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Since Meiji Restoration in 1867, Japanese people have strove in many ways in order to create a modern society. It enabled us to overcome the devastating damage on social and economic systems after World War II and achieve amazing economic growth. Although some may not agree, the central government has played an important role in the reconstruction process, and it is responsible, in large part, for the economic prosperity of today's Japan.

In the field of city planning, the central government also has played a large role through those times. Major planning policy in Japan before the war was to create a capital that symbolized the power of Japanese Government, or to build urban infrastructure that will last for "one hundred years." Those policies were carried out under the strong leadership of the central government. Local governments were merely a delivering body of central government programs, and citizens' voices were hardly heard.

After WWII, a law was passed that established the system of local governance, but Japanese people had to wait until 1969, which was at the peak of high economic growth period, for decision making powers to

be actually delegated to local governments.

During the high economic growth period, the urbanization in three major metropolitan areas --- Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya--- progressed rapidly. In order to control suburban sprawl and confusion of land uses in those areas, the central government set unified regulatory rules and guided the local governments. Besides, financial aid from the central government was very crucial for local governments in order to develop industrial base, which was highly needed at the time. Through this high economic growth period, Japan faced the urgent issues of urbanization and industrialization; it forced close working relationship between central and local government to be formed, and the system that enabled such close relationship was developed.

After the two oil crises, Japanese economy had moved into a period of stable growth. As the speed of urbanization lessened, people's interest moved to more immediate surroundings, like living environment, historical heritage, and natural environment. Many progressive attempt in city planning were made by various local governments, and those attempts began to influence the central government policy.

Today, many agree that political and economic system that is lead by a strong central government cannot cope with issues today's societies have, and demand for decentralization is high. Similarly, decentralization is now a very important issue in the field of city planning. However, the present planning system has been fostered through a long relationship between central and local governments, and immediate change will not occur. We need to have a long-term view to deal with the questions: How can we better our cities and rural areas? What is the best system in achieving those goals? How citizens and private corporations should be involved in decision making process? Huge issues lie in front of us. Following articles will feature on those issues.

Decentralization of City Planning Administration

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Under the decentralization policy adopted by Japanese Government, the administrative system of national and local government is under review. The purpose of the decentralization policy is to promote formation of unique and vital regional societies by increasing discretionary powers of local governments. Since the Decentralization Act was passed in 1995, a series of discussion and consultation regarding city-planning administration has also taken place, followed by phased revisions of related laws and codes. A part of the revisions has already been implemented in November 1998.

Main foci of revisions regarding city planning included the following: reassignment of decision making bodies, due process (whether approvals by higher governments are required or not), the roles of central and local governments, and the roles among local governments (the Japanese local government system is a bilayer system, composed of prefectures and municipalities.)

The 1968 City Planning Act delegated all decision making powers to local governments (the law allows the central government to practice its power over local governments in very exceptional cases, but it has never been done.) Therefore, the ongoing review does not interfere with the very foundation of the present system. However, the review is important in a sense that, in the process of reviewing and discussing the foundation of general administrative system, particularly deep attention was paid to the city-planning administration as a main branch that is concerned with developing regional societies.

One large change regarding the general administrative system caused by the review is discontinuance of "agency-delegated functions". The agency-delegated functions are a type of prefecture's administrative jobs, in which prefectural governors work as an agency of the national government. This system has been used widely in Japanese administrative laws, including city-planning laws. By doing away with this, what has been "decisions made by the prefecture and approved by the national government" will change to "decisions made by the prefecture, with consultation and agreement of the national government."

From a legal point of view, this change is very fundamental, but it will not cause dramatic change because prefectures in large part have been working quite independently. However, because the revision extends the terrain of independence for local governments, it will, in the long run, certainly cause gradual change in the administrative system and how policies are carried out.

For city-planning administration, the revisions focused on two points: (1) municipalities should be the central bodies in city-planning administration, and (2) higher governmental organizations, like the national government and prefectures, should clarify the purpose and limit the extent of interference. In other words, the revisions emphasized and reinforced the role of municipalities, a body which is closest to local people and most aware of the local situation. Municipalities are thus acknowledged as the best organizations to realize the purpose of decentralization. And for the higher governmental organizations, they are to refrain from "supervising as guardians," the role they played when city planning was still in its developing stage.

Furthermore, city-planning administration deals with very wide range of people's lives, from hedge around houses to interregional highways. Therefore, in each city planning decision, every-day point of view, like creating townscape or better living environment, and regional and national point of view should be adjusted properly.

