

Open space planning in China focusing on Urban Lifestyle

~For the green system planning of ShenYang as Example~

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1. Respecting Open Space

1.1 Definition of Open Space

Modern urban space consists of building site, transportation site and open space which came into being in the 19th century in Britain. The original definition of Open Space raised by Hiroshi Ikeda in 1921 indicates that besides the vacant land apart from the building site which isn't overcated by buildings, such as parks, squares, stadiums and vivariums, Open Space also consists of the law-setting vacant land within or around the building site.

In modern times, people share in common with the idea on Open Space as spacious, public and scenical.

1.2 Relationship between Green Space and Open Space

It is also in the late 19th century that scholars from Germany raised a point of Green Space (Grünfläche) apart from the building site and transportation site which consisted of the vacant land such as parks, squares and graveyards. Green Space focuses on environment in contrast with Open Space on value in use. With the globe and urban environment problems getting more and more serious, the importance of urban environment is generally acknowledged. Therefore, from the point of modern urban programming, Green Space is widely being used. And from the point of access to public facilities, so is Open Space.

1.3 Functions of Open Space

Open Space functions in many ways in cities .As the Environmental functions, Open Space can mitigate the weather, purify air and protect diversity. Moreover, Open Space functions in such ways as to

prevent fire from spreading, to provide shelter from disaster, to adjust surface water flux, to prevent flood from overflowing. Meanwhile it also works in forming natural and rural scenery and providing the citizens with sites for relaxation, walking, exercising, and recreation. Among all of the functions, to improve the urban environment and to prevent disaster and viewing are functions in existence while recreation is the function in use. There is a close connection among usage of Open Space, history culture of cities and lifestyles of citizens. For example, each spring, cherry blossom-view held in parks in Japan was a kind of activity for noble people in ancient times which now comes down as folk custom, becoming a world-wide-known traditional activity (phot.1). China has experienced feudalization, colonization, capitalism and socialism. Therewith Open Space exists in absolutely different means which comes down into nowadays and becomes part of modern Open Space.



Phot.1 Cherry blossom-view in Japan

From www.exceedentertainment.co.jp

2. History of Open Space in China

2.1 Classification on Open Space

Accordingly, Open Space can definitely be

classified into parks, squares and scenery spots, which originated from Europe and spread around to China. It functions and is put into use diversely because of its obviously different history background and introduction courses.

2.2 Parks

There were no theoretically public parks in China before 1840—the feudalization period. There were actually many gardens and courtyards which could be called more Theme Parks for the emperor and nobles than dooryards inside the dwelling site. A good representative was the glorious, great “Yuanmingyuan Park” burnt by Anglo-French Alliance in 1860 which covered 350 hektare and consisted through watercourse of Yuanmingyuan, Changchunyuan and Qichunyuan. Yuanmingyuan Park, which was during over 150 years of Qing dynasty the most good-sized royal court, covered more than 200 buildings, over 100 scenic areas. Yuanmingyuan, it completely integrated advanced architecture arts and crafts from western countries into outstanding landscaping tradition for the past 3000 years in China. So it, beyond all doubt, was called “Park of all Parks”. (fig.1)



fig.1 Diagram of a restoration of Yuanmingyuan

From www.yuanmingyuanpark.com

After Opium War, many parts of China became colonies among which Shanghai was built into the first modern city during the certain period of short time. In Shanghai, the former of Parks or public garden was appearing, which copied the mode of parks in Europe with the functions of walkway,

tennis court, field and golf course (fig.2). These “parks” which could hardly be called parks, however, were only used by colonists. At that time, some local top-class-gentlemen built a “Xijin public garden”. It was open to local folks by raising funds. This garden was a typically Chinese garden style with very traditional pavilions from the noble design. It meant that common people can equally enjoy Chinese royal scenery (Phot.2). The two modes mentioned above were powerfully influencing on landscaping in China afterwards.



fig.2 Draft of Jieshi Park in Shanghai

From www.news365.com.cn



phot.2 Present condition of Xijin public garden

Form www.wuxi.gov.cn

After Revolution of 1911, parks were put into construction in some cities of China in which traditional Chinese courtyard style have been introduced as “Xijin public garden” in Wuxi. And

these parks were destroyed in wars and did get well preserved after 1949, foundation of PRC. And those parks used as tennis court, ball park and golf course were almost put down because of their Capitalism style in stead of some parks rebuilt from ancient Chinese royal and noble gardens. Similarly the new-built parks took traditional Chinese garden as style.

