



A report on realizing area improvements
through residential participation:

Aiming at city planning that emphasizes the
joy of living together

The case of
Kitagata

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A REPORT ON REALIZING AREA IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH RESIDENTIAL PARTICIPATION :

— AIMING AT CITY PLANNING THAT EMPHASIZES "THE JOY OF LIVING TOGETHER" —

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I ENCOUNTERING KITAGATA

My involvement with the city planning of the Kitagata District of Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka Pref., Japan, started in August, 1983. Before that, I had been in Kochi Prefecture, where my office is located, and for eight years I had been involved in city planning for Buraku areas, promotion plans for cities, towns and villages, city planning surveys, etc.

There was a real need for living environment improvements in the Kitagata District, the largest Buraku area in Kyushu, and the Buraku Liberation Movement in the area strongly proposed plans to the city, but none were seriously taken up. Yet, the need for this planning was carefully considered by the Kitakyushu City administration, and was deemed the most important factor in the Buraku Integration Measures after an interim report by the Integration Council stressed the need for drastic urban renewal.

Upon receiving this report, an organization for the redevelopment of the district was created. At first, in November, 1982, the Construction Bureau's District Improvement Office was set up in the main city office as an administrative window dealing with urban planning in Kitagata. (It was later renamed The Building Bureau's Kitagata District Improvement Office.) Then in April of the next year, as a field office, it was moved to its present location, adjoining the Kitagata District. In June, 1983, the Kitagata Council for the Progress of Living Environment Improvements (later referred to as the Progress Council) was founded by neighborhood association representatives from Kitagata and the surrounding areas.

After considering their options, the Kitakyushu City Office first asked my company, the Wakatake City Planning Institute, to work on basic planning and surveying for this urban renewal project at the start of 1983. At first, our company respectfully turned down the survey request, because we felt it was not a matter of merely saying "good-bye" after finishing the planning. Rather, the premise that close connections with the Kitagata District planning would continue into the future had to be considered, and we decided this would only be possible for planners and researchers in the area itself. However, we finally decided to accept the survey

request, and since our basic policy is to work while physically encountering the area's true state while studying its history, culture, community and social movements, we moved into district while working.

II MOVING INTO KITAGATA

① A House on Main Street

I and the three college students helping me (they were undergraduate and graduate students majoring in city planning at Toyo University's Engineering Department) moved in on a hot August day in 1983. The house we were to live in faced the Main Street of the district. My term "Main Street" has a nice ring to it, but the local people called it "90 cm Road", because it was a narrow street only one meter wide. Since many people came and went on it from dawn to midnight, it was a good place to measure the local people's daily communication. Our furniture and things also came by this road, which caught many peoples' eyes, and they thought we were Kyushu University students moving in. Since only one window separated us from Main Street, talkative women would warmly ask, "you fellows got something to eat?", or "did you take a bath?" as they passed by.

Along this street, there were benches located here and there, which were good places for chatting. We made every effort to give a positive impression at these gatherings, and talked about who we were and what we were doing. At first, people were suspicious and thought "who on Earth are these guys?", and as we also felt embarrassed, initially everyone was stiff and formal, but gradually people came to call out, "sit and let's talk", and we were then able to bring up the subject of how the area would change.



[Members of our group chatting with women on Main street]

② Outsider's Performance in a Large Song Contest

After arriving in Kitagata, we tried hard to actively participate in social gatherings. For example, there are three popular and bustling public baths in Kitagata, and after our portraits were put up in the changing rooms of each bathhouse,

people came to say, "they're just like the pictures on "Wanted" posters; it really looks like them."

We also actively participated in major events, like district sports festivals, softball tournaments, and croquet tournaments. Whenever we attended these events, we met new people, and we felt an increasing sense of affinity with the area. The highlight was attending a song contest that was part of a Buraku Liberation Festival. The four of us and five city office workers painted our faces black, stiffened our hair with pomade, put on happi coats and sunglasses, and then appeared on stage, greeted with applause and cheers. Since there were about 300 people listening, it was a rather effective appeal. After that day, there were many times when people we did not know at all came up and said, "you're the fellow who blackened his face and put on the funny act, aren't you?"

③Our Work Place Some How Becomes A Private Children's Hall!?

For the first three years, we worked in a borrowed room in the Civic Center which had been prepared as our office (Note 1). About one month after starting work, we received some cute visitors who would curiously peer into our office from behind the door. Soon 5th and 6th grade students came to see us everyday, asking, "what are you doing?" as they watched us work. Or they would say, "oh! lots of color Magic Markers! Can we use them?", and then proceed to draw a picture. Their first drawings were portraits of our group. These made us very happy, so we put them up on the wall. The children saw that their works were well appreciated, so everyday they came in to draw, and before we knew it, our walls were covered with pictures. They also tried to help us work, and amused us by trying to act like "good assistants." Later, they started coming in and out of our house, eating the food we cooked, wrestling, sometimes even bringing their homework, and we were pleased with the creation of the "Wakatake Private Children's Hall."

In this way, we got to know the children, and we keenly felt the need for a place where children could freely gather to play and learn after school. The construction of the Children's Center, mentioned later, can be thought of as a reaction to this realization. Anyway, with our home and work place as a base, we actively began our district planning.

III KITAGATA'S "TOWN CONDITION"

①Problems With The Town's Living Environment

This district is located 4km south of Kokura JR Station, and has an area of 34 hectares. With 1,920 households and a population of approximately 5000, it is the largest Buraku Integration Area (Dowa area) in Kyushu. The streets in the area are paved, but some of these maze-like alleys are so narrow that one must turn side-

ways to get through. If by some chance there is a fire, even fire truck could not enter the alleys. Along these alleys, aging wooden houses and apartments are crowded together, over half of which are substandard buildings (Note 2). Also, the area of each lot is small, and there is a lack of open space and parks. Looking at these substandard conditions of aging buildings, lack of space, and the lagging construction of fundamental items such as roads and parks, there was a pressing need to immediately start working on their elimination.



[Densely crowded and aging homes.]

②A Town That Gives The Feeling Of "The Joy Of Living Together"

In describing the living conditions of Kitagata, I started off with negative images of crowded, deteriorating homes and a lack of roads, but perhaps this approach shows a lack of consideration for the charms of Kitagata. From a different perspective, the maze-like alleys, into which no car can enter, form the basis of this community, and they hold its charm. For example, the streets are always clean, with not even one speck of trash lying around. Most of the paths are formed where two private lots meet, and one can sense that there are such unsaid rules as, "because everyone must use these streets, no one should throw garbage on them", and "since everyone walks through here, we should keep them clean in order to pass easily."

Also, because the houses completely fill the lots, plants and flowers are grown in the very narrow space between the buildings and the alleys, which gives a peaceful feeling to those who pass by. Furthermore, hand made benches located in the alleys are places where people can rest and gather easily, and one can see people exchanging information while sitting in the sun, or neighbors and passers-by leisurely talking while enjoying the cool evenings. Thus, people here have developed very close human relationships in which if a companion draws near, both people can skilfully protect their privacy and still be subtly enquiring towards each other.

[Various uses of roads into which no car can enter]



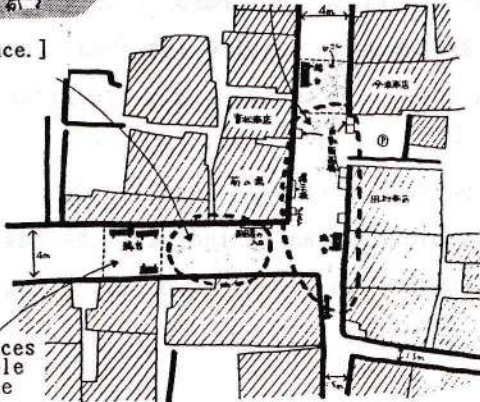
[lively Bon Odori Dance.]



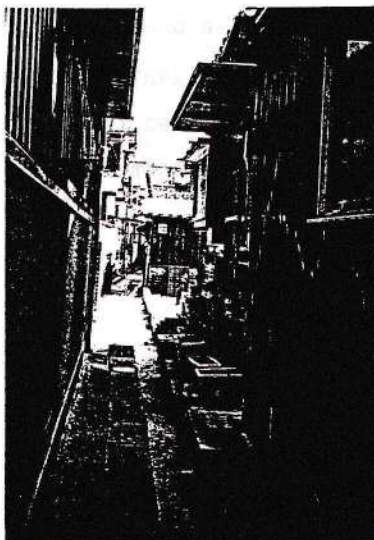
[lively gathering place with shoppers and people leaving the Public Bath.]



[Above the roads, there are places for drying clothes, which people can use for protection from the sun and rain while talking.]



In view of this, one can say that in this town there is joy in living together; that is, people living here have grown accustomed to knowing each other intimately, which can only come from living closely together. We dubbed this the "Kitagata Style." This way of life was developed during the long history of the area. Yet, scenes resembling this "Kitagata Style" (I think it can be called "an old style town feeling") are not limited to this district, but at one time could be seen in many places. Even now, such areas remain, although most have been lost to advancing urban redevelopment recently.