Taking this into consideration, the revision reassigns decision-making powers appropriate for each level of governments. Now decisions made by prefectures are limited only to inter-municipal matters; all the rest are delegated to local municipalities, thus enlarging the discretionary power of municipalities. Also, matters that require approval of the national government is limited to regional issues and matters that directly interfere with national interest.

Looking at roads for example, prefectures are now responsible for highways, national road, prefectural road, and roads with four or more lanes (used to include roads with width of 16m or more). And out of those, highways and national road (it used to include prefectural road with width of 16m or more) are going to require approval of the Secretary of Construction. For land use district (= basic zoning of building use and density), prefectural decision and national approval are now limited only to the three major metropolitan areas (used to include cities with population of 250,000 or more.)

The impact of the revisions can be seen through numbers. The percentage of decisions made by municipalities is estimated to rise from 60% to 75% of all city-planning decisions, whereas decisions made by prefectures will drop from 40% to 25%. Decisions that require national government approval will drop from 20% to 10%.

In addition, a bill proposing amendments to the Local Governance Act will be laid before the Diet in the spring of 1999. The bill is going to propose such revisions like discontinuance of delegated agency functions in city planning, authorization of city planning commissions of municipalities (at present, only those of prefectures have legal base), and enlargement of discretionary powers for entitled cities (cities with approximately 1 million population or more).

City Planning System in the Period of Decentralization

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Movement of Community-based Planning

City planning in Japan has been carried out according to nationally set standards. It is possible for local governments to create an “ordinance,” but subjects of the ordinance are limited only to matters “delegated by national laws,” and creating ordinances that go beyond the framework of national laws is not allowed. In other words, Japanese planning system does not allow flexible uses to respond to different local situations.

To supplement such deficiency in the system, local governments, since the 1968 City Planning Act, have practiced self-autonomy right based on the Constitution and have created “local ordinances.” The local governments had to supplement the local planning outside the framework of the national statutory city planning system.

In recent years, the role of those “local ordinances” is growing more important, decentralization movement serving as a tailwind. Until recently, “local ordinances” were only a passive statement which stayed within the framework of the national laws. However, starting in the 1980’s, ordinances that aims for “regional planning that responds to the local situation and with extensive public involvement” began to appear, and those ordinances went

beyond the framework of the national laws. By looking at those ordinances, three major trends are perceptible.

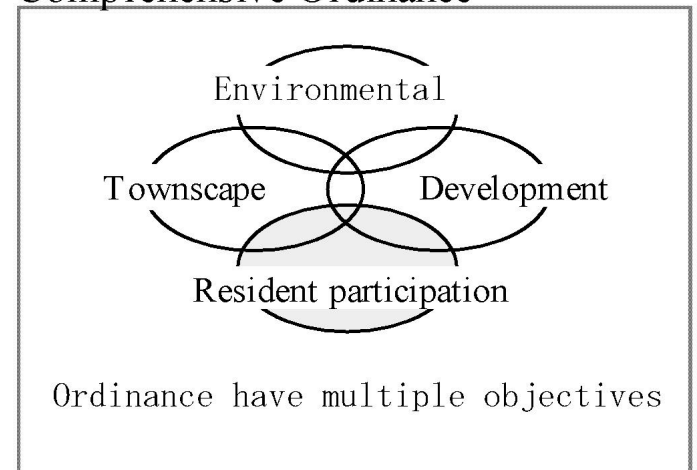
(1) Comprehensive Planning

Those ordinances have multiple objectives and try to take comprehensive approach in achieving those objectives. They deal with wide range of matters, from natural environment, historical and cultural heritage, to social welfare. They are also characterized by provisions that:

- call for cross-sectional discussion,
- control matters that are concerned with several laws, and
- require extensive public involvement.

Conventional administrative system has been ruled by strong sectionalism. In addition, national laws only allow dealing with problems within the jurisdiction of each law. Such situation set the background for those local ordinances to come about. In other words, the mechanism created by those ordinances requires cross-sectional adjustment and various laws to be utilized comprehensively; therefore, they sometime even require a change in organizational structures of the local government. The ordinances enable planning that responds to specific local situations and to meet the diverse needs of local people by taking comprehensive approach.

Comprehensive Ordinance



(2) Planning with Common Goals

Those ordinances set common goals in order to promote planning by the citizens. By -clarifying roles and responsibilities of government and citizens, and

-setting norms for related programs, they function to reorganize the complex system of related city planning programs. By setting common goals, they try to promote community planning and building through cooperation of government and citizens. And by simplifying the related programs, which tend to become complicated, they try to make planning more easily understood by citizens. Thus, the ordinances set basis for each regional administration to be achieved through democratic process.

people to be actively involved in the planning process.