In the Cultural Revolution from 1960s, economy in China depressed for a long while and policy that parks should support themselves was adopted by the government. At that time, people needed to pay to enter parks. Although parks were no longer public indeed, they were still so popularly chosen for there were quite few ways of recreation. When China entered time of Reform and Opening, economy development and demand from people called that Open Space has to be public which didn't come into reality until the 21st century. At the very beginning that people enter parks for free, there are twice as many people but later the number gets decreased. For one reason, the free-entry policy made parks less mystery and charming. For another reason, higher living standard offered more opportunity for citizens to travel outside the city.

2.3 Square

Public squares origin from western countries as urban space with a longer history than parks. A great many squares have been built for respect to Gods in Cist which described by Napoleon as the living room of cities war very important locations for sociality. These kinds of squares were introduced into China at the very beginning of the 20th century and soon became popular in such colonies as Shanghai, Dalian and Shenyang (phot.3). However, they were more like heart of the city than square for the citizen. And they were indeed representative space for publicizing their cities.



phot.3 Squares built in Dalian by Japanese colonists

Form "Shanghai—150 years of modern city"

After foundation of PRC, good-sized squares were built for politics purpose in each big cities among which was the world-class square—Tian'anmen Square (phot.4). In addition, squares built by colonists were basically rebuilt for politics purpose. These kinds of squares are usually disposed in front of the city governments, being political and urban symbols nowadays although there are decreasingly political meetings day by day.



phot.4 Political meetings held in Tiananmen Square in

1960s

Form flickr.com

2.4 Other open spaces

Accordingly, there were no parks or squares in ancient China. There were a large number of temples in many cities because Buddhism were once so popular. Commerce gathered all around these temples for people to amuse themselves as worship was going on. This had become some natural open

spaces. Afterwards, some of the temples were destroyed or abandoned. Religion activities were cut down because of the hot conflict between communism and religion. In recent years, many of the temples got rebuilt and religion culture got protected and flourished for renaissance of Chinese classical culture.

Moreover, graveyards called “graveyards of the Martyr” have been built in most of the cities. This was to honor soldiers died from wars since the foundation of PRC. These graveyards work not only as graveyard but also as sites with patriotism ceremony for students. Otherwise, some waterside open space has been built since people have been paying more attention to urban scenery and environment.

3. Green space system planning of Shenyang

3.1 General situation of Shenyang

City of Shenyang, central part of Northeast China, covers totally 12980 km² and the city zone 3495 km² with the total population 7,204,000 and 5,066,000 in the city. Shenyang has more than 2000 years history, and city of Shenyang has been capital of Qing Dynasty in 400 years ago, colony during the World War II, heavy industry centre after foundation of PRC and played a quite important role for national economy. There are many parks and squares from colony period and open space for mending industry pollution after 1949 (phot.5).



phot.5 Bird's-eye view of Shenyang

3.2 Process of Open Space in City of Shenyang

While Japanese colonists were taking possession of Shenyang in 1920s, the city became modernized when it renamed as Fengtian. In that time, Railroads reaching all Northeast were being built. Around station of Fengtian, the center area was been construct by Japanese colonists. They designed open spaces such as some parks from western countries and squares in that area (fig.3). Afterwards, some Japanese did planning on open space of the whole city which was been abrogated because of they failed the war. Hence, only the railway stations and a few squares and parks around them have been left.

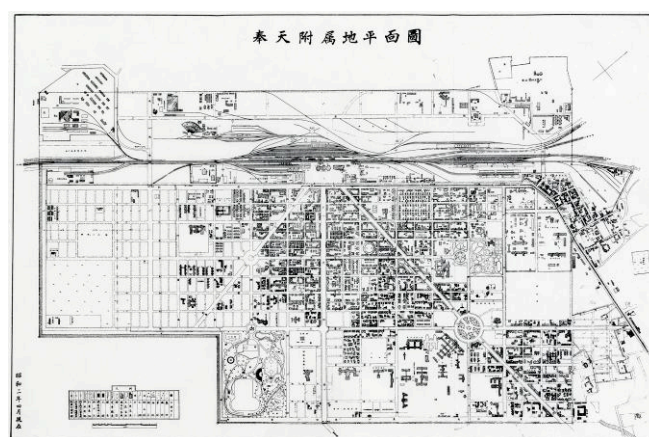


fig.3 The urban plan of Fengtian Station area

Form “The Ten Years of South Mansyu Railroads Company”

Since 1949, foundation of PRC, large quantities of factories have been built for Shenyang was an industry city. Because lack of money and technology, construction of parks and squares couldn't be adopt. 20 years thereafter, air pollution has made the environment be destroyed and the city has been the top badly polluted one.



