

ADOVOCACY OF VISTA-HERITAGE—THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF VIEWING TO MOUNTAIN FORSETTING IN JAPAN

Akasaka Makoto / Japan
assoc. Professor of Chiba University

Introduction

How can we define the concept of Setting? They say, the Setting can be compared to the existence of waterfall. The waterfall is composed of upper part, waterfall, basin and under part of waterfall. Without any part there is no waterfall. We see only a changing part of dynamic movement of water as just a waterfall, water is moving and waterfall exists. But something is lacking. That is existence of man, viewer, watcher or me, who recognize a waterfall. Without existence of a recognizer there is no setting. Also the existence of waterfall can be compared to the forest, that is good cared and enough sustained by afforesting and deforesting. We see a part of changing of the forest just now. The garden of Entsuji-temple in Kyoto is well-known for the garden of “shakkei (borrowed scenery)” in Japan, namely we consider a shape of mountain (Hieizan) to be an important element of the garden scenery (fig.1). Of course there is the mountain outside of the garden. Therefore we say it “borrowed...”. But we can presume the relation to be a setting. We look at the garden and that mountain through this garden. In other words there is a relation line for the setting, mountain – garden – and me (recognizer) (fig.2). In that shakkei-garden the vista to the mountain is absolutely necessary. The setting is a selected combination of some elements in landscape. The scheme of setting was preferred often in landscapes of Ukiyoe-art (Japanese Prints), that was a motif for Katsushika Hokusai (and later Andou Hiroshige) of the Edo period. He made many prints with Mt. Fuji. In his works with Mt. Fuji we see the scene of people’s life in the near distance and over there Mt. Fuji always somewhere in the background. We see simultaneously the near distance and the distance, namely the contrast of something static and dynamic or eternal and not eternal. We see not only the mountain but also near distance (fig.3,4). Viewing and praying to the mountain had originally a religious meaning. Fuji-kou is one of popular groups of sacred Mt. Fuji-religion. They banked small hills for the praying to Mt. Fuji in their hometown. They visited hills many times to pray instead of climbing to Mt. Fuji (fig.5). It was possible to view and pray to Mt. Fuji from those hills, they called “Youhai-jo”. There are many shrines with name of Fuji even now in Tokyo, that tied to the role of “Youhai”. Youhai means the viewing and praying

from a distance. However we have no Fuji-shrine nowadays, where we could have a distant view of Mt. Fuji. I would like to advocate “Vista-Heritage” by introducing of three different issues on settings of viewing to mountains in Japan.

1 Advocacy of the conservation of vista for the connecting World Heritages (Shuri-castle and Sefa-utaki) in Okinawa

Shuri-castle is one of the nine properties that compose the World Heritage site, Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu. Until the 17th century, the Ryukyu Region, located at the southernmost tip of Japanese archipelago, had independent state of its own. Sefa-utaki is also one of the nine properties of World Heritage, which was the most important Utaki of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, clearly exhibits the essential elements of a sacred place in its solemn atmosphere. From Sefa-utaki, a small island known as Kudaka-jima can be seen to the east. Within the Shuri-castle there are many ritual facilities and sacred places, and also outside of the castle. In an east direction 1 km from Shuri-castle (max.136m above sea level) there is a hill for praying named “Bengatake” (166m) (fig.6). From that hill we can see the hill “Sukunamui” (149m) to the direction of the other World Heritage “Sefa-utaki” (fig.7). The presence of Bengatake is a very important connecting point. But it is excluded from heritage area and the buffer zone. Bengatake is a Youhai-jo and sacred place which the King of Ryukyu used to visit directly three times every year to the ritual ceremony. On the hill Bengatake there was a stone gate named Uhutaki, which could be compared with one of the World Heritage Sonohyan-utaki-stone gate. But it was bombed and vanished during the World War II. After the war it was reconstructed but made of concrete. Anyway the historical importance of the position as the sacred hill for the Shuri-castle is not vanished. The vista to Bengatake from the Shuri-castle and the vista to Sukunamui, namely the direction of Sefa-utaki from the top of Bengatake are still alive (fig.8,9). The vista-lines and spaces must be cared more and kept up with watching the disturbance of the setting.

