でたえたものが右図である。

新しい都市建築の原型として、我々は、『庭路樹』を提議する。一私有地の、公へのしみだしにより、街路樹に代わる豊かな公共空間の創出で、緑豊かな公共空間へ。

対象地：松戸市小金地区にしたのは

それはどこにでもありそうな郊外住宅地であり、以下の問題をかかえ、なおかつ外観を一般向くその地域らしさが表れる点もモデルとして相応しいからと考えたからである。

1 旧水戸街道の宿場町の景観の崩壊と商店街衰退

江戸時代は、宿場町として栄えていた松戸市小金地区 (写真①)

1990年代の小金原団地開発時に商店街として建てたが現在は空き店舗や空地が点在。どのまちにも共通する問題であるように商店街衰退の危機を迫っている



2 地割の変化・建て詰まりと緑地の減少

江戸時代から続く短冊状の敷地割、旧宿場町時代の自給自足の資源供給源の畑や屋敷林などの緑地

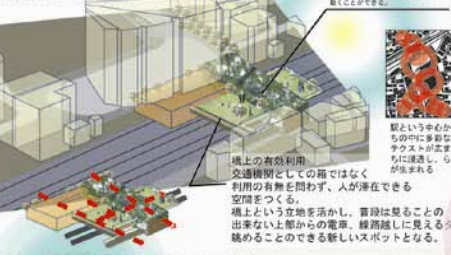
昭和15年当時
 現在の同じ場所
 まちなみ
 前庭を構えた屋敷へ変化、敷地の分筆の進行がすすみ、建て詰まりなどにより部分的に残った空地が点在する状態となっている。



対象地に庭路樹を応用すると...

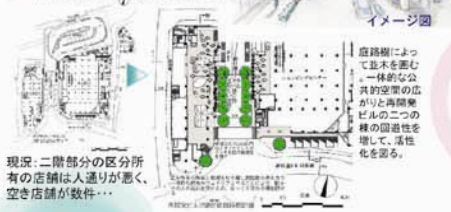
1. 駅では南と北の町をつなげる。

参道の入り口からのシークエンスの並木道を鉄道の橋上利用広場に、新たな価値の付随。それは、まちの歴史を象徴し、線路によって分断された南北のつながりを再生するみちを再生するみち。片側まちから両側まちへ...



2. 再開発ビルでは庭路樹で活性化

区分所有にとられないカフェテラス



3. 交差点は辻広場化

ハンブによる交通抑制、四つ角樹化



3 鉄道によって北と南に地区が分断 再開発によって歴史的場所性が一変

旧水戸街道が折れ曲がる辻からは日蓮宗三山の一つの本土寺(800年の歴史を有し、今日はあじさいと紅葉が季節観光地となっている)の参道が北に伸びている。

1896年の鉄道の開通はその参道を切り、地区の北と南を分断し、南側は開発が進み、北側は参道側面に農地が残る。片側町となった。(写真②)

駅南側の市街地再開発事業(1992年完了)はさらに参道の入り口脇にあった神社を移転させ、街道の辻と参道入り口となる重要な場所の性格を一変させてしまった。

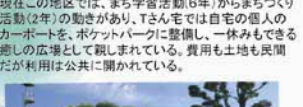
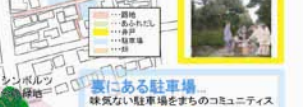
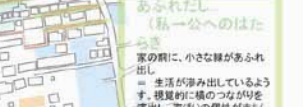
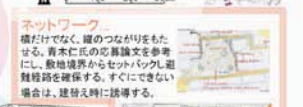
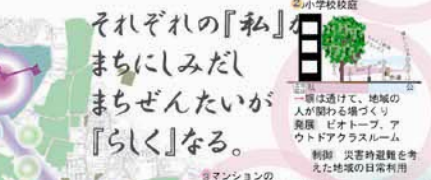


Fig 1 The idea of NiwaRoJu (proposal at the AIJ competition 2005, Honorable Mention)

In the novel of “Utopia”ⁱⁱ, Sir Thomas More described about the ideal city Utopia using the tale spoken by the fictional traveler Raphael Hythloday at the volume 2 chapter 2 about the city Amaurot as following.

