

Inquiry of the Value of Parks in the Characteristics and Use of Park Through Urban Revival Planning Projects in Maebashi City

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ABSTRACT: Recently, the interest about environment of park rises. But it does not become clear enough, that environment of park in local city. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the evaluation on the urban parks in Maebashi city, Gunma Prefecture, Japan. One example of a local city in Japan, there are a stock of many parks from post-war urban revival planning projects, and aims to consider the evaluation of development by park planning and use through an understanding. We researched on the relation of these parks planning and using by the historical materials. Result of investigation, we obtain the characteristic and the subject in urban revival planning projects Maebashi city. In addition we consider the changing use of these parks, Maebashi park, Shikishima Park, and Hirose Riverside park road.

Keywords: Urban park, Maebashi City, Urban Revival Planning Project

1. INTRODUCTION

In Japan enters the 21st century, its most pressing issues include developing a mature society at the community level from its aging and declining population, as well as tackling the global problems of stabilizing greenhouse gas output and preserving its ecosystem. In response to these issues, urban parks are being looked to as a possible way to improve the environment, increase the safety of urban communities, provide a place for citizens to rest, and build a sense of community.

2. RESEARCH POSITION

In Japan, as recognition for the necessity of children's playground rose, studies developed from a child's psychology and a sociological point of view. It began with Reijou Ooya shifting from city planning in 1924-1925 to the arrangement of urban parks, their scale and facilities, in Osaka city and Sakai city, and established the scientific theory that sets the radius of children [1].Tutomu Kano investigated conditions in urban parks in Nagoya city [2].

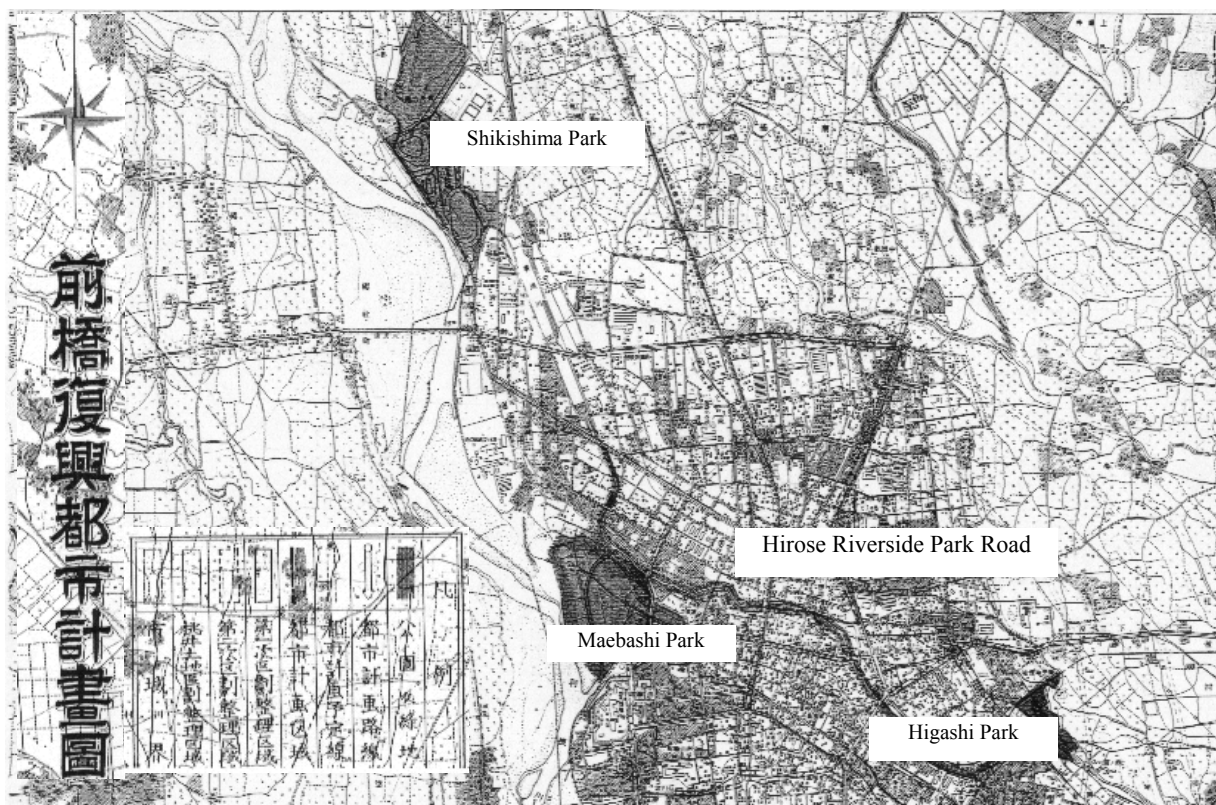


Fig.1 War-devastation urban revival planning in Maebashi City [3]