2 Vulnerability within the setting of vista-passage

(viewing corridor) to Mt. Fuji in Tokyo

In Great Edo (present Tokyo) there were many streets with names of slopes because of topographical characteristic. From the top of slopes could be seen sea (bay) or Mt. Fuji. Therefore they called them Shio-mi-zaka (Sea view slope) or Fuji-mi-zaka (Fuji view slope). Only the street names exist even now. But there is no more Shiomi-zaka, where we could see the Bay of Tokyo. And many Fujimi-zaka exist also now. According to the study on Fujimi-zaka (1999) there are 16 streets with the name of Fujimi-zaka in the center of city Tokyo (fig.10). But there is only one where we can see Mt. Fuji, named Nippori-Fujimi-zaka. In January 2000 a urgent symposium “On the succession of the vista to Mt. Fuji from Nippori-Fujimi-zaka” was held, because the constructing of 13-floor condominium (38 m high) was found out, which would disturb the vista to Mt. Fuji. The next day the participants of the symposium made sure practically the same height of 13-floor condominium by using balloon and went to the construction site (fig.11). At the end of the excursion they were watching a silhouette-phenomenon of Mt. Fuji at the sunset (fig.12, 13). The distance from Fujimi-zaka to the top of the Mt. Fuji is 103 km (fig.14). The important part of vista-passage should be first 3~4 km from Fujimi-zaka according to the computer-simulation (1999). That part is consisted of three different Wards of Tokyo. The top of slope “Fujimi-zaka” is in Arakawa-Ward, the site of the flat is in Bunkyo-Ward and the part between both points is in Taito-Ward. The site of the flat was not so wide, but the position and the height of the building + ground were factors of disturbance of the vista. Although the citizen-group (Mamorukai, CASF) piled up the petition of the conservation of the viewing to the Mt. Fuji to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, to the three Ward-offices and to some apartment house development traders and asked reduction of the number of story of the condominium “9-floor” (namely minus 4-floor), every Ward answered helplessly and every offer was by the traders refused. And the 13-floor condominium was built finally (fig.15). The left half of the shape Mt. Fuji has been concealed by the construction of the condominium. The vista-passage is one line, which is composed of complicated relationship of possession and right. It must be reached the consensus with not only owners of the real estates also the related habitants. As the number of the Fujimi-zaka reduced, from which we could see Mt. Fuji really, and the possibility of Fuji-viewing narrowed down, so the setting was limited in a certain place. When the setting was disturbed, the protest movement on Fujimi-zaka occurred. When we think of the conservation of landscape, we should take care of the different point compared with architectural monuments. Namely to conserve the vista to Mt. Fuji is of course not to

conserve the Mt. Fuji directly. What is the object of the conservation in this case? That is not “thing” but the “situation”, something like consensus to make possible to keep the vista-passage.

3 Contemporary meaning of the snow shapes on the mountainside in Fukushima

When the flowers of cherry and peach trees are coming out in spring, the snow of the mountainside melting. Under the different conditions of the vegetation and topography on the mountainside the difference of the speed of the snow melting offers and then some remained snows form something like a picture. The shape of the snow seemed sometimes like a rabbit, horse, farmer, bird, carps etc. People who lived in village at the foot of the mountain named them the shape of the snow. Yukigata (snow shape), the picture made of the remained snow is moving (melting and disappearing). Therefore the village people used the changing shape as a almanac. Namely when the snow-rabbit appears, they recognized it the time for sowing or planting. Yukigata must be vanished until the early summer it means no permanent snow ravine. Yukigata is one of marks of changing seasons for the habitants, who could see and recognize it. It is the landscape, which would be found not in a mountain but seen from a village at the foot of the mountain. Yukigata used to be a vernacular landscape for the habitants only in spring. In a sense Yukigata is time-limited and area-limited. It has no meaning outside of a certain area. Yukigata is something just very local. There is a mountain named Azuma-kofuji (1,705m) with Yukigata in Fukushima of Tohoku-region in Japan. The shape of the Yukigata seems like a rabbit (or rabbits), which shows Yukigata “sowing rabbit” from the end of April till the beginning of May yearly (fig.16). The rabbit-Yukigata was written in book in 18th century and described by the farmer of sericulture in his diary in 19th century. In the region people used to say, when the rabbit appears on the mountainside of Azuma-kofuji, it's a signal for sowing on the fields and the time of the hatching work of silkworms. The high quality and technique of sericulture in this region was famous, and the business was prosperous. In the “Tsuki-no-miya jinja (moon shrine)” of this region rabbit is enshrined. The rabbit is a charm of this region (fig.17). The custom of rabbit-charms in this region went out in the 1930s. Yukigata has been studied almost by the field of folklore. Recently the theme Yukigata is researched also from the side of the disaster prevention by the surveying the appearance of remained snow. It has been tried by the survey to judge the moving situation of the surface of the earth. What is meaning today the viewing of Yukigata, as it were, to look at the natural phenomenon on the