The people in the “Utopia” take the best care of garden. In the area there are vineyard in the center and other fruits, vegetable and flowers. People have experiences trained in the country farm for a couple years so that they could manage their garden. They are competing the beauty of their garden.

It is very interesting that the origin of the Utopia is explained as the city which residents like to do gardening. Howard’s idea of “Garden City” used the word Garden as a representative of the life in country side but this image might be the quotation of the description in the More’s Utopia.

In Edo era, the downtown in the capital city Edo(Tokyo) was said a kind of garden cityⁱⁱⁱ which was composed of small garden and potted plant by townhouses. In Edo era people enjoyed the different plant market like the Asagao Ichi (Morning Glory Market) at Iriya, Hoozuki Ich (Ground Cherry Market) at Asakusa, etc. to see, buy and bring at home. The people from country side came to live in downtown Tokyo, and they made their neighborhood of houses and streets by themselves together with planting vegetables at vacant lots as their original way of farming lives^{iv}. The landscape might be as if garden city at that time.

The idea of “NiwaRoJu” may play a role to empower the people again for making today’s garden city, if we could break through the boundary of the public street and the private garden.

3. The case of the Takahashi- House Pocket Park

The case of Takahashi-house pocket park was already reported at the previous Pacific-Rim conference^v. It is an amazing case that the private land which area formerly had been a car port was designed and rebuilt opened to public as a pocket park through students’ studio works involving primary school kids. The owner Mr. Takahashi was encouraged to realize the Design & Build introduced through the collaborative design studio of the global classroom of UW and Chiba University students which was held in 2003. He paid all costs for materials and Chiba University students and primary school children worked for the construction. The land is privately owned but it is open to public, therefore it may be a type of new public realm.

This idea to re-use a car port opened to public as a rest space might be a good idea to consider that the society is



Photo1 &2 Before & After of Takahashi House pocketpark

getting to high aged society. If the people will get too old to drive a car, they may not need anymore the car port. If the car port would be opened to be used as a rest space for pedestrians, it would be very helpful for the aged people walking on the street because they might need any place to sit down every short distance according to their foot condition.

The residents along the street were very much encouraged by this Takahashi House Pocket Park to do something for the street townscape. The organization for the community development (Kogane No Machi Wo Yokusuru Kai “Yokusuru Kai”) had proposed to the prefecture office to remove the telegraph poles along the street and put the cable line underground. This proposal was accepted by the prefecture and the feasible research has been conducted in 2005. On the other hand, the Yokusuru Kai had been organizing the workshops for making the design guideline by the residents’ participatory process and completed to print it in 2005. In this guideline, the idea of “NiwaRoJu” was introduced to encourage the other landowners to extend this idea at their private land.

4. For the extension of the idea of “NiwaRoJu”



Photo 3 Before the Wrapping



Photo 4 After the Wrapping

In 2006, the workshop series have been held to make a vision of the street townscape using the idea of “NiwaRoJu”. Mainly four workshops were held taken part by children of junior high school and primary school together with the residents along the street. The first workshop was “Drawing a Future Vision”. The second workshop was to make the idea to replace the concrete blocks. The third one was the experiment to cover the concrete blocks walls between the street and private gardens by the green color

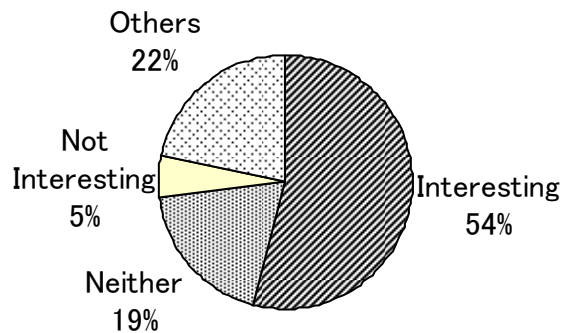


Fig. 2 Reaction of the pedestrians about the experiment of Wrapping

sheets for a couple weeks, to check the scenery if the concrete blocks walls were replaced to hedges and to know the reaction of the people. The reaction of the people was not bad, but not so strongly approved. The reason might be that the simulation had not succeeded to reappear 100 % of reality of hedges. However this event was useful to make the residents conscious of and think about their townscape. The final workshop was making the model and synthesizing the different ideas by evaluating each idea.