[Constantly cleaned streets.]



[Idle conversation on a road side bench.]

As we were progressing with the plans to remove the problems connected with the present living conditions, there was the lingering question of whether this charm will continue after the improvements are made.

IV STARTING TO STRUGGLE WITH THE DISTRICT PLANNING

① Creating A System That Allows The Local People To Participate In Planning

We thought that unless we received the enthusiastic participation and full understanding of the local people, it would be difficult to actually plan and effectively work in the district. Therefore, with the support of the city, we made an effort to create a system that enabled the local people to participate from the surveying and planning level. The main points are given below.

1. Founding And Running A Citizen's Association

In order to advance planning which included the residents as leading participants, it was first necessary to set up an organization composed of these people. There are several ways of doing this, but in this case, representatives of the citizen groups in both the Kitagata District and the surrounding areas formed the Progress Council. It was the job of this council to completely understand the living conditions and the opinions of the local people, and to make sure that these were reflected in the planning. In order to accomplish this task, the citizens associations were divided into block committees, study committees, etc., thereby creating various channels of information, as well as places for discussion. Then, the council both summarized the many opinions coming from these sources, and helped residents understand what was occurring.

As of February 1990, the Progress Council had met 49 times, with various discussions concerning the contents of the planning and ways to carry out the work. In the end, however, the city's leadership in the management of this project stood out, and the Progress Council's transformation into an independent organization was not completed, which is still the present situation. It is hoped that an independent managing organization embodying the ideal of "we will govern our own town by ourselves rather than merely leaving it up to the government" will come to life.


2. Publishing The City Planning News

In order to encourage the enthusiastic participation of the district residents in the project, it was necessary to provide them with appropriate news at the appropriate times. Also, in order to make the planning a part of the whole community, it was vital to continually announce the Progress Council's discussions, etc. When there is a lack of information, rumors start to fly, and it takes a good

deal of effort to put them to rest. As one way of getting out basic information on the project, The City Planning News was created and delivered to every home in the area. In The News, the information was arranged on both sides of B4 size paper, and was presented as simply as possible with the pronunciation of difficult Chinese characters included, so that everyone, from children to adults, could read it. As of February 1990, 31 issues have been published.

[Front cover of The City Planning News, Issue #17, which explains the planning process.]

まちづくり
みんなの手で
すすめよう!



まちづくり

ニュース

第17号
昭和60年1月28日
北方地区環境改善推進
協議会


北方地区環境整備計画に対し国の 事業認可おける

—— 昨年12月21日 事業認可決定 ——

事業認可をうけるに至った経過を報告します

1. <計画案にもとづく話し合い段階>
昨年7月に市から計画案(たたき台)が示されて10月までの間に、各町内で2回の説明・検討会を開きました。そして、計画案に対する皆さんのいろいろなご意見を伺いました。
4. <計画案の確定>
『相談コーナー』他でお聞きした皆さんのご意見等について、推進協議会で話し合いました。その結果、計画の詳細については今後ひきつづき検討する必要があるが、計画の基本的な方針についてはほぼまとまると判断し、修正案を北方地区環境整備のための基本計画案として確定しました。
5. <事業の認可手続を及ぶ認可決定>
確定した計画案にもとづいて、国の事業認可をうけるための書類を整え、12月18日に申請し21日には国からの認可を得ました。

2. <計画案の修正段階>
皆さんから出されたご意見について、推進協議会を檢討を重ね、一軒一軒にかかわる問題については、事業実施段階で十分につめることを前提にしたうえで、計画の骨組にかかわる内容についての修正を行いました。
3. <修正案の検討段階>
修正を行った計画案(修正案)を多くの皆さんに見ていただき、検討していただくため、修正案を各町内ごとに掲示しました。そして、市民館に『相談コーナー』を開設し、修正案についてのご意見等いろいろなお話を聞かせていただきました。



At first, the Progress Council was the publisher in name, but actually we assumed this task. Later, it was necessary to officially report the work progress, so The News came to be a joint publication of the Progress Council and the Kitatgata District Improvement Office (the city's field office); we helped with this, too.

One more purpose for publishing The News was that by putting it straight into the hands of the residents, the Council members hoped it would act as a medium between the Council and the community. Furthermore, to provide information not fully covered in The News, and because there were requests and questions coming to the Council from the community, it is now hoped that The News is supplemented by "face to face" direct information exchanges. I am not sure how far this is actually being carried out.

3. Starting A New Movement To Take A New Look At The District

In general, to determine plans for a project like this, the planners involved conduct a survey on the present state of the area in question. But up to this point, there was little information shared with the Kitagata residents. We realized that this stage in the work should be treated carefully. By becoming part of the community, and working with the residents to survey the history of the district's formation, as well as its present living, housing and industrial conditions, we could see the need to both bring out the district's problems and its good points. It is important for the residents to reaffirm their connection with all the problems of the area, and not only those environmental problems stemming from the space limitations of each person's home. Furthermore, the residents could re-evaluate the actual state of discrimination, and see the need to take up measures towards its elimination. The "Great Maze Festival", discussed later, was held for this purpose.

4. Conducting A Questionnaire

In order to fully understand the residents's evaluation of the state of their homes and the living conditions in the district, as well as their views and desires concerning living environment alterations, a questionnaire was sent to each household. Plans for the improvements in an area must be realistic for them to work. In terms of planning, the opinions of the residents (concretely speaking, are they willing to sell their homes to the city or not?; in the case of road planning, will they help by moving their home?) are vital reference material.

In this sense, the questionnaire was important not only because it allowed direct participation in the planning. At the first stage of the planning and surveying, there were many people who felt surprise or indifference towards the project. (In many cases, criticism and mistrust of past government plans created this attitude.) In this situation, passing out the questionnaires to each home encouraged interest in the planning. People would say things like, "there seems to be something to this", and "perhaps this time the government will seriously improve conditions." Thus, the questionnaire was connected with the activation of citizen awareness.

The above is a summary of the questionnaire's aim, but a note must be added

about the severe limitations of this primary level survey. For the district residents, a survey at this stage pressed them for answers even though they had been given only a small amount of information; this led us to believe that in many cases, we were not entrusted with the residents' true opinions. These answers were views and intentions held only at this initial stage, something which would change as more detailed information became available. For planning, this questionnaire was basic resource material for making a rough plan for discussion, which, after a process of presentation, discussion and correction by the residents, would eventually bring out their hopes and requirements. One can say that this situation unavoidable.

5. Presenting The Plan To The District Residents

In order to resolve the problems concerning the project which were raised by the survey, we decided upon a rough draft of the plan which put forth basic designs and concepts. This rough draft was to be corrected and improved by the residents, and we thought that we could obtain general consent only after allowing enough time for a full discussion of the plan's content. However, after presenting the basic plan to the city, a long time passed before its contents were made public. (The city administration required six months to examine policy, etc.) As a result, the application deadline for project approval drew very near (there was also a feeling of pressure stemming from the worry of going over the expiration date set for "The Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvements"), so there was not sufficient time for complete and detailed explanations and discussion of the plan. Due to these circumstances, the course from the initial presentation of the project plan in the district to the final decision went as follows.

First of all, the plan was presented to the Progress Council and discussed, and along with its introduction in The City Planning News, each block had meetings to explain and investigate the plan. Based upon the views expressed in these meetings, policies were altered, and the plan was then studied once more by the council. Due to the problem of the project approval deadline, it was not possible to hold block study meetings once again. In their place, the revised plan was posted on the bulletin board of every neighborhood association, and we planned to send it to each home through The City Planning News. Furthermore, we opened a "Discussion Corner" in one room at the Civic Center as a place to hear residents' opinions. The final plan was based upon this process, but this was over a period of just four months, and we could not help feeling that it was done too quickly. Because of the unavoidable rush at this stage, there was a price to be paid when it came to carrying out the work. (Details will be given later.)

② Development Of The Plan's General Outline And Work

Along with creating a system for resident participation, we continued to

develop the plan itself, and in January, 1984, we presented to the city an initial plan with the following five points:

[BASIC POLICIES]

1. Planning a city which can be called "home"
 - Environmental improvements as one part of the Buraku Liberation Movement.
2. Forming an open community
 - Maintaining the district's unity.
3. Creating a safe and comfortable living environment
 - Arrangement of housing basics;
 - Increased fire protection;
 - Supplying good quality housing;
 - Guaranteeing the standard of living;
 - Advancing policies for private home ownership;
 - Using the district's good qualities;
 - Creating a symbol for the area;
 - Creating areas for meeting and contact.
4. Practical city planning
 - Emphasizing reality.
5. City planning emphasizing the residents
 - Respecting the residents' opinions and their participation from the planning level on;
 - Perfecting an organization that creates the "town", and an organization that maintains it;
 - Going from "city planning" to "human planning."

Studies by the city administration and the residents' were added to the basic plan, and in February, 1984, the Progress Council added this condition: "we agree to all the points. Specifically, we will consider each point in further detail as it reaches the level of actual work". Then, in December of the same year, the national government gave its approval of the project as per "The Law on Special Measures for Buraku Improvement Projects" (Note 3). Thus, at this point there was a transition from planning to the physical work itself.