Tokutarou Kitamura determined the required area of children's parks from the activity time per person and the number of visits on in 1932 at the development of park theory, and calculated according to age class [4]. The studies of the use of parks by children. It is assumed that Kunio Yanagida were investigated during the prewar days [5]. However, these researches intended for big scale of city. Recently, the interest about environment of park rises in local cities. Shinya Tsukada et al make clear that park amenities greatly influence residents' consciousness by survey in Maebashi City [6]-[8]. But it does not become clear enough, that relation of history among these parks. This study looks at Maebashi City, Gunma Prefecture, one example of a local city with a stock of many parks from post-war urban revival planning projects, and aims to consider the evaluation of park development by park planning and using through an understanding. We researched on the relation of these parks planning and using by the historical materials in Maebashi city.

3. THE PLANNING IN URBAN REVIVAL PROJECT IN MAEBASHI CITY

The Japanese park system began by official notice of the Department of State in 1873. The Japanese park planning began by the ordinance of Tokyo in 1889. Through the promulgation of the former City Planning Law in 1919, opportunities arose for securing planned parks even in local cities through the use of "rezoning projects."

However, genuine park preparation began with the urban disaster revival planning projects that followed the World War II, and the City Park Law of Department of State in 1956.

The city planning of Maebashi City progressed with the promulgation of the city Planning Law of 1919, and in 1929 city planning zones were determined. These brought opportunities for city planning projects in Maebashi City. However, because approximately 80% of the city was destroyed in the world War II, city planning projects could not be carried out.

In 1946, Maebashi City was designated a war-devastated city, and this was used as an opportunity to examine city plans from before the war, and to move forward with road and park planning. The area of rezoning projects for war-devastation urban revival planning projects in Maebashi City was set in 1946 at 343.2 hectares, and the cabinet approved a plan for major thoroughfares. In 1947, Gunma Prefecture officially announced route 120.

This plan included three items regarding parks in the basic policy of city revival planning. First is the planning of parks, sports grounds, and park roads. Second is the securing of over 10% of urban area as open space. Third is the designation of agricultural land, mountain and forests surrounding the urban as open space. Park arrangement was attempted under these three items.

However, citizens protested, demanding the prefecture "make it Maebashi City's original planning. Therefore, the basic policy for post-war urban revival planning was changed in 1949. The aim became quick execution of projects.

Already in Maebashi City preparations had been made for Maebashi Park along the left bank of the Tone River flowing north-south through the city center, and for

Shikishima Park. However, due to the rising demand for open spaces and tree, park plans through war-devastation urban revival planning projects were proposed.

First, Maebashi Park was prepared for the west side of Maebashi City, and Higashi Park was planned for the east side of the city. Also, a park road was planned for Hirose riverside flowing east-west through the city, connecting the parks [Fig. 1].



Fig.2 Maebashi Park [9]



Fig.3 Maebashi Park [10]

4. CHANGING USING OF MAEBASHI PARK

The establishment of Maebashi Park was decided by resolution of the Maebashi city council in 1903 in commemoration of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905.

It is recorded that this place was used for recreational cherry-blossom viewing. Cherry-blossom viewing was a popular outdoor recreation in Japan from the Edo period. Records of park use show a design of cultivated cherry-blossom trees and garden-like views with additional trees. Monuments were erected, increasing symbolism, and the park was used as a place for holding national events.

Female factory workers and geisha used the park as a place to enjoy cherry-blossom viewing and strolls.

With symbolism in its scenery from the Meiji era, and use for strolls and events, everyday use of Maebashi Park increased, and the convenience of the facility improved with the arrangement of gazebos and flower beds.

Everyday use of the park increased, and a boat dock facing the Tone River was built. Neighboring farms were bought,

and the park was expanded. Waterfalls and fountains [Fig. 2], and children's playing equipment were built in the expanded areas. On the other hand, management problems such as public disturbances, crime, and safety appeared in the park. Lighting was set up to prevent crime, and moral edification was conducted in response to vandalism of facilities. Records show that bicycle competitions and plays were abundantly held. During public gatherings, rice cakes called "hagi-mochi" were sold in the park.