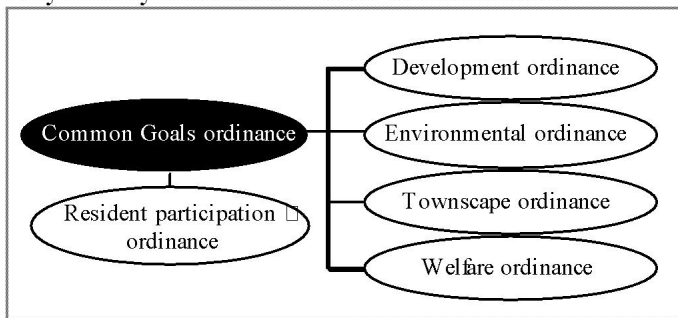
Creating New Planning System

By looking at the major trends of the local ordinances, we can see that local areas, although still in trial-and-error stage, are developing unique systems for planning. Those movements reflect the actual situation of regional planning administration and provide implication for a model for decentralized planning system.

On the other hand, the importance of “decentralization” also began to be emphasized at the national level. So now, a turn from “planning by nationally set standards” to “planning based on specific regional situation and with the involvement of local people” is promoted. However, the measures taken are limited to creating “District Plans” or increasing delegation of administrative powers, and they do not go beyond the framework of present planning system. No prospect is shown regarding what role the local ordinances are going to take in the present system.

Like many other countries, Japan also needs to turn its head from the center to the local level. In that process, it is important to recognize the implications made by the “local ordinances” and to acknowledge the roles they have taken.

A system by Ordinance with Common Goals



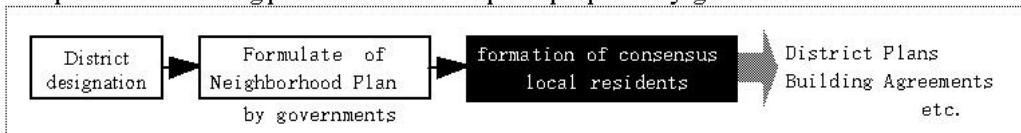
(3) Neighborhood Planning

The ordinances create system of neighborhood planning in order to match neighborhood situations more closely. For example, the ordinances include provisions that:

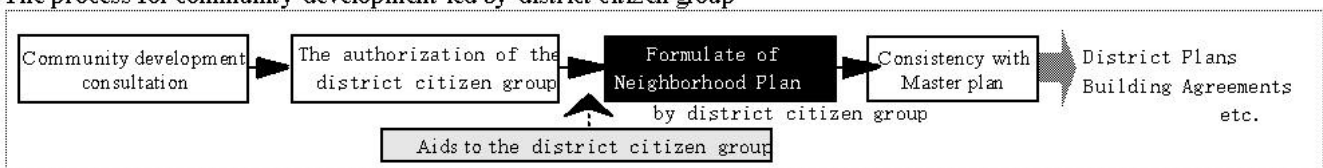
- explain the process for forming public consensus on plans proposed by governments, or
- enable plans made by citizens to be adopted officially, with provisions for financial and technical assistance.

Tools like “District Plans” and “Building Agreements” created by national laws also deal with neighborhood-level planning and incentive system, but those do not fit to provincial situations. Furthermore, they do not include provisions that lead community-made plans to be officially adopted. Neither actual method nor assistance is stated in the laws. Therefore, the need became high for “local ordinances” that enabled local

The process for forming public consensus on plans proposed by governments



The process for community development led by district citizen group



Machizukuri Ordinances with Provisions for Citizen Participation

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In recent years, ordinances regarding community-based planning are established in many local governments. However, the aims of these ordinances vary, from improving living environment to conserving historical heritage or landscape, or targeting at welfare, road, or transportation.

This report looks particularly at ordinances that are concerned with framework and due process for realizing community-based planning. The report will referred to them as “machizukuri ordinances,” and explain their recent trend with some examples, paying special attention on the provisions for citizen participation.

1. Background of Machizukuri Ordinances

The major factor that machizukuri ordinances became popular is the limitation of the Development Control Outlines, which were originally used to control sprawls of unplanned development and land use. These outlines were used to supplement the City Planning Act, but by establishing the machizukuri ordinances, local governments aimed to make clear the will and reinforce legal grounds for their guidance.