Section I: Defining the setting of monuments and sites:
The significance of tangible and intangible cultural and natural qualities
Section I: Définir le milieu des monuments et des sites-
Dimensions matérielles et immatérielles, valeur culturelle et naturelle

mountainside a long way off from a lower world? The role of the farmer's almanac of Yukigata was over a long time ago, besides it is time-and area-limited. However it is not projected on the screen and just visible to the naked eyes. Indeed we see now the natural phenomenon really and directly. Yukigata is composed of not only the remained snow as a physical existence but also the imagination of the recognizer. The landscape consists of the both elements. If the recognizer having the imagination would disappear, the landscape would become not the landscape itself, although the Yukigata remained physically on the mountainside. In fact the Yukigata was almost forgotten during more than the half century. Since 1980s the Yukigata "sowing rabbit" is reevaluated for the regional identity. In this sense the theme of Yukigata should be also a part of the Theme "setting" of landscape. Nowadays it seems to be no problem of disturbance like the case of the Fujimi-zaka in Tokyo. But the best viewpoints must be found and set in this region for the future.

Conclusion

The vista-passage to the mountains or green hills gives us moment for the visual connecting with separated or distanced places each other. But the meaning of the vista-passage is changing time to time. The meaning of the vista-passage for nowadays must be defined for the setting conservation. Here we have to take care of the meaning, that mountains or green hills are the end of the vista-passage. They are natural elements of the townscape and landscape, which move never quickly (so I hope) and also we can see always in the town. This is no landscape, which we see through the window of the high-rise or airplane, but the landscape, which we see with naked eyes from on the ground level like ancient people did. The shapes of the mountains far away are retained since a long time ago, although the townscapes or landscapes in the near distance are changing quickly. By the conservation of vista-passage can be dedicated the structural framework of the landscape in the town. The framework must be composed of something eternal or not changeable.

For the conservation of the setting are important the viewing points but with existence of recognizers having the definite imagination, which would be continued as a custom or discovered and reevaluated by new generation. Let us remember the following words: There is no snow-rabbit, without the village people as recognizer. And also the recognition of people is changing. But in other words therefore appeared a chance of reevaluation of snow-rabbit. At the peak of economic growth or in the time of the

economic supreme in Japan there was very few interest for the viewing to the Mt. Fuji on the Fujimi-zaka. The changing gives us sometimes chances (but also crisis). We have to find and select the good chance for keeping or recovering of the setting in the changeable situation. Here must be asked the question again, what the setting is. Is it static or dynamic? The settings are some of patterns of landscape elements, which include changeable elements in themselves. The color of the mountains is changing in fall, it's snowing in winter. It's coming to bloom in spring. What we see now in the landscape? It is derived from difference of the changing of the seasons. The changing of seasons is expected. The feeling has a similarity to expecting of cherry blossoms or snow-rabbit, which is time-and area-limited. It's the feeling of loving and enjoying of natural phenomenon, which is caused by the revolution of the earth around the sun.

In fact we are losing the vista-passage to the mountains or green hills even now. Have we no chance for saving them? The townscape and landscape will be changing also from now on. But building is moving (scraped and built), the town exists. The time of the reconstructing of buildings is coming surely. Here is a chance for recovering of the vista-passage, if the habitants of the town wish to do so. Because the possibilities of vista-passage are researched and simulated, it will be possible to make reservations of vista to the mountain from now for the future.

Abstract

References

The Shakkei (Borrowed Scenery) in Japanese garden is an essential type of setting. Through the garden space (the near distance) we can see the shape of mountains (the distance) over there. Then the shape of mountains becomes a part of scenery of that garden. The setting is a selected combination of some elements in landscape. The scheme of setting was preferred often in landscapes of Ukiyoe-art (Japanese prints). The scheme of setting was a motif for Katsushika Hokusai and later Andou Hiroshige in 18th~19th century. I would like to advocate "Vista-Heritage" by introducing of three different issues on settings of viewing to mountains in Japan.