Accompanying the park's change from scenery viewing to more daily use, park use became more integrated with daily life, and modern culture such as food and the arts ripened. In 1946 at the start of urban revival planning projects, Maebashi Park became a normal park of approximately 18.6 hectares. In 1954, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of Maebashi City, the Maebashi Ground Fair was held.

In 1986 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Maebashi City, a plan for improving Maebashi Park was revealed that would make the park a general park of 64.4 hectares, and even at present plans for refurbishing the park are being advanced [Fig.3].

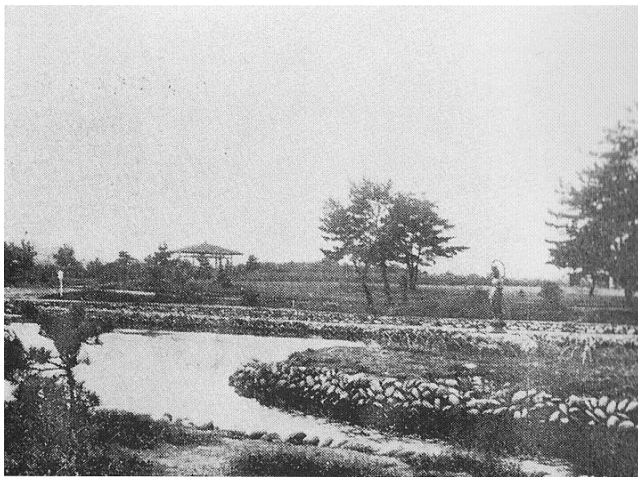


Fig.4 Shikishima Park [11]



Fig.5 Shikishima Park [12]

5. CHANGING USE OF SHIKISHIMA PARK

Shikishima Park lines the clear waters of the Tone River, rich in scenery symbolized by stretching pine forests, and blessed with views of the Three Jōmō Mountains of Akagi,

Haruna, and Myōgi. In 1921, an outdoor school was created in the summer in Maebashi City using pine forests, and it served as a place for improving the constitution of children. In 1922, the Maebashi City Council resolved to make the land a park site, and the park was made by disposing of the riverbed and national forest.

Such was the origin of Shikishima Park, which opened an area that included a riverbed blessed in natural scenery to the public as a recreational garden.

In 1925, a local youth labor service built a sports ground. The park name of "Shikishima Park" was decided by accepting submissions from Maebashi citizens. In 1924, citizens donated Yoshino Cherry-blossom, improving park scenery. In 1929, Dr. Seiroku Honda and Dr. Kiyoshi Ishita Kiyoshi proposed a lake with islands as seen in the Chinese Imperial Garden, a stone-made rest area imitating a French garden, and toilets [Fig.4].

In a place blessed with a natural environment favorable enough to house an outdoor school, athletic facilities were enriched.

In 1930, a baseball field was built. In 1920, U.S. and Japanese professional baseball teams met for a friendly game that including Sawamura Eiji and homerun-king Babe Ruth. In 1938, municipal rental boats were opened for people to enjoy the scenery.

In 1950, the grounds were expanded for the construction of a Gunma Prefectural General Sports Ground. In 1953, a volunteer park beautification club was organized of townspeople to clean the park, and townspeople conducted cleaning activities. In 1956, Meiji Shine conveyed 500 irises, and an iris garden was created. In 1971, with the creation of a rose garden, the institutionalization of the park as a tourist resource progressed.

In 1983, a national sports festival was held at the sports grounds of Shikishima Park (Akagi Kokutai). In 1985, with the addition of a drainage channel, a water playground, and a large wooden playground in the connection point between the recreational walking zone and the sports facility zone, the park was given general functions that various generations could use [Fig.5]. In 1989, Shikishima Park was chosen by the Parks & Open Space Association of Japan as one Japan's top 100 parks.

6. CHANGING USE OF HIROSE RIVERSIDE PARK ROAD

The Hirose River was a part of life during the Edo period as a transportation route for boats, and in the early Meiji period powering water wheels. The city center side was mainly used as commercial land, and the new city center side was mostly used as industrial land (silk factories). On holidays, many female factory workers would cross the Hitone Bridge to enjoy the city center [Fig.6].