On the other hand, by the introduction of District Plans, citizen participation in community planning became more and more emphasized, and the governments were urged to make a new system for citizen participation, instead of former top-down government system.

2. The Promotion of Citizen Participation and Machizukuri

The main focus of citizen participation in the machizukuri ordinances is to promote community-based planning and building process, such as development control and conservation of the environment, with citizens' voluntary actions and cooperation. This is achieved through “fostering residents' groups,” “creating District Plans,” and “clarifying the democratic due process.”

In one common pattern of machizukuri ordinances, a local government authorizes machizukuri organizations, which are to make a general district plan. The plan is then proposed to the government to be adopted officially.

Then, with the cooperation of residents and the government, community building based on the general plan is promoted.

Some of the typical examples of such machizukuri ordinances are Kobe City Machizukuri Ordinance (1982), Setagaya Machizukuri Ordinance (1982, revised in 1995), Kakegawa City Lifelong Education Machizukuri and Landuse Ordinance (1992), Manazuru Machizukuri Ordinance (1994), Toyonaka Machizukuri Ordinance (1994), and Kamakura Machizukuri Ordinance (1997).

3. Originalities of Local Governments

Those Machizukuri Ordinances are similar in their basic aims of promoting community planning and building through fostering of citizen organizations, but at the same time, each has its uniqueness.

Here, I will explain briefly about two cases, Setagaya Machizukuri Ordinance and Toyonaka Machizukuri Ordinance. In both cities, citizen organization and the local government actually worked together to make the ordinance.

The characteristic of Toyonaka Machizukuri Ordinance is that its major focus is on supporting citizen organizations. It aims to promote smooth actualization of city-planning project by supporting machizukuri organizations at early stages. To be more specific, the city supports the very early stage of organizing groups. Then, the city guides them through the next stage of designing “General Machizukuri Plans,” which include making extensive examination of the district, putting together the future image of the district, and studying methods for realizing the image. Finally, it supports the last stage of proposing the plan to the local government, which can then lead to the beginning of actual projects.

The characteristic of Setagaya Machizukuri Ordinance (1982) is that it is focused on a support system for realizing actual projects. Setagaya-ku designates certain districts as “Machizukuri Promoting Districts.” Then, Machizukuri Councils (citizen organization) will have the right to propose plans for public projects. Moreover, the Ordinance requires Ward Council approval for the designation of “Machizukuri Promoting District,” therefore there is certainty for the public projects to be carried out accordingly. Toyonaka City and Setagaya-ku both had set the provisions for authorizing Machizukuri Council, but Setagaya-ku, in 1995 revision, repealed the provision. Instead, it broadened the domain of planning body by giving the right to propose general district plan

not only to the authorized councils but also to any citizens in the district.

Both cities' ordinances set provisions for financial and technical support to machizukuri organization. There are also provisions for making use of the national laws such as statutory District Plans, in order for the general plans to be realized.

As we have seen, machizukuri ordinances that set provisions for citizen participation are similar in their basic composition, but each are unique in details on how they are promoted and carried out.

Planning with Citizen Participation

District Planning Laboratory
Minoru Nishida

■ City Masterplans

The revision of City Planning Act in 1992 obliged local governments to make "the basic policy of city planning," which is commonly called "the City Masterplan".

The distinctive feature for the city masterplan is that each local municipality is responsible for making the plan, and the municipality has the obligation to explain to the citizens in the course of planning. These provisions enable the masterplan to be an important guide for unique district planning, and to possibly make it more familiar to the citizens of the district.

City planning in the past has been viewed often as just restrictions on citizens' lives, such as district zoning and city-planning road. It has not necessarily been a familiar thing to the citizens. Besides, citizen participation in city planning has centered on "development projects" such as land readjustment or redevelopment, and it often took the form of an opposing action, such as the movement against road construction. In recent years, many local governments have changed the name of city planning division to "Machizukuri Division" and are trying to make a softer image of city planning. Despite the effort, the system of citizen participation in making city masterplan was conceived by many people with some uneasiness, since neither the local government nor the citizens had the experience of citizen participation in creating city-wide masterplans.

Now each local government is struggling to search for ways of citizen participation. It is still true that many of

them are only taking the form of citizen participation when they are actually not, but some local governments are trying out many ways, such as the usage of internet or walking-tours, to promote citizen participation. Also, a number of government officials are participating in machizukuri events planned by citizens, and new wave of partnership is about to begin.

