
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Mitsuhiko Kawakami is a Professor at the School of Environmental Design, Kanazawa University, Kanazawa City, Japan. He serves as the Chairperson of the Urban Planning Committee and the Land Use Committee of Ishikawa Prefecture, Advisor of Urban Planning for Kanazawa City, and Director of the Kanazawa Citizens' Research Organization. He also serves as the Commissioner of Urban Planning and Design at the Architectural Institute of Japan, and a Councilor of the City Planning Institute of Japan. His research interests include land-use planning, housing planning, planning support systems, and environmental design. He is the main investigator of a number of historical conservation projects in Kanazawa City that support local policy decision-making on urban conservation. He also participated in the revision of Kanazawa's Master Plan and a diversity of urban projects. Recently, he was selected as the President of the non-profit organisation Kanazawa Traditional House (Machiya).

Jen-Te Pai is an Associate Professor at the National Cheng Chi University in Taiwan and also serves as the Secretary-General of the Taiwan Institute of Urban Planning. He received his PhD from National Taiwan University and worked as a government officer in the Ministry of Transportation and Communication. His teaching and research areas include urban and regional planning, urban design, industrial cluster analysis, and disaster-prevention planning.

Zhenjiang Shen is a Professor at the School of Environmental Design, Kanazawa University, Kanazawa City, Japan. His research interests include urban policy of China, decision support systems for planning, and design through the use of GIS and VR. Recently, he has been collaborating with the Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning for research on metropolitan growth simulation. He has also served as an Advisor of Urban Planning in local cities within Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan. In planning practice, he has also participated in a diversity of urban projects, including an early-stage historical conservation plan for Beijing, which won the second prize awarded by the Ministry of Construction, China in 1987. In 2010, he won the Heritage Conservation Award, Region IV, UIA (International Union of Architects) for his work on historical landscape visualisation for traditional temple-building preservation in Kanazawa, Japan.

Destruction of historical landscape and culture during rapid economic development is reaching worrying proportions in many Asian areas, where new urban redevelopment projects are implemented in urban downtown areas. A lesson gained from the urban development experience is that the aspect of urban conservation is a strategic opportunity for sustainable society, in a sense that it could be easier to gather all stakeholders concerned with community suitability in historic preservation areas since historical and cultural landscape are limited.

This special issue focuses on spatial planning and historical conservation issues in some case studies in the Asian countries. The objective is to provide an insight on the experiences of planning policy and implementation for urban conservation from viewpoints of sustainable society.

In developing countries in Asian area, it is important to establish historic district preservation system into the current planning practices in order to protect historic sites. In the work, 'Spatial and historic characteristics of Phnom Penh central area: Railway Station Garden', Phnom Penh Railway Station Garden is taken as example, which has a long history parallel to the city formation after colonised in 1863. Phnom Penh is now a city with Cambodia's first skyscrapers and subjected to Westernisation. The authors strive to clarify through history and site reviews in order that the area can be kept as the important green-space harmonising the city and, more importantly, has the historical and architectural values.

Furthermore, at the risk of seeing expanding shantytowns destroying an historical environment, the impending population growth necessitates the success of the planned development. In the work, 'The rise of sustainable urban development on Reunion Island', Reunion Island, a French overseas territory in the Indian Ocean, employs Green Energy Revolution programme as part of its governmental programme, and the island's isolation highlights the need for short distance supply and self-sufficiency. As one of the planning strategy of in this island, historical districts are intended to be attractive and affordable for all inhabitants, and housing, activities and public services are integrated and well connected.

The basic design concepts of the neo-traditional development trends come from the western countries, such as the compact city and the walking distances. Many Middle Eastern planners use those concepts in their planning and design while little is done to localise the design concepts according to vernacular urbanism. The paper 'Neo-traditional neighbourhood design concepts based on the urban form of the historical cities of central Iran' discusses on the size, pattern, and accessibility of the traditional

neighbourhoods of central Iran. The author tries to make a linkage between the studies related to the historical urban form on the one hand and the new design approaches based on the traditional urbanism of Iran on the other hand.

As the convention city in Taiwan, Tainan has accumulated many traditional cultural resources indebted to the traditional religion from the Ming Dynasty. The authors of 'Traditional religious space, urban streetscape, and leisure activities: a case study in Tainan City, Taiwan' aims to explore the role of traditional religious space in the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment in Tainan City, Taiwan. In this study, 'Jing', as the basic design unit, is a key design element for constructing a pedestrian-friendly environment, while considering the functions of united organizations of historical temples.

Revitalisation of Chinese historic districts is currently confronted with the problem, namely a similarity of development models. The work 'Tourism development and revitalisation of San-Fang Qi-Xiang historic district, Fuzhou, China: a perspective of tourist experience' applies a new model to the tourism development for revitalisation of San-Fang Qi-Xiang historic district in Fuzhou, China, which is based upon the concepts of estheticism, education, entertainment, escape, exchange, and emotion in historic district. It is suggested that the model of tourist experience can be used to create fresh images and revitalise historic districts from cultural, social, and economic aspects.

Finally, urban conservation is a strategy for urban regeneration and community development in historic preservation areas. We hope that the unbalance between the protection and development in historical cities awakes stakeholders when traditional communities are disappearing gradually.

All submitted manuscripts were peer-reviewed by at least two referees. The guest editors would like to thank the reviewers for their hard work, time and valuable comments and suggestions that make this special issue possible.