1. In an east direction from World Heritage Shuri-Castle(Okinawa, Japan) there is a religious hill for dynasty named "Bengatake". From that hill we can see the mountain "Sukunamui" to the direction of the other World Heritage "Seifa-Utaki". The presence of Bengatake is a very important connecting point. But it is excluded from heritage area and the buffer zone.

2. There were many viewing points to Mt.Fuji named "Fujimi-zaka" in Tokyo (Edo). Because of increasing of highrises Fujimi-zaka are vanishing. Nowadays there is only one Fujimi-zaka in center part of Tokyo. By constructing a apartment house, that interrupted viewing to Mt. Fuji from the top of slope of "Fujimi-zaka", occurred against movement of habitants.

3. The snow shapes on the mountainsides in early spring used to show the time of planting. These snow shapes were benamed like a rabbit, horse, farmer, bird, carps etc. The Role as a farmer's almanac is disappearing but actually it has the other value for habitants.

1. TERAKADO, AIBA, CHIBA, KAWAMOTO(1999): Study on the vista-conservation of Nippori-Fujimi-zaka, Daiichijuutakukennsetukyoukai Foundation,
2. 147p.2.YAMASAKI, Noriko(1999): Crisis of Nippori-Fujimizaka, Chiikizasshi YANESSEN No.60, pp.40-45
3. YAMASAKI, Noriko(2000): Crisscross around Nippori-Fujimizaka, Chiikizasshi YANESSEN No.61, pp.28-37
4. YAMASAKI, Noriko(2000): Afterwards Nippori-Fujimizaka, Chiikizasshi YANESSEN No.62, pp.40-42
5. <http://fujimizaka.yanesen.org/indeex-e.html>

ADOVOCACY OF VISTA-HERITAGE——THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF VIEWING TO MOUNTAIN FORSETTING IN JAPAN

Akasaka Makoto / Japan
assoc. Professor of Chiba University



Fig.1 Mt. Hiei from the garden of Entsuji-Temple



Fig.4 Kanagawa-oki uranami, Fugaku 36 Landscapes by Katsushika Hokusai



Fig.2 the setting: Mt. Hiei -the garden -recognizer (me)



Fig.5 Small Fuji of Fuji-kou (Otowa-fuji), okokuji-Temple Tokyo



Fig.3 Honjo-tatekawa, Fugaku 36 Landscapes by Katsushika Hokusai



Fig.6 Location of the east end of Shuri-castle and Bengatake

Section I: Defining the setting of monuments and sites:
 The significance of tangible and intangible cultural and natural qualities
 Section I: Définir le milieu des monuments et des sites-
 Dimensions matérielles et immatérielles, valeur culturelle et naturelle