Since it has been generally thought that the governments were responsible for city planning, very rarely had correction or changes in the government-made plan occurred. Now, some of the progressive local governments are taking three-step planning strategy for citizen participation: "rough draft, first plan, and final plan," and they work very flexibly toward modifications. Some local governments open citizens' opinions to the public, and publicly answer them. For the relationship with city council, there also seems to be a change from the conventional way, in that more detailed explanation is given to council members, although it may not necessarily require a council decision.

On the side of the citizens, it is now understood that in order to participate in creating a masterplan from early stages, knowledge and experience of city planning is necessary. Some citizen organizations are now trying to accumulate their works and the experience of making masterplan proposals.

■ Seikatsu-sha Network

People who are especially active in proposing citizen-made city masterplans are the women of Seikatsu-sha Network, which is a group aiming to participate and to propose plans based on their everyday experience. In the past, they have made disaster prevention maps, and have made suggestions to constructions of public buildings from the women's point of view. Now that the citizen participation is adopted in the planning system, they are challenging the city planning, something they could not put their hands on in the past.

They said, "We don't know much about masterplans, but it is fun to think how our city would be in ten years from now. So, let's do it!"

Their principles were as follows:

1. Bring in your friends and extend the group
2. Never fear the differences of opinions
3. Make it fun--- or else it will not last
4. Do in workshop style--- discuss and work at the same time.

It seems that early work, which was done in Chofu City in 1994, interested them and matched their feelings very well. In more than ten districts or cities of Tokyo, citizens are starting to create their city masterplans, and many of the staff members of those movements are the ones who participated in the work in Chofu. They have made very detailed and bold district research and public park research, and through those researches, they acquired district information that the local government (and entrusted consultants) could never give. Their power and energy and the richness in their ideas should always be greatly admired.

In Suginami-ku, when the local government started basic research for the masterplan, the citizens organization, "Citizen's Group of Dreaming Machizukuri," was started, and I participated as one of the citizens. In the first year, the group put together the "District Machizukuri Plan". In 1996, when the local government presented the rough-draft plan, citizens presented their report, and the basic ideas in the report were reflected in the final masterplan.

In the process of preparing "District Machizukuri Plan," which took up Suginami District No.2 as a model district, detailed district research was done, and district maps such as "the map of endangered houses" were made. It was something very difficult for the local government to do. The plan was made through workshops, with government officials participating, and the proposals in the Plan were realistic, based on everyday life. At the same time it kept some dreams in it. For example, there were interesting proposals concerning the Kanpachi Street, which passes through the district and is giving troubles to the residents. Since the street is planned to be put underground in the future, they proposed construction of a park for young people on the ground above the street and the revival of the old river, using the overflow of underground water. Those ideas took disadvantage as an advantage, and they called it "repaying of kindness by Kanpachi Street". Governments tend to criticize citizens' proposals to be "unrealistic," but I realized that the citizens, based on their everyday life, never present unrealistic ideas, unlike some of the consultants who are simply trying to show off their originality. After the workshops, in order to reflect more people's ideas to the plan, the group prepared presentations for other district groups and shopping street organizations. They also explained their proposals and had discussion with relating sections of the local

government.

*The result of this activity is given in the published book, "Working Manual for Urban Design".

■ The Prospect of Machizukuri through Citizen Participation

The level of citizen proposals is high. Now there are a variety of participants in Machizukuri organizations. Especially, male participants are increasing in numbers, including professionals of city planning and architecture, and retired businessmen. There are also quite a number of cases where a passionate government official is participating as an individual resident. Regarding the techniques for citizen participation, the first generation would be the "workshop style" (ex. Kamakura City, Yamato City, etc.) in which a government takes the initiative, and participation is conducted more like an event than a continuous effort. Today, it is going into the second generation, "counter plan, opinion-proposal style" (ex. Suginami-ku). Now the governments are responding to the citizens more flexibly, and making it possible for the proposals, which are usually realistic ideas based on the situation of each district, to be reflected in the final plan.

Furthermore, some trial works for the third generation are being done. In Chofu City, the citizens' committee, "Chofu Machizukuri Group" made the rough draft plan and presented it to the public. This actually meant the realization of entrustment of the masterplan to the citizens. In Komae City, three citizen plans have been proposed, and the government is now working to make its plan based on those proposals. These examples suggest that the third generation of citizen participation would be the "partnership-style". It is a welcome move that governments are now recognizing abilities of the citizens. But on the other hand, heavy load is put on to the citizens who are working as coordinators. In that means, it is important to support the coordinators of citizen participation by authorizing Machizukuri NPO and supporting them financially as well.