

A study on the Incorporation Processes of Agricultural Land Use in the Planning of Kohoku New Town

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1. Introduction

A key task for urban planning in Japan is to incorporate agricultural land uses into urban fabric and statutory planning. In contrast to the single function of many existing agricultural policies, many people are becoming increasingly aware of the multifunctional benefits of urban agricultural land and activities (Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2009) and urban agriculture even found support in the Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas Basic Act of 1999.

This demands reconsideration of the principle of separating of rural and urban land uses that has guided urban planning in Japan for decades. Under this principle agricultural land in urban areas is largely excluded from urban planning statutes and instead regulated by agricultural policies that promote efficiency, economies of scale and avoid urban-rural conflicts. However, agricultural land has remained in urban areas in somehow till now and it would not transform into urban land use since the demands of urban development would declines due to declining population of Japan.

Thus, it is required to find a new concept for urban planning. Although there is now a large literature on comprehensive planning, a planning concept of agricultural land in urban areas has not been appeared. Therefore is research hypothesizes that the planning worked out before establishing the City Planning Act had a concept unconstrained by the principal. The study analyzes the process whereby "Agricultural Zones" were incorporated into the planning of Kohoku New Town, called an outstanding practice in 1960s, aiming to suggest the concept and the way of incorporate agricultural land uses into the urban fabric and statutory planning.

2. Method

Kohoku New Town, located in northern part of Yokohama city, supports about 200,000 people on a land area of 25.30 square kilometers. Project of constructing the new town started in 1965 and a master plan was worked out in 1974. Agricultural land was planned as "Agriculture zones" with other land, comprehensively.

This research was based on literature survey and interview to people worked for the project during the term 1965-1974. The analysis was focused especially on application of the City Planning Act to the planning.

3. Result and discussion

(1) A primary cause of incorporation of agricultural land into the planning

The result shows that there are two main causes. One is that urban land use and agricultural land use planned comprehensively in the primary plan before the City Planning Act established in 1968. The other is that local municipality, Yokohama city government, organized the project to avoid urban sprawl by planning agricultural land.

(2) Intentions of planning agricultural land

The result suggests that planners took agricultural land use in a perspective of landscape, which represent unique rural landscape, and incorporated agricultural land use into open space planning in the primary planning in 1968. However, the purpose of planning agricultural land was changed in the planning process in the type of agriculture and land use type of agriculture. This is because definition of "agriculture" in the planning was shift emphasis from "green space" to "agriculture as an industry".

It is suggested that the reasons why shifting emphasis are 1) As the method of the planning open space including agricultural land had not established, method of land improvement towards modernization was applied in the process of crystallization of the concept. 2) Based on the City Planning Act, area classification of the planning area

was determined by implementation policy such as "Only land readjustment areas would be designated for urbanization promotion area (UPA) and therefore the others would be for urbanization control area (UCA)." "Socioeconomic infrastructure investment would not be carried out in UCA." "These facts suggest that the planning aims, integrating agricultural land use with development area, gradually diminished after the act established as figure 1 shows.

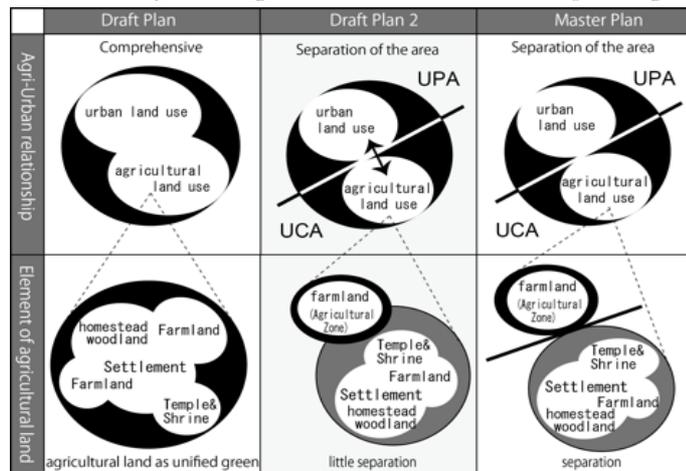


fig.1 the change of the planning concept

4. Conclusion and vision for city planning

Learning from this planning process, we need to free from values of "classification" to make a new concept of planning. To stipulate agricultural land use to city planning, it is required not to make "agricultural zone" as use districts, but to consider variety of agriculture required by citizens. In addition, planning relationships with urban land uses, as well as coppice, settlements are required. It is said that farmland itself is not valued but landscape of collaboration with other land uses are valued by citizens. In considering sustainable way of planning, the concept existed before the City Planning Act established would be remarkable. The concept should not be decided uniformly. Securing the process of planning based on assessment of local social and natural landscapes is to be required.

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