Phot.6, Phot.7 Bird's-eye view of water side open spaces in

Shenyang

Therefore, in the end of 1980s, the city government built some large-scale open space in water side to improve the environment with open space coastwise as beginning. (Phot.6, Phot.7)

In the 21st century, the government tries resolving problems on environment and heat island by building urban green space. In 2002 national government enacted a law for ask city government to make urban green space more systematized. Wherefore, Green space system planing of Shenyang was been planed. It was acknowledged that open space functions in urban climate, sanitary environment, sluice, disaster-prevention, beautifying scenery, recreation, energy saving and so on. There are one Mountain, one belt, two loops, five sphenic green spaces in the plan. Mountain refers to the Qipan Mountain beauty spot in the northeast of Shenyang. Belt refers to the green spaces on waterside of Hunhe River. Loops refer to the buffer green zone on the side of the beltway and green spaces beside canal, and 5 sphenic green spaces are set according to prevailing wind direction.

3.3 Present condition of open space in Shenyang

With great efforts within a few years, a green space system has been formed. Among these, parks, squares, green space by rivers around the cities work the most as recreation spots.(fig.4)

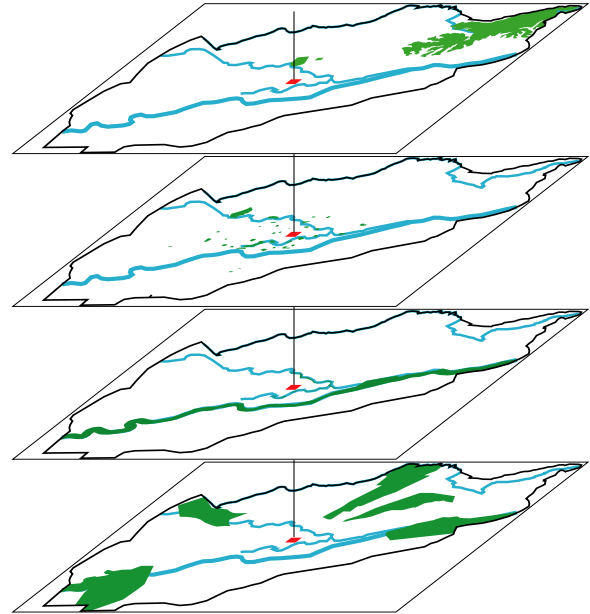


fig.4 Structure of Open space system in Shenyang

4. Utility of open space in Shenyang

4.1 Parks

Parks are mainly formed by verdant plants since most of the parks were built on the purpose for people to sightsee. For example, in Zhongshan Park, one of the oldest parks, people would take morning exercises and go across it for fresh air. (Phot.8, Phot.9)



phot.8 Morning exercises in Zhongshan Park



phot.9 Carving in Zhongshan Park

4.2 Squares

Formers squares were used for meetings and assembly, so there were no plants but some patterns for decoration. During daytime, only some non-natives came for sightseeing. But at night, the urban people would come for recreation, such as group dancing, shuttlecock kicking, handwriting. (phot.10, phot.11)



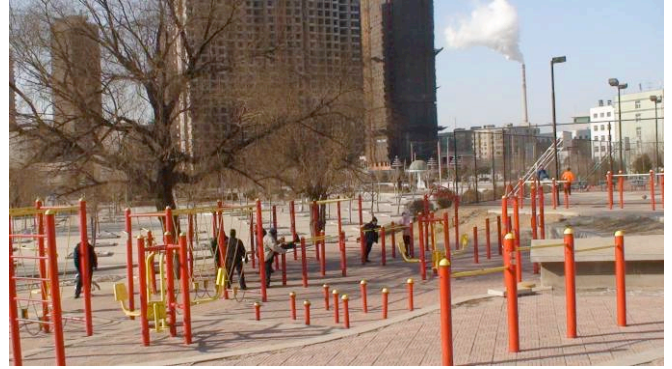
photo. 10, photo. 11 Activity of citizen in Zhongshan square

4.3 New type squares

Although some former squares provided people with recreation spots, they infected city transportation and people's health because of the central position. Improvements have been doing in 21st century, squares being built near residential area. It has characteristic of former squares, parks and adds plants and some simple gymnasium facilities. (phot.12, phot.13)



phot.12 Plants in Dadong square



phot.13 Simple gymnasium facilities in Dadong square

4.4 Green space by waterside

Accordingly, the government built green space at waterside and Hunhe river in 1990s and after the 21st century which has enriched the city scenery, improved the environment. These green space, however, functioned only for walks and morning exercises for people were limited on usage of open space. (Phot.14)



Phot.14 Green space in waterside

5. Conclusion

In China, as well as in Shenyang, formation and history of Open Space have been affected too much. So, it is Open Space that is more crucial for people's recreation style than life of people for Open Space. And some of the recreation still exist but some faded as they are no longer needed. Although the government has not being put large amount of money on construction of Open Space, it is still a significant task to soft-lead Open Space creating a better outdoor recreation for citizens.