The contents of the general work requirements were:

1. Of the 1920 homes in the whole area, over 1000 were to be bought and torn down by the city or moved.
2. Using this newly created open space, the roads were arranged so that each house adjoined a road over 4m in width; parks, open areas, and the

installation of sewer lines were also planned.

3. Altogether, 407 units of public housing apartments (Note 4), were to be constructed with over 300 additional private homes to be built by the people themselves.

Also, the cost of the projects partially funded by the national government was estimated to be ¥20,000,000,000, and the city would spend 11 years carrying out the work.

In terms of this project's method of development, it differed greatly from the one used by the city in the past (i.e. the Complete Clearance Method- in the area to be improved, all homes are torn down or moved, the land is remade, and mid and high rise public housing is constructed.) In the results of the initial opinion poll, about 30% of the people did not want to sell their homes, and taking into consideration the 50% who wished to rebuild on their present land, a sectional renewal method was indicated as best.

In the first year of work, the measurement and surveying of homes was conducted in order to start work. To smoothly proceed with the purchasing of those private homes designated for renewal, there was an urgent need to both build public housing for the displaced residents, and to acquire land for the building of substitute homes. We mainly directed our efforts to these problems.

As a result, in January of 1985, work started on the public housing, which was the first construction in the district, and, as the start of the environmental improvement projects, a ground breaking ceremony was held. From then on, due to the strong effort made by the city, the work proceeded at a high pitch, and by the end of February, 1990, about 691 houses had been purchased and demolished or removed, and in their place, there was construction on 250 units of public housing (of which 106 were completed). Also the acquisition of land for roads and parks progressed; in general, the rate of progress reached 60%.

[The fast pace of dismantling houses - in the fore ground is the lot of a removed house. Many homes had been built in this kind of narrow space.]



[A road being built over the lot of a removed house.]



In addition, while this construction differed from the Buraku Area Improvement Projects, the Children's Center was fit into the basic plans and built. As the construction of roads planned by the city progressed, the form of the district changed.

③ Adjustment Of The Work Plans

In this situation where the work closely affected the residents, a variety of opinions expressing both positive and negative evaluations of the new district planning started to come from the residents. The construction of public housing, and the arrangements for guaranteeing substitute land proceeded with difficulty. Thus, some people worried, because their old home was torn down, and not having a place to live, they had to find temporary housing. Others worried about the disintegration of "close relationships" (i.e., their sense of community) which came from living together and helping each other in the streets of the district. On the other hand, some people viewed the construction work positively. In each case, we felt each problem as if were our own. In this sense, I can say that each family's views of the planning became very clear to us.

As I mentioned before, when the project received national work approval in December, 1985, the people in the district accepted the project with this condition: "at present, the general plan is accepted, but as for details, the views of each family must be taken into consideration during the actual work." As to why the details had not been developed by the time the construction approval was granted, there are the following reasons:

1. Before the plans's contents could be made public to the residents, the city administration required a long time for its own studies, because the plans, arrangements, and methods we proposed differed from those used by the city in the past.

2. At that time, "The Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects" had only two years remaining until its expiration, so we were pressed to apply for national work approval quickly.

3. As a result, even by using several methods in a very limited amount of time, there was not enough time to fully explain and discuss the plan's details with the residents. I think this was a big factor.

In order not to lose the time it would have taken for each family to clearly state its opinions, we concentrated on developing the details. Before the expiration, in March of 1992, of "The Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning the Projects Designated for Buraku Area Improvements" (valid 4/87~3/92), which came after "The Law on Specific Measures For Regional

Buraku
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Improvements" (valid 4/82~3/87), our policy aimed at generally finishing the project. In 1988, we worked on planning revisions, and added studies to make the plan's goals more attainable. Finally, during the revisions we studied the two questions of how to create a "Kitagata Style" and how to realize it practically.

V AIMING AT CITY PLANNING THAT CREATES THE "KITAGATA STYLE"

① Studying How To Create The "Kitagata Style"

In 1987 we gained assistance from the Endo Research Center of Kumamoto University's Architectural School on the practice of resident participation in community and home design, and we took detailed surveys of the residents' lifestyles. Based upon these survey results, a group was formed to increase knowledge on how to best develop the "Kitagata Style" through design revisions and the actual progress in building housing units (public housing and private family homes), facilities, and roads. This study group was formed on a proposal made by the Planning Director of the Kitagata District Improvement Office (known as the Improvement Office). Beginning with Dr. Endo and his research staff at Kumamoto University, the group was composed of architecture teachers from Nagasaki Sogo University, designers involved with planning the Arita Town project in Saga Prefecture, the architects in charge of designing the public housing in the Kitagata District, the city's Building Bureau Director, the Improvement Office staff, and the chairman of the Progress Council.

This study group met many times between September, 1987, and March, 1988, and after many discussions concerning ideas for creating the "Kitagata Style", it was able to put in order the policies and themes of the project's revised plans. Up to the present, a number of efforts to concretely produce these policies and themes have been advanced, and some are now in progress. I would like to introduce some of them.

② Spurring Replacement Housing Through The "Communal Housing Proposal" And The "Communal Method"

Listening to the district's residents, one could hear the older people using the term "communal", as in "going to the communal bath", and "using the communal well." In other words, it means a number of people doing something together, or it is used to express a communal object. We felt this term expressed well the district's character, and we used it as a key word when thinking about and working on the city planning and housing designs. Just as we began to use this word "communal", a project to produce a pamphlet called the House Planning Information Box, which easily explained home design, was begun in order to help the residents in rebuilding their homes. Like the study group for considering the "Kitagata Style" mentioned above, this project was also proposed by the Improvement Office's Planning Director.

Receiving help from young architects working in Kitakyushu City, work on the pamphlet proceeded along with the study group's other activities.

The House Planning Information Box also took up "housing reconstruction through the communal method" as its main theme, and decided upon the "communal type" housing listed below. No matter which type, the lots were purchased by parents and children, brothers and sisters, relatives, and good friends, who basically considered building homes together, which easily enabled the sharing of gardens, etc

1. Kitagata Communal Type- Designed for people with single families and financing problems who have maintained their land, but cannot rebuild their home, and who hesitate to enter public housing.

2. Two Family Type- For two generations of the same family who want to live together. While ensuring each generation's way of life, it allows parents and children to live together.

3. Communal Type For The Elderly- Developed so elderly families can live together and help each other.

4. Communal Type For The Young- Intended to continue the advantages of the district by having young married couples, and young people who take pride in the district, live together.

For each type, appropriate households were chosen and visited several times, and while listening to their views, we actually designed their homes. Sadly to say, there was not enough time to do this kind of planning for Type 1 style homes, so we were not able to design these homes after hearing the families' views.

Along with proposing the model plans for each type of home designed in this fashion, we completed the Housing Planning Information Box (41 pages, printed in color on A4 size paper) by adding basic information on home design. This pamphlet was carried by the city officials as they entered into negotiations to purchase land and homes for renovation, and its designs were recommended to people who considered rebuilding by themselves.



[The pamphlet for home planning- Housing Planning Information Box]

Going back for a moment, there was one other reason for visiting each home and exchanging views on the home designs. We strongly believed that at this opportunity, it would be good for the residents to actually experience the process of house planning, allowing them to see how they think and feel about this process, and see that their views are expressed in the designs.

Actually, during these opinion exchanges, one family member might say, "a house needs to have a wide Japanese style guest room on the south side", only to have another member retort, "What!? You shouldn't be taken by such formalities. Why is it necessary to put a room only used a few times each year in the best place? Wouldn't it be better to use that space for rooms used everyday, like the kitchen and the living room?" I think this gave the residents a chance to personally think about the meaning of "designing."

From these experiences, we created a "Home Planning Consultation Corner" in the Improvement Office, and, responding to the needs of those people who came in for consultation, architects were included on the staff through a "system for dispatching home planning consultants." In these ways, we were able to increase the exchange of ideas concerning plans and view points between residents and planners.

③ "Resident Participation Style" Public Housing

Up to this point, a variety of public housing units have been designed and built. We had the architects in charge of designing these units participate in the "Kitagata Style" study group. They then designed these units with a greater understanding of the district's life style and character. Thanks to this effort, the room plans were close to a 「田」 shape, which the residents felt was easy to use. (In this plan, if the sliding doors between the rooms are opened, four rooms may be used as one big room.) Also, skill and attention were devoted on ways to utilize the communal spaces in these units, such as walkways and gardens, while roads and paths were designed to maintain the charm they had possessed until now. The units being built by Kitakyushu city are completely different from those built in the past, and I feel that the city's great effort and the epoch making nature of the project should be highly regarded.

[Five story public housing with aerial walkways on the third floor.]

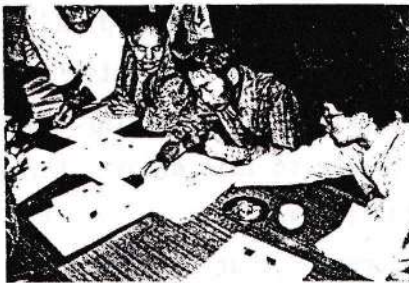


[Public housing with open verandas on the first floor.]