Photo 5 The final workshop making vision through the

5. The situation of each garden and some opinions from the land owners.

The interview research was conducted to each private garden owner along the street about the management of the garden and consciousness concerning the townscape. The samples were 35 lots of private garden. 10 Students of Chiba University have been working for it together with 2 faculties. The interview was taken 1 – 2 hours each, by watching, drawing, asking, listening and noting. The boundary such as fence, hedge or wall between the street and each private garden is different, which could be classified by these following items: penetrative – opaque, low-high, natural – artificial. The trees overhanging over the boundary to the pavement, symbolic trees which were seen from pedestrian side were checked.

The old clan families have the long history of the garden. The most garden was made in Japanese traditional garden style, which composed of stones, rocks, well maintained trees cut by the gardener. For the maintenance of the garden, the owners usually spend from 1 to 5 million Yen per year by paying the gardeners. The good maintenance of the garden was necessary to show the guest. If it was not kept in good condition, it means the shame of the owner. But today's young generations don't put the worth on the garden, then they like to make it change to western grass garden or otherwise to change it as an apartment house for the scheme of the tax reduction considering future inheritance tax.

The problem of the garden management is that aged people is living alone or by couple and has to maintain the garden hardly if they will not able to pay for the gardener and has to do by him/herself. This kind of situation of the private garden has happened increasingly recently and will be more in the near future.

For one case, there is the garden of special form which was made by the old woman by her taste. The trees were planted by her with buying at the traditional green market at the temple every year for last 40 years. After she died, the garden has been maintained by her husband alone. From the interview to him, it was revealed that he started the gardening work after she had died, and the garden was the real memory of his wife. In this meaning the garden has the personal history and situating within the private world. Now it may be no problem if he will be able to work for gardening so long as he will be good condition. But if he will not be able to work any more by some health condition, how shall we manage the gardening work? If the site is not open to public, it may be difficult to get any support from the public. Though the memory of the trees and plants of the garden is very private one, shouldn't it be disturbed by the introduction to the public work? From the context of the personal history of the human relationship with the plants, the plants will have the special value. How can we make the bridge between this personal realm and the public realm? It may be the subject for the idea of "NiwaRoJu".



Fig. 3 Samples of Students Survey at each Garden

In the other case, this following episode was heard. The old woman when we met for the interview had just come back a few days ago from the hospital for the operation removing cancer of the breast. There has been the gardening place for her in this house garden, which has been called "Grand Ma garden". Chrysanthemums of different colors and types are planted in this garden. In its blossom season it was very attractive for the pedestrians walking sidewalk. The fence between the sidewalk and the garden is very low. Therefore the rich communication between the strangers walking on the sidewalk and the Grand Ma had often happened. But the period of the Grand Ma's absent at her garden for a while brought some anxiety to the people walking by. That was the reason why she re-started her gardening work as soon as she came back from the hospital.

At the interview time, she explained how the garden gave her plentiful communication getting to know many people, such as the photographer who gave her suddenly the beautiful photo pictures of her garden taken the picture of the beautiful blossoms of Chrysanthemums.

There is a case also for the communication by gardening which the owner set the bench in front of her garden. In this way, the open type of the boarder line between street and private garden contribute to empower the human communication.

From the interview and watching research at each garden, these following tendencies are found:

- 1) Former type of gardening was the Japanese style garden, which costs a lot for the maintenance for the maintenance done by the gardeners. These activities have been leaded by men of the housemaster. These Japanese style garden is closed to inside of each garden surrounded by walls. But there are several trees which we can be see from street side and be pleased with the seasonal blossoms like plum, cherry, etc.
- 2) Nowadays there are several change of vegetation of the garden introducing Western garden, like English garden. These gardening are mostly leaded by women by themselves. These gardens are shown to outside often to be seen from the street with lowering fence.
- 3) There is a historical context which the vegetation at each garden has the relationship with the plant (green) market which is held once a year as a traditional event at the temple for long time more than a hundreds years to buy and plant at their own garden. Now these trees grew old which same species and age are seen.
- 4) Narrative story which the owner has any attachment to the garden may be attractive to be shared for bringing any support for the maintenance of the garden, to consider the maintenance work will be hard under high aged community.