Sakutaro Hagiwara, who influenced modern poetry, announced his poem "Kyōdo Bōkyōshi" in 1925, which includes reference to Hirose River, and he is said to have liked this scenery [Fig.7].

In 1930, preparations began for Hirose River park road, 3.6 meters wide and 283 meters long. In the early Shōwa period, Hirose riverside was prepared as a street.

Following the end of the World War II, in 1948 Maebashi Park (general park) was planned to the west of the city center, Higashi Park (normal park) was planned to the east



Fig.6 Shinkeizu [13]



Fig.7 Hirose Riverside Park Road [9]

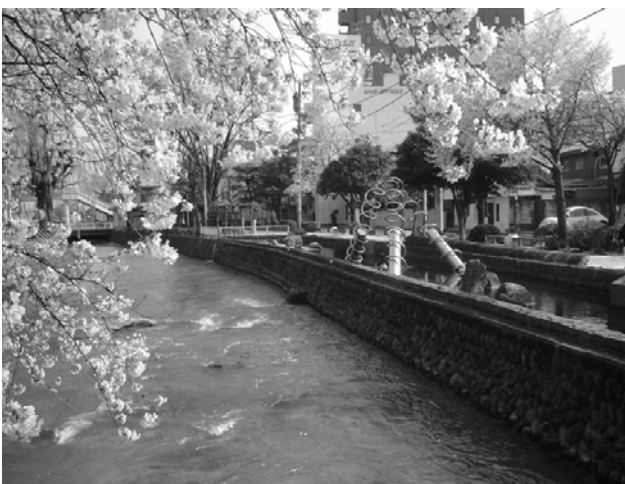


Fig.8 Hirose Riverside Park Road

of the city center, and "Hirose Riverside Park road" was planned as a park road connecting the two parks in light of city disaster prevention.

The land for "Hirose Riverside Park Road" was secured through rezoning projects for the purpose of urban disaster prevention in Maebashi City's central areas. Weeping willows were planted at even intervals on both banks, and a dirt promenade along the right bank was built. A concrete bench was built along the promenade, and a green tract of land was built in a concrete tree-planting box. Through this preparation, the weeping willows planted alongside both banks of the river became familiar to citizens as the scenery representing Maebashi City.

In 1970, a monument inscribed with a poem entitled "Hirose River" was built. This was followed by many other hometown poetic monuments erected in the promenade. In 1974, Maebashi City enacted the "Maebashi City Water and Green Community Development Ordinance," and for five years from 1974 to 1979 reconstructed Hirose Riverside Park road as a cultured and high-quality space, with the theme of making a symbolic road of water and tract [Fig.8]. Inside, a stone walking path was added, a viewing lake and monument were built, and preparations focusing on recreation and scenery-viewing progressed.

After this, cultural hues were deepened in the areas surrounding Hirose Riverside Park Road, and in 1993 the Maebashi Museum of Literature was built along the Hirose Riverside Park road, with materials from poets on display and for research including the work of Sakutaro Hagiwara. Every year since 1999, from autumn to winter both sides of the riverside promenade are lit with lights by volunteers, making an elegant scene.

7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the evaluation on the urban parks in Maebashi city, Gunma Prefecture, Japan. One example of a local city in Japan, there are a stock of

many parks from post-war urban revival planning projects, and aims to consider the evaluation of park development by park planning and using by park planning and using through an understanding. We researched on the history of the park planning and using by the historical materials. Result of investigation as follows;

We obtained the characteristic and subject in urban revival planning projects Maebashi city. The plan included three items regarding parks in the basic policy of city revival planning. However, the basic policy for post-war urban revival planning was changed in 1949. The aim became quick execution of projects.

Already in Maebashi City preparations had been made for Maebashi Park along the left bank of the Tone River flowing north-south through the city center, and for Shikishima Park. Also, a park road was planned for Hirose riverside flowing east-west through the city, connecting the parks.

In addition we consider the relation of using these parks, Maebashi park, Shikishima Park, and Hirose Riverside park road. Stage of using in these parks was carried out as follows; First of stage was opening of scenery, Next of stages was the addition of tree planting, and third of stage was construction of institutions.

However, while park recreational functions have increased, there is also the possibility that the original intent for a connection with the scenery has been diluted.

Therefore, in future park preparation, even as partial improvements, three considerations are significant in landscape design: the origin of the natural scenery and land, integrating natural features and nature with design, and subsequent use of the park.

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