From 1988, we went a step further in handling the project by starting construction on the "Resident Participation Style" public housing units. Previously housing complexes (including public ones) were supplied to occupants only after full completion. However, in the case of the "Resident Participation Style" units, we first determined future occupants, held discussions with them from the planning stage, and even though space was limited, we then planned rooms to fit the desires of each family. (In an extreme case, if there were ten units desired, the room designs differed with each unit.) Because we took into consideration the residents' opinions when planning the walkways, gardens, and the complex as a whole, our methods were quite progressive. This "planning with the hopeful occupant" technique was considered a type of the above mentioned "communal public housing", so amongst our friends, we referred to it as "publicly run communal."

This housing is publicly-managed rental housing, but unlike regular public housing in which five or ten years is normal occupancy length, there was a tendency for people to move in permanently. For this very reason, it was vital to use the "Resident Participation Style", and that is the reason for this style's high level of viability. As of February, 1990, the interviews with the concerned households were completed, and work was begun.



["Resident Participation Style" public housing - holding discussions with resident from the planning stage]

④ Planning Facilities With Personality

In July of 1988, a children's center, desired by children and adults alike, was completed. This center was constructed to function both as a children's hall, and as a physical education center (arena). Since its construction, it has been used by many children and adults everyday. It is also frequently used by people from Kitagata's surrounding neighborhoods; looking towards the future, it may now conceal the great possibility of becoming a focal point of exchange between the people inside and outside Kitagata.

Incidentally, the various projects involved in the construction were not only for the sake of planning a facility with a unique personality. When considering the city planning for the whole district, the effort and methods used were exceptional

and I would like to describe them in some detail.

Construction of the center fell under the jurisdiction of several city offices. Whereas work concerned with the improvements of living conditions came under the care of the Building Bureau, construction of the center was under the jurisdiction of both the Welfare Bureau and the Education Council (later referred to as the Welfare Bureau, et al.). In this system, construction usually begins after the School Construction Office of the Building Bureau is commissioned with the work. However, in this case, the Improvement Office and the Progress Council oversaw the project together. Concerning the planning efforts for the center, I thought a very important point was how well the Progress Council understood the children's actual playing conditions and their desires for the center. Therefore, as the need for a study group to help the Progress Council became clear, the Building Section Committee was formed from area residents. Receiving help from kindergartens and schools, the Building Section Committee started as a movement to understand the realities of play conditions and the children's desires. Furthermore, they studied other successful children's centers in Kitakyushu City, setting a new precedent, and held slide show discussions. Then, after many such meetings, their Report on Hopes Concerning the Children's Center, which contained their findings, was presented to the Progress Council. In this report, views on the practical use and placement of the center were laid out, and it brought together articles on desires for facility arrangements and room designs, as well as building designs which would bring these hopes to life. It also included drawings and visual layouts by the Building Section Committee.

Recognizing the soundness of this report, the Progress Council presented to the city its own Report on Requirements based upon the Building Section Committee's work. Some days later, the city's plans and its responses to the Report on Requirements were presented by the Welfare Bureau. In the response, up to 80% of the resident's desires were accepted. However, some remaining problems, such as the building's design and height, required further study.

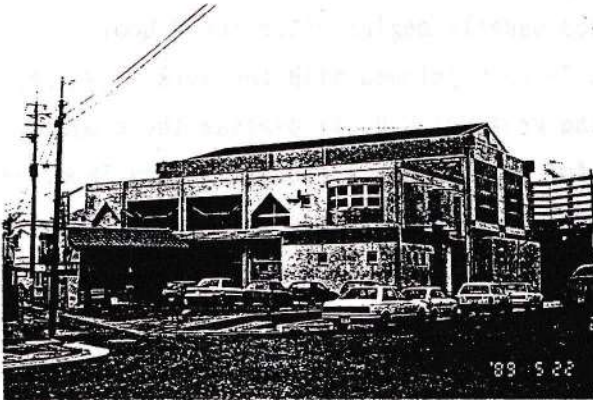
At this point, we created a group in order to consider the Children's Center designs, asking practicing young architects, kindergarten attendants, and school teachers for their help. This group brought together practical plans which would enable the center to create the "Kitagata Style", and which were then presented to the city.

Special aspects of the plans were as follows:

1. The original proposal to place the children's hall on the first floor and the sports center on the second floor was altered by placing both on the first floor so they are more accessible, and small windows were placed in the walls so people could look in from the outside;
2. The children's hall was turned into a two story facility, with open

ventilation space;

3. To capture the atmosphere of the area's streets, open verandas were placed on the first floor, in order to emphasize the connection between the children inside and the passers-by outside.

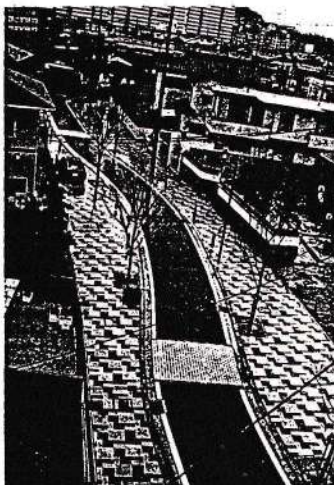


[The Children's Center-the children's hall section is in the front half, and the physical education center is to the rear.]

Eventually, the city's detailed plan, based on these proposals, was accepted by the Progress Council and construction was begun, resulting in the completion of the present Children's Center. As seen above, through a process of individualized building planning, the voluntary Building Section Committee revealed its influence. Because this group was separate from the Progress Council, and its efforts were not obvious to all, I feel it deserved special recognition. Furthermore, the self confidence gained by the residents through the Building Section Committee's work became a source of motivation for later projects. I place great hope in this new movement in city planning born from these events.

⑤ Planning Streets That Are Easy And Enjoyable To Walk Though

Rather than design dreary, noisy, and dangerous roads which give priority to cars, we studied how to create clearly defined streets that are both easy and enjoyable to walk on, and which preserve the functions and benefits found in the open air walkways until now. At present, work on these roads is progressing.



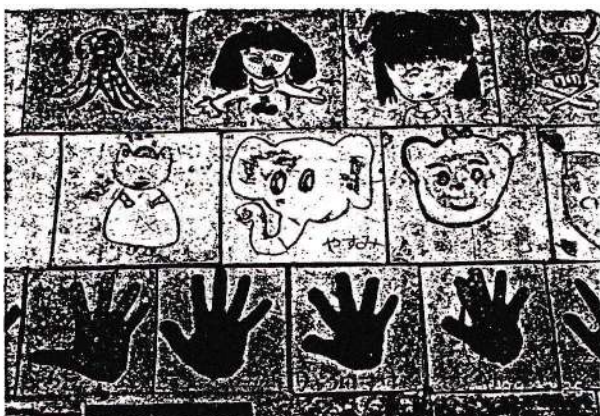
[One completed section of "streets that are easy to walk along."]

⑥ Realizing The "Enjoyable City Planning" Movement

Along with efforts towards planning facilities and homes giving life to the "Kitagata Style", as noted in sections ②-⑤, the following projects were carried out to increase the district residents' interest in town planning by including elements of "fun and play."

1. Inlaying hand made tiles in one part of the Children's Center.

While building the Children's Center, we received help from kindergarten, first, and second grade students by having them make tiles by hand. The finished tiles were then inlaid in one area inside the center. Not only will the tiles be a good memory for these children in the future, they will also increase adult interest in the center.



[Tiles made by children.]

2. Holding continuous events for the Children's Center's Inauguration.

Two months before the center's inauguration ceremony (July 19, 1988), we began talking to youths in the district about what kind of activities to have in commemoration of the event. About one month later, the Committee for Implementing the Children's Center's Inauguration Ceremony was formed (referred to below as the Inauguration Committee.) It consisted of the Steering Committees from both the Children's Center and the Civic Center, representatives from the Progress Council, and both elementary and junior high school teachers. The following events were adopted from this committee's findings:

- A. On the day of the ceremony, July 19th, there would be the handing out of Japanese "mochi" rice cakes, a puppet show, and a performance by the junior high school brassband;
- B. From July 21st to the 23rd, there would be the formal opening of the theater, and a grade school volleyball tournament, both in the physical education center;

C. A lecture on city planning was arranged for July 26th;

D. September 11th was the day set for the "Great Maze Festival."

Each event was carried out with careful preparation, and with the participation of many area residents, all were a great success.

Among these activities, the grade school volleyball tournament had a strong effect on the Kitagata District. Originally, this was an annual event at the grade school gym, but aside from parents, very few people went to see it. However, because it was held that year in the Kitagata District Children's Center, there were many spectators; ultimately, many adult teams were formed by people inspired by the playing students. In any event, young and old alike enjoyed volleyball on the same court, and when I saw everyone share in the fun, I chuckled with joy; it was truly a splendid sight.