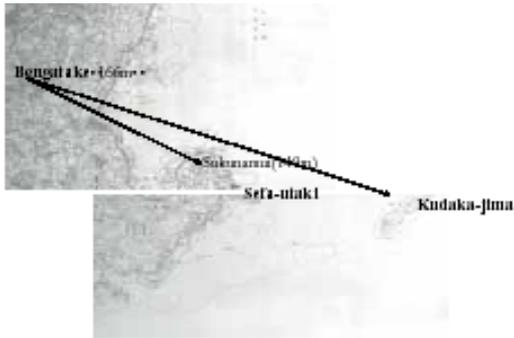


Fig 7 Location of Bengatake - Sefa-utaki (Sukunamui) - Kudaka-jima

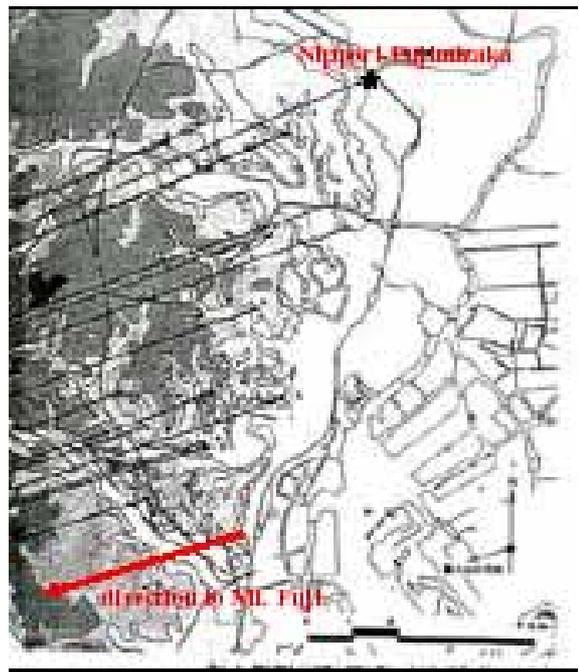


fig.10 16 Viewing points of direction to Mt. Fuji



Fig 8 Vista to Bengakake from Shuri-castle-park(east end of the castle)

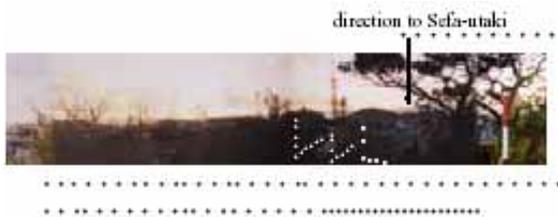


Fig 9 View from the top of Bengatake to the direction east (Sefa-utaki)

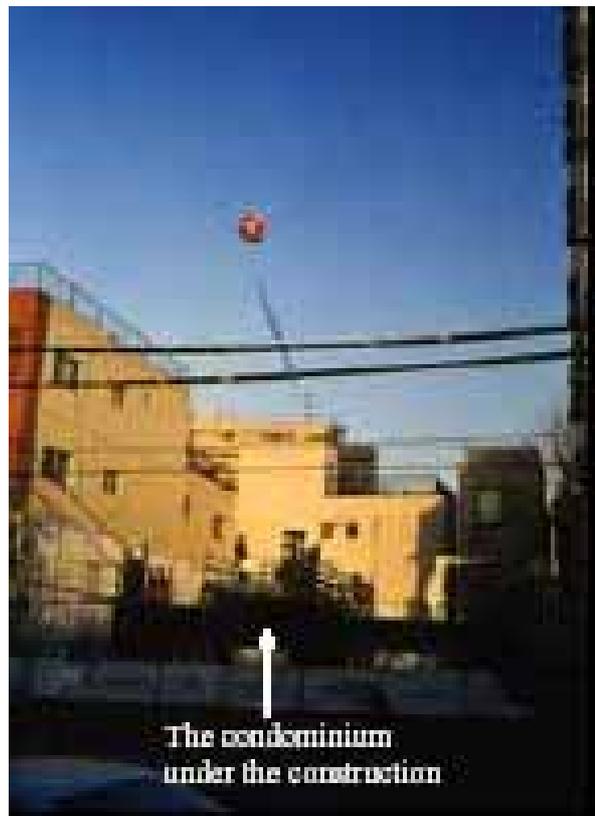


fig.11 searching the height of the condominium by using balloon

Section I: Defining the setting of monuments and sites:
 The significance of tangible and intangible cultural and natural qualities
 Section I: Définir le milieu des monuments et des sites-
 Dimensions matérielles et immatérielles, valeur culturelle et naturelle



Fig 12 Mt. Fuji and the sunset (Nippori-Fujimizaka, 29. Jan. 2000)

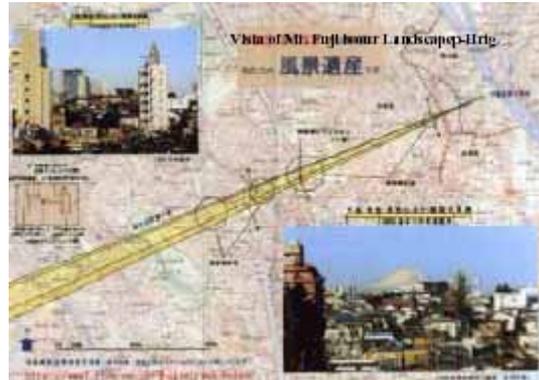


Fig .15 Leaflet of the campaign for saving the vista of Mt. Fuji



Fig 13 "Mt. Fuji + sunset" watchers



Fig 16 Snow-rabbit on the mountainside of Azuma-kofuji



Fig 14 the distance from Nippori-fujimizaka to Mt. Fuji



Fig 17 Rabbit-figures as charm and the votive picture for sericulture