6. Proposals by students for NiwaRoJu

After these surveys, students had proposed their idea to break through the hard surface of the boarder line between the street and private garden as a realization of the idea “NiwaRoJu”. The idea was different 10 types focusing on the fence, gate, green ornament, open garden, from easy way to complicated way. After students made the presentation to the residents, the residents had chosen their favorite one



Fig.4 The Proposal by students (Communication)

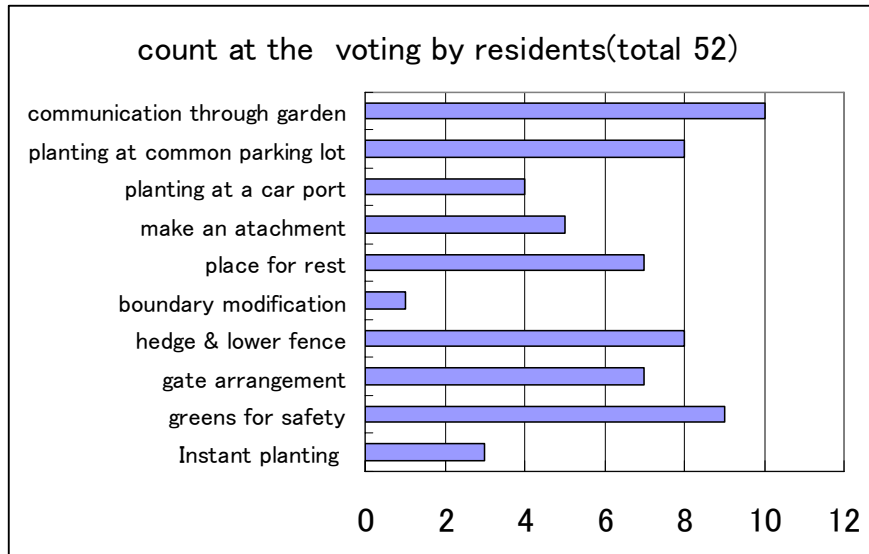


Fig.5 The result of the voting by the residents to the students' proposal about "NiwaRoJyu"

among the ten proposals. The best one which was selected by the residents was the idea titled "Communication through the gardens"(Fig.4, 5).

It means that residents approve the idea to empower communication using their gardens. To consider that the idea for safety and hedge & lower fence are sustained at next level, people like to enhance the human relationship. In this meaning the idea of "NiwaRoJu" could be supported to extend the idea to open the private realm for the new public realm.

7. Conclusion

"NiwaRoJu" is the new word and idea to use the private garden to contribute the improvement of townscape and street environment in place of GaiRoJu. There are two factors of recent trend to enable this idea. One is the recent mode of the western (English) garden which has enhanced the consciousness of the residents (mainly women) to show the private garden to outside rather than the Japanese garden which used to be shown inside within the relationship of the house room and garden, and closed to the street. The other is that the trees have grown up to be seen from the street composing an important role of townscape while some trees are hanging over the sidewalk even though those are mostly from the Japanese style gardens. The species of trees are similar because of the history of the plant market which has been held once a year at the temple for long time. The narratives of each garden and owner shows the background of human attachment to the plants and garden and it may become the human factors to make original townscape of NiwaRoJu and the collaboration of the people for its maintenance if those private narrative could be shared in the community. NiwaRoJu may be in the boundary area between public and private realm, but if it could be shared more in the public meaning it would be a new public realm for community enhancement.

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ⁱⁱ More, Thomas (1516) (translated in Japanese by Masao Hirai 1957) Utopia, Iwanami Publisher

ⁱⁱⁱ Kawazoe, Noboru(1979) “Tokyo No Genfukei Toshi To Denen No Koryu (Original Landscape of Tokyo – Interaction of City and Country” NHK Publisher

^{iv} Yanagida, Kunio (1929) City and Country, Asahi-Newspaper Publisher

^v Hou, Jeffrey • Kinoshita, Isami, (2004) : Negotiating Community Differences: Participatory Planning in International District, Seattle and Kogane District, Matsudo 、 The 5th pacific Rim Conference on Participatory Community Design 2004 Seattle, Proceedings, (Re)Constructing Communities, Jeffrey Hou, Mark Francis, Nathan Brightbill ed. Center for Design Research UCA Davis, 128-134