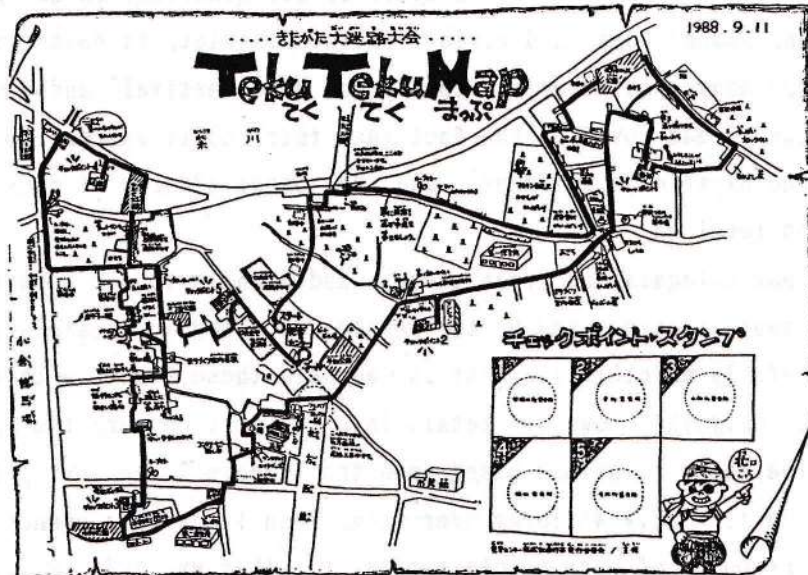
3. Holding the "Great Maze Festival".

While this was included as one event connected with the Children's Center Inauguration, in my own mind it was a main event in the town planning movement (i.e., one way to look at the district in a new light.) The "Great Maze Festival" project was a way to expose residents to both advantages and disadvantages of their district, and to do so in an enjoyable way - under the premise of a treasure hunt game. Children and adults would walk together through the maze-like roads and paths of Kitagata. During the walk, they would stop at check points, which consisted of games or factual questions about the area. Everybody then saw for themselves the realities of the district and the construction' progress.

However, when we thought of holding this, the Inauguration Committee and I worried about what kind of events would be suitable. I knew that the Endo Study Group of Kumamoto University held "Street Corner Orienteering" every year, so at this point I quickly borrowed a video tape, and after watching it together with the Inauguration Committee, we studied what activities would work for our "Great Maze Festival."

The start of the preparations coincided with summer vacation, so the teachers and staff of the Children's Center worked with children in the afternoon to build equipment, while volunteers, starting with the Inauguration Committee, worked in the evenings. For a month one could see unskilled and inexperienced youths working side by side with old men who made stilts and squirt guns with apparent ease and skill, while old ladies neatly and deftly twisted straw into rope. Even now, I cannot forget the lively and cheerful faces of those men and women.

[People started the "Great Maze Festival" with this map in hand.]



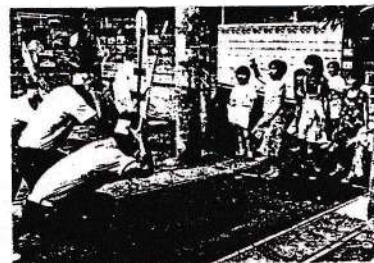
[Everyone making tools.]



[Walking and walking with map in hand.]



[Carefully discussing plans.]



[Competing against the "Paper, Scissors, Stones Man" - at each check point in the "Great Maze Festival", an adult wearing a paper mask, known as the "Paper, Scissors, Stone Man", stood guard. In order to pass the check point, a child from the touring group had to beat the guardian in a game of Paper, Scissors, Stone.]

We discovered that Kitagata has great energy, and along with our hope that this energy would always be treasured by the people, we vowed to create city planning that would carefully maintain it. That is, we held these events with the following ideal: "if only this town can retain into the next century the merit of rich and trouble free human relations based upon the streets." The lively faces of the children; the adults kindly watching over them. When I saw this scene, I felt that this valuable resource of many people working together was left intact. Furthermore, the events' success created a self confidence in the district residents which I hope will continue in future projects.

夕一落成記念行事実行委員会
(木村正安会長)。

小倉で改善事業前に

大行党委事務局長長谷谷
四六さん、この大行大会は
今月十一日、北方三丁を舞
台に、五町内にある果菜を
採り、餅ぶ形で、大人の足歩
きに、時節感あるコリを
を規定。人々が通れること
の狭い路地りともなめて、
照がく路地りにとりつてか
どうかを願う。

地元の子どもたちは六以
内のチームを作って挑戦
が、十八歳以上の大人が人
はいることが条件で、自分
たちが生まれ育った街のこ
とを大人に教えていたのが歩
く。コース要所にはタズ
イヌやゲームを用意。タズ
は北方三丁の中に「おろ
し人」は群衆の○か×か
×かといふ真色。

この遠路大を果菜じのの
は、地元の人たちが「ケ
のヨウコウさん」と親し
むの品中洋行さん。、
中まは、同市から北方地区
の若木さんについて委託
の若木さんについて研究
北州市事務所。五年前
知市から北方に移り住み、
つづいたため計画と関係
手をつけている。「来年は
の北方が持ち回り、問題
を発生してもらえればと思
くれば」と果菜の動機を

-22-

VI ASPECTS OF CITY PLANNING FOR BURAKU AREAS WHICH I HOPE ARE BETTER UNDERSTOOD

① Progressive Planning For Buraku Areas

One thing I hope people will acquire from the Kitagata District planning is that when engaged in city planning for other areas, the positive usage of the results and knowhow gained from the Kitagata work can raise the standards of cities/towns/villages as a whole. That is, efforts made in Buraku areas will be a breakthrough in raising the level of the whole town in question. As to why I say this, unlike the redevelopment of areas in front of train stations, or the building of new housing tracts, Buraku Area Improvement Projects are directed towards rebuilding previously populated residential areas. Aside from these projects, there are few examples of this kind of work in Japan. Furthermore, unlike past planning, which came from the "top", in Kitagata's case, the residents could participate from the survey and planning stages, and by unifying their efforts, they had the chance to actually bring to life their desires by themselves. Considering these facts, the Kitagata District planning is advanced in nature, even on a national level.

For example, based upon the results of this Buraku Area Improvement Project in Kitagata, the Construction Ministry decided to adapt these methods for work on improving living conditions in "general areas." Thus, the Kitagata planning was so advanced that it created a new planning technique called "community based residential improvement work" (residential improvement work in currently populated areas.)

I sometimes heard people say, "only that area gets improved", or "why does only the Buraku area get special treatment?" It is never possible to escape from this kind of negative reaction, but in the end I believe it had no effect on the district's improvement as a whole. Yet, I do think there are problems with some government officials' attitudes. Also, the administration only thinks of the Kitagata project (living area improvements) within the framework of a "Buraku area project"; it cannot see the project from a wider perspective as a significant part of city planning as a whole.

② The Suffering Of The Residents

Due to the progress of the work, many residents lost their homes - in which they had been living for a long time - and were unable to acquire new ones; therefore they were forced to enter public housing or to live in rented housing. Yet, I believe that people outside the district do not understand the hardship and grief experienced by the residents.

Even if old and narrow, one's home of many years is still one's home. For people living in their own house, scratches on the pillars came from things they will never forget. I think most residents truly did not want to move until they had to, and I

believe almost all of the people who assisted us in the project had the conviction, "if it makes the district's living conditions better, and it leaves a good town for our grandchildren to live in, then I should help." However, for people who had been renting, once their house is torn down, they must start anew by buying land, and on top of that, they must build a new home, too. That alone requires a great deal of capital. In "The Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvements", a system of long-term, low-interest loans was created, but that is insufficient. Even if other forms of financing are used at the same time, for people without stable employment, there still remains the doubt of whether they can repay the loans or not. This is also true for the elderly. People like this cannot help but give up the hope of owning their own home, and so must move into public housing built by the city. Furthermore, because the city paid compensation money to those whose homes were torn down, people who had been receiving social welfare payments ended up losing such support. That is, by tearing down a home, which is an asset, a home owner receives compensation, which is also an asset, but unless a certain amount of this money is expended, that person becomes ineligible for social welfare money. Furthermore, even if someone thought of using the compensation funds to start an independent business, it is provided by a system which dictates that the compensation must be used primarily for living expenses, thus it does not allow one to use the compensation as a means of fulfilling one's dreams of financial independence. I hope we continue with the district's planning while bearing in mind the residents' worries and troubles.

③ City Planning Pressed By Legal Time Limits

The present "Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning the Projects Designated for (Buraku) Area Improvement" expires at the end of March, 1992. With this, the basis of the renovation work, i.e., the Buraku Area Improvement Project System, also disappears. In the Kitagata case, it is impossible to finish the renovations in the time remaining (about two years at this time); situations like this are probably not uncommon throughout the country. After the law expires, citizens groups in each area will be faced with the question of how to respond to remaining problems, many of which are not just limited to renovation work. In the Kitagata District, one can see the damage from having to carry out city planning while pressed by a time limit. On the city's part, it was a situation of wanting to do the work quickly by buying as many homes, building as many roads and housing complexes, and acquiring from the national government as much assistance as possible in a limited amount of time. Originally, upon entering negotiations to buy the homes and land, there were to be detailed discussions with residents concerning the purpose of the project and the contents of the plan. The work was to have started only after fully understanding the views of each household. In reality, the city had to proceed with the work quickly, without being able to devote enough time to this

process. Even for the city officers in charge of the project, I think the situation was not in tune with everyone's original intentions.

This fact, in turn, increased the sense of mistrust felt by the residents towards the government, and it may have been connected with the problem of not being able to increase substantive resident participation in the planning. In other words, many people thought living environment improvements must be made, but some could not adapt to the changes, while others could not accept what was happening. Because the project was under a time limit, and we were not able to completely discuss things with the residents, I was concerned that negative factors in the environmental improvement work might come strongly in play, i.e., once the improvements were made, there would be those people who could use them effectively, and those people who could not, and as the stratification between the two groups grew more marked, I worried over the possible loss of the community's spirit and sense of unity.

As the project continues, no doubt the living environment will be put in order. However, if the people needed to support the community are not raised along with the changes in the community itself, I do not think we can call this city planning in the truest sense. I think there is now the question of whether the community has the strength to overcome the damage from having to plan and work while being pressured by the law's time limit.

EPILOGUE

I started the Kitagata District's city planning in 1983, and before I knew it, six and a half years had passed. I returned to Kochi in May, 1989, having spent six years in the district. The children who came to play while we worked in the one room of the Civic Center have graduated from high school. Those boys and girls of the "Watakake Private Children's Hall" now gather in the completed Children's Center and are good "big brothers and sisters" for other little children, so I end up feeling, "yes, the time has really passed."

Since returning to Kochi, I visit the Kitagata District about once every two months, and it seems there are always many changes and fewer old houses. Sometimes I ask myself if all the planning and rebuilding was worthwhile, and I wonder if the residents will believe it was beneficial. At these moments, there is something I always remember. Fifteen years ago, when I was a college student, I began working on Buraku area city planning, and at that time I had an unforgettable experience. One day, I visited an old woman living in a Buraku area in order to conduct a survey and when I asked her if she was willing to sell her home, she said to me, "young man, please look at this pillar. For me, it contains memories whose value can't be measured in money. Improving this area's condition is necessary, but this pillar is why I don't want you to ask me so lightly if I willing to sell my home or not." I

was shocked by these words. Since that incident, I have always tried to work on city planning with them in mind, but when I walk through Kitagata, I ask myself uneasily, "haven't I ended up doing the same thing in this place, too?"

At present, the district is in a transitional phase from "destruction" to "construction", so it truly has the sad appearance. Presently, along with arranging the roads, construction of homes and public housing complexes will start here and there, so in several years, a new town will start to show its face, but at that time, I wonder what the men and women will say? Will they kindly tell us, "I'm glad we rebuilt", or will they say, "the old neighborhood was better"? No doubt, they will give us their answer a few years from now. In the meantime, in order to create a community that they will approve of, I think the only way is to do our best and take up the problem with wisdom and ingenuity.

In those six years, I met many wonderful people - the residents of the Kitagata District who kindly gave us their support. I was married in Kochi, and on the night of our return to Kitagata, we were surprised with a reception secretly prepared for us by some of the residents. What is more, they gave us a three day, two night trip to Beppu as a wedding present. Even now, it is a memory I cannot forget.

Also, there were city officials who worked hard to make the Kitagata project a model case for city planning in general, and the architects and the college students who gave their help in order to give life to the "Kitagata Style." These people gave assistance, and through them, work in the area has progressed. Amidst all of this, for me, Kitagata became a place I can call home.

Written February, 1990

NOTE 1 As a city branch office, it is a public facility that functions both as the area community center, and as an office charged with giving advice to area residents, coordinating communications with the main city office, etc.

NOTE 2 Based upon the grading standards for a building's condition, state of disrepair, and its structure (as determined by the Construction Ministry), all homes are ranked by a survey; those buildings with even one point over the predetermined standard are called "substandard." On the other hand, if the total points fall below the standard rating, the structure is referred to as "good housing."

NOTE 3 Buraku Area Improvement Projects focus on living environment improvements in Buraku areas containing massed substandard housing (see Note 2.) The project system for this redevelopment is as follows:

- ① The purchase and removal of substandard housing. (Strictly speaking, even if the home is substandard, if the occupant does not wish to sell, then the house is left as it is, with the possibility of the owner repairing it in the future by himself.)
- ② Basic arrangement of the whole area. (Planning for such public facilities as parks, roads, sewers, etc.)
- ③ Building public housing complexes; those who wish to own their own home build a new house by themselves.

NOTE 4 For those people who lose their homes due to the Improvement Project (see Note 3), the local government will build and rent out public housing.

NOTE 5 The contents of the Sectional Renewal Method are as follows:

Based upon the idea of leaving behind both "good housing" and those substandard homes whose owners do not want to sell (with the assumption they will repair their homes individually in the future), all other homes are purchased and torn down. Along with planning the basic layout of roads and other public facilities, the size and shapes of the vacant lots are altered, and it is decided whether individuals will build new homes there, or, in places where lots can be put together, public housing units are to be built. The arrangements are clearly planned in this fashion.

Advantages of this method are it is possible to receive more individual opinions from the residents, and arranging can be done while leaving behind the valuable open spaces. Problem points are the planning must be very detailed, and it is vital to create an organization which will co-ordinate governmental and residential activities.

NOTE 6 For people who build by themselves a new home to live in, the "New Home Building Loan Project" was developed, as was the "Land Purchasing Loan Project" for those wanting to buy land on which to build a private residence.

- 1) New Home Building Loan - April, 1989
At Present
Loan Limit.....¥6,400,000
Term of Repayment.....Within 25 years
Annual Interest Rate.....2.8%

2) Land Purchasing Loan - April, 1989

At Present

Loan Limit.....¥5,000,000

Term of Repayment.....Within 25 years

Annual Interest Rate.....2.8%

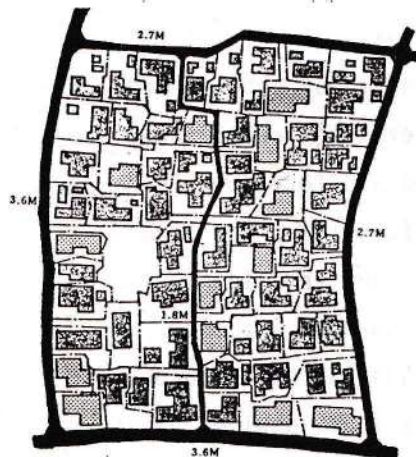
2) New Home Bldg. Loan Apr. 1989

Loan Limit ¥6,400,000

Term of Repayment Within 25 years

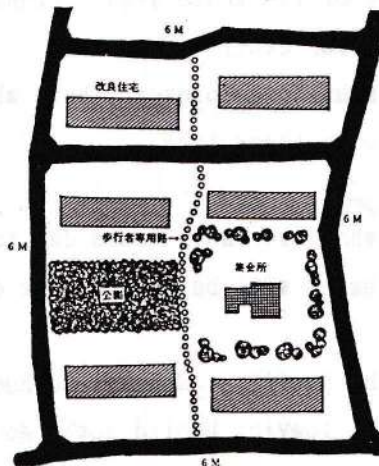
Annual Interest Rate 2.8%

Area's Present Situation (model map)



Good Housing.....13 units
 Substandard Housing.....48 units
 Land with no road frontage..... 8 units

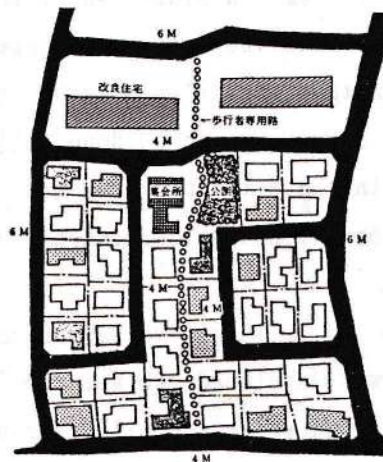
Complete Clearance Method



Public Housing.....144 units

(Purchased and Removed Homes.....61 units)

Sectional Renewal Method



Public Housing.....48 units*
 Rebuilt Private Homes.....24 units
 Good Housing Left Standing.....10 units
 Substandard Housing Left Standing.....4 units

* 3 units from Good Housing and 44 units from Substandard Housing.

A REPORT ON REALIZING AREA IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH RESIDENTIAL PARTICIPATION :

— AIMING AT CITY PLANNING THAT EMPHASIZES "THE JOY OF LIVING TOGETHER" —

Yoko Hatakenaka

Managing Director

Planning and Architecture Section

Wakatake City Planning Institute

I ENCOUNTERING KITAGATA

My involvement with the city planning of the Kitagata District of Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka Pref., Japan, started in August, 1983. Before that, I had been in Kochi Prefecture, where my office is located, and for eight years I had been involved in city planning for Buraku areas, promotion plans for cities, towns and villages, city planning surveys, etc.

There was a real need for living environment improvements in the Kitagata District, the largest Buraku area in Kyushu, and the Buraku Liberation Movement in the area strongly proposed plans to the city, but none were seriously taken up. Yet, the need for this planning was carefully considered by the Kitakyushu City administration, and was deemed the most important factor in the Buraku Integration Measures after an interim report by the Integration Council stressed the need for drastic urban renewal.

Upon receiving this report, an organization for the redevelopment of the district was created. At first, in November, 1982, the Construction Bureau's District Improvement Office was set up in the main city office as an administrative window dealing with urban planning in Kitagata. (It was later renamed The Building Bureau's Kitagata District Improvement Office.) Then in April of the next year, as a field office, it was moved to its present location, adjoining the Kitagata District. In June, 1983, the Kitagata Council for the Progress of Living Environment Improvements (later referred to as the Progress Council) was founded by neighborhood association representatives from Kitagata and the surrounding areas.

After considering their options, the Kitakyushu City Office first asked my company, the Wakatake City Planning Institute, to work on basic planning and surveying for this urban renewal project at the start of 1983. At first, our company respectfully turned down the survey request, because we felt it was not a matter of merely saying "good-bye" after finishing the planning. Rather, the premise that close connections with the Kitagata District planning would continue into the future had to be considered, and we decided this would only be possible for planners and researchers in the area itself. However, we finally decided to accept the survey

request, and since our basic policy is to work while physically encountering the area's true state while studying its history, culture, community and social movements, we moved into district while working.

II MOVING INTO KITAGATA

① A House on Main Street

I and the three college students helping me (they were undergraduate and graduate students majoring in city planning at Toyo University's Engineering Department) moved in on a hot August day in 1983. The house we were to live in faced the Main Street of the district. My term "Main Street" has a nice ring to it, but the local people called it "90 cm Road", because it was a narrow street only one meter wide. Since many people came and went on it from dawn to midnight, it was a good place to measure the local people's daily communication. Our furniture and things also came by this road, which caught many peoples' eyes, and they thought we were Kyushu University students moving in. Since only one window separated us from Main Street, talkative women would warmly ask, "you fellows got something to eat?", or "did you take a bath?" as they passed by.

Along this street, there were benches located here and there, which were good places for chatting. We made every effort to give a positive impression at these gatherings, and talked about who we were and what we were doing. At first, people were suspicious and thought "who on Earth are these guys?", and as we also felt embarrassed, initially everyone was stiff and formal, but gradually people came to call out, "sit and let's talk", and we were then able to bring up the subject of how the area would change.



[Members of our group chatting with women on Main street]

② Outsider's Performance in a Large Song Contest

After arriving in Kitagata, we tried hard to actively participate in social gatherings. For example, there are three popular and bustling public baths in Kitagata, and after our portraits were put up in the changing rooms of each bathhouse,

people came to say, "they're just like the pictures on "Wanted" posters; it really looks like them."

We also actively participated in major events, like district sports festivals, softball tournaments, and croquet tournaments. Whenever we attended these events, we met new people, and we felt an increasing sense of affinity with the area. The highlight was attending a song contest that was part of a Buraku Liberation Festival. The four of us and five city office workers painted our faces black, stiffened our hair with pomade, put on happi coats and sunglasses, and then appeared on stage, greeted with applause and cheers. Since there were about 300 people listening, it was a rather effective appeal. After that day, there were many times when people we did not know at all came up and said, "you're the fellow who blackened his face and put on the funny act, aren't you?"

③Our Work Place Some How Becomes A Private Children's Hall!?

For the first three years, we worked in a borrowed room in the Civic Center which had been prepared as our office (Note 1). About one month after starting work, we received some cute visitors who would curiously peer into our office from behind the door. Soon 5th and 6th grade students came to see us everyday, asking, "what are you doing?" as they watched us work. Or they would say, "oh! lots of color Magic Markers! Can we use them?", and then proceed to draw a picture. Their first drawings were portraits of our group. These made us very happy, so we put them up on the wall. The children saw that their works were well appreciated, so everyday they came in to draw, and before we knew it, our walls were covered with pictures. They also tried to help us work, and amused us by trying to act like "good assistants." Later, they started coming in and out of our house, eating the food we cooked, wrestling, sometimes even bringing their homework, and we were pleased with the creation of the "Wakatake Private Children's Hall."

In this way, we got to know the children, and we keenly felt the need for a place where children could freely gather to play and learn after school. The construction of the Children's Center, mentioned later, can be thought of as a reaction to this realization. Anyway, with our home and work place as a base, we actively began our district planning.

III KITAGATA'S "TOWN CONDITION"

①Problems With The Town's Living Environment

This district is located 4km south of Kokura JR Station, and has an area of 34 hectares. With 1,920 households and a population of approximately 5000, it is the largest Buraku Integration Area (Dowa area) in Kyushu. The streets in the area are paved, but some of these maze-like alleys are so narrow that one must turn side-

ways to get through. If by some chance there is a fire, even fire truck could not enter the alleys. Along these alleys, aging wooden houses and apartments are crowded together, over half of which are substandard buildings (Note 2). Also, the area of each lot is small, and there is a lack of open space and parks. Looking at these substandard conditions of aging buildings, lack of space, and the lagging construction of fundamental items such as roads and parks, there was a pressing need to immediately start working on their elimination.



[Densely crowded and aging homes.]

②A Town That Gives The Feeling Of "The Joy Of Living Together"

In describing the living conditions of Kitagata, I started off with negative images of crowded, deteriorating homes and a lack of roads, but perhaps this approach shows a lack of consideration for the charms of Kitagata. From a different perspective, the maze-like alleys, into which no car can enter, form the basis of this community, and they hold its charm. For example, the streets are always clean, with not even one speck of trash lying around. Most of the paths are formed where two private lots meet, and one can sense that there are such unsaid rules as, "because everyone must use these streets, no one should throw garbage on them", and "since everyone walks through here, we should keep them clean in order to pass easily."

Also, because the houses completely fill the lots, plants and flowers are grown in the very narrow space between the buildings and the alleys, which gives a peaceful feeling to those who pass by. Furthermore, hand made benches located in the alleys are places where people can rest and gather easily, and one can see people exchanging information while sitting in the sun, or neighbors and passers-by leisurely talking while enjoying the cool evenings. Thus, people here have developed very close human relationships in which if a companion draws near, both people can skilfully protect their privacy and still be subtly enquiring towards each other.

[Various uses of roads into which no car can enter]



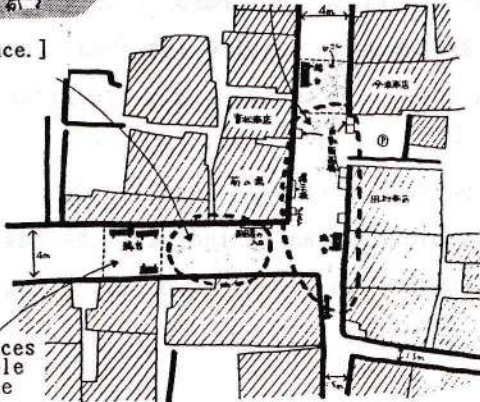
[lively Bon Odori Dance.]



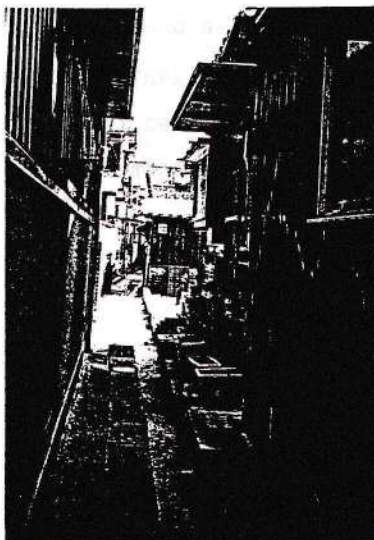
[lively gathering place with shoppers and people leaving the Public Bath.]



[Above the roads, there are places for drying clothes, which people can use for protection from the sun and rain while talking.]



In view of this, one can say that in this town there is joy in living together; that is, people living here have grown accustomed to knowing each other intimately, which can only come from living closely together. We dubbed this the "Kitagata Style." This way of life was developed during the long history of the area. Yet, scenes resembling this "Kitagata Style" (I think it can be called "an old style town feeling") are not limited to this district, but at one time could be seen in many places. Even now, such areas remain, although most have been lost to advancing urban redevelopment recently.



[Constantly cleaned streets.]



[Idle conversation on a road side bench.]

As we were progressing with the plans to remove the problems connected with the present living conditions, there was the lingering question of whether this charm will continue after the improvements are made.

IV STARTING TO STRUGGLE WITH THE DISTRICT PLANNING

① Creating A System That Allows The Local People To Participate In Planning

We thought that unless we received the enthusiastic participation and full understanding of the local people, it would be difficult to actually plan and effectively work in the district. Therefore, with the support of the city, we made an effort to create a system that enabled the local people to participate from the surveying and planning level. The main points are given below.

1. Founding And Running A Citizen's Association

In order to advance planning which included the residents as leading participants, it was first necessary to set up an organization composed of these people. There are several ways of doing this, but in this case, representatives of the citizen groups in both the Kitagata District and the surrounding areas formed the Progress Council. It was the job of this council to completely understand the living conditions and the opinions of the local people, and to make sure that these were reflected in the planning. In order to accomplish this task, the citizens associations were divided into block committees, study committees, etc., thereby creating various channels of information, as well as places for discussion. Then, the council both summarized the many opinions coming from these sources, and helped residents understand what was occurring.

As of February 1990, the Progress Council had met 49 times, with various discussions concerning the contents of the planning and ways to carry out the work. In the end, however, the city's leadership in the management of this project stood out, and the Progress Council's transformation into an independent organization was not completed, which is still the present situation. It is hoped that an independent managing organization embodying the ideal of "we will govern our own town by ourselves rather than merely leaving it up to the government" will come to life.


2. Publishing The City Planning News

In order to encourage the enthusiastic participation of the district residents in the project, it was necessary to provide them with appropriate news at the appropriate times. Also, in order to make the planning a part of the whole community, it was vital to continually announce the Progress Council's discussions, etc. When there is a lack of information, rumors start to fly, and it takes a good

deal of effort to put them to rest. As one way of getting out basic information on the project, The City Planning News was created and delivered to every home in the area. In The News, the information was arranged on both sides of B4 size paper, and was presented as simply as possible with the pronunciation of difficult Chinese characters included, so that everyone, from children to adults, could read it. As of February 1990, 31 issues have been published.

[Front cover of The City Planning News, Issue #17, which explains the planning process.]

まちづくり
みんなの手で
すすめよう!



まちづくり

ニュース

第17号
昭和60年1月28日
北方地区環境改善推進
協議会


北方地区環境整備計画に対し国の 事業認可おける

—— 昨年12月21日 事業認可決定 ——

事業認可をうけるに至った経過を報告します

1. <計画案にもとづく話し合い段階>
昨年7月に市から計画案(たたき台)が示されて10月までの間に、各町内で2回の説明・検討会を開きました。そして、計画案に対する皆さんのいろいろなご意見を伺いました。
4. <計画案の確定>
『相談コーナー』他でお聞きした皆さんのご意見等について、推進協議会で話し合いました。その結果、計画の詳細については今後ひきつづき検討する必要があるが、計画の基本的な方針についてはほぼまとまると判断し、修正案を北方地区環境整備のための基本計画案として確定しました。
5. <事業の認可手続を及ぶ認可決定>
確定した計画案にもとづいて、国の事業認可をうけるための書類を整え、12月18日に申請し21日には国からの認可を得ました。

2. <計画案の修正段階>
皆さんから出されたご意見について、推進協議会を檢討を重ね、一軒一軒にかかわる問題については、事業実施段階で十分につめることを前提にしたうえで、計画の骨組にかかわる内容についての修正を行いました。
3. <修正案の検討段階>
修正を行った計画案(修正案)を多くの皆さんに見ていただき、検討していただくため、修正案を各町内ごとに掲示しました。そして、市民館に『相談コーナー』を開設し、修正案についてのご意見等いろいろなお話を聞かせていただきました。



At first, the Progress Council was the publisher in name, but actually we assumed this task. Later, it was necessary to officially report the work progress, so The News came to be a joint publication of the Progress Council and the Kitatgata District Improvement Office (the city's field office); we helped with this, too.

One more purpose for publishing The News was that by putting it straight into the hands of the residents, the Council members hoped it would act as a medium between the Council and the community. Furthermore, to provide information not fully covered in The News, and because there were requests and questions coming to the Council from the community, it is now hoped that The News is supplemented by "face to face" direct information exchanges. I am not sure how far this is actually being carried out.

3. Starting A New Movement To Take A New Look At The District

In general, to determine plans for a project like this, the planners involved conduct a survey on the present state of the area in question. But up to this point, there was little information shared with the Kitagata residents. We realized that this stage in the work should be treated carefully. By becoming part of the community, and working with the residents to survey the history of the district's formation, as well as its present living, housing and industrial conditions, we could see the need to both bring out the district's problems and its good points. It is important for the residents to reaffirm their connection with all the problems of the area, and not only those environmental problems stemming from the space limitations of each person's home. Furthermore, the residents could re-evaluate the actual state of discrimination, and see the need to take up measures towards its elimination. The "Great Maze Festival", discussed later, was held for this purpose.

4. Conducting A Questionnaire

In order to fully understand the residents's evaluation of the state of their homes and the living conditions in the district, as well as their views and desires concerning living environment alterations, a questionnaire was sent to each household. Plans for the improvements in an area must be realistic for them to work. In terms of planning, the opinions of the residents (concretely speaking, are they willing to sell their homes to the city or not?; in the case of road planning, will they help by moving their home?) are vital reference material.

In this sense, the questionnaire was important not only because it allowed direct participation in the planning. At the first stage of the planning and surveying, there were many people who felt surprise or indifference towards the project. (In many cases, criticism and mistrust of past government plans created this attitude.) In this situation, passing out the questionnaires to each home encouraged interest in the planning. People would say things like, "there seems to be something to this", and "perhaps this time the government will seriously improve conditions." Thus, the questionnaire was connected with the activation of citizen awareness.

The above is a summary of the questionnaire's aim, but a note must be added

about the severe limitations of this primary level survey. For the district residents, a survey at this stage pressed them for answers even though they had been given only a small amount of information; this led us to believe that in many cases, we were not entrusted with the residents' true opinions. These answers were views and intentions held only at this initial stage, something which would change as more detailed information became available. For planning, this questionnaire was basic resource material for making a rough plan for discussion, which, after a process of presentation, discussion and correction by the residents, would eventually bring out their hopes and requirements. One can say that this situation unavoidable.

5. Presenting The Plan To The District Residents

In order to resolve the problems concerning the project which were raised by the survey, we decided upon a rough draft of the plan which put forth basic designs and concepts. This rough draft was to be corrected and improved by the residents, and we thought that we could obtain general consent only after allowing enough time for a full discussion of the plan's content. However, after presenting the basic plan to the city, a long time passed before its contents were made public. (The city administration required six months to examine policy, etc.) As a result, the application deadline for project approval drew very near (there was also a feeling of pressure stemming from the worry of going over the expiration date set for "The Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvements"), so there was not sufficient time for complete and detailed explanations and discussion of the plan. Due to these circumstances, the course from the initial presentation of the project plan in the district to the final decision went as follows.

First of all, the plan was presented to the Progress Council and discussed, and along with its introduction in The City Planning News, each block had meetings to explain and investigate the plan. Based upon the views expressed in these meetings, policies were altered, and the plan was then studied once more by the council. Due to the problem of the project approval deadline, it was not possible to hold block study meetings once again. In their place, the revised plan was posted on the bulletin board of every neighborhood association, and we planned to send it to each home through The City Planning News. Furthermore, we opened a "Discussion Corner" in one room at the Civic Center as a place to hear residents' opinions. The final plan was based upon this process, but this was over a period of just four months, and we could not help feeling that it was done too quickly. Because of the unavoidable rush at this stage, there was a price to be paid when it came to carrying out the work. (Details will be given later.)

② Development Of The Plan's General Outline And Work

Along with creating a system for resident participation, we continued to

develop the plan itself, and in January, 1984, we presented to the city an initial plan with the following five points:

[BASIC POLICIES]

1. Planning a city which can be called "home"
 - Environmental improvements as one part of the Buraku Liberation Movement.
2. Forming an open community
 - Maintaining the district's unity.
3. Creating a safe and comfortable living environment
 - Arrangement of housing basics;
 - Increased fire protection;
 - Supplying good quality housing;
 - Guaranteeing the standard of living;
 - Advancing policies for private home ownership;
 - Using the district's good qualities;
 - Creating a symbol for the area;
 - Creating areas for meeting and contact.
4. Practical city planning
 - Emphasizing reality.
5. City planning emphasizing the residents
 - Respecting the residents' opinions and their participation from the planning level on;
 - Perfecting an organization that creates the "town", and an organization that maintains it;
 - Going from "city planning" to "human planning."

Studies by the city administration and the residents' were added to the basic plan, and in February, 1984, the Progress Council added this condition: "we agree to all the points. Specifically, we will consider each point in further detail as it reaches the level of actual work". Then, in December of the same year, the national government gave its approval of the project as per "The Law on Special Measures for Buraku Improvement Projects" (Note 3). Thus, at this point there was a transition from planning to the physical work itself.

The contents of the general work requirements were:

1. Of the 1920 homes in the whole area, over 1000 were to be bought and torn down by the city or moved.
2. Using this newly created open space, the roads were arranged so that each house adjoined a road over 4m in width; parks, open areas, and the

installation of sewer lines were also planned.

3. Altogether, 407 units of public housing apartments (Note 4), were to be constructed with over 300 additional private homes to be built by the people themselves.

Also, the cost of the projects partially funded by the national government was estimated to be ¥20,000,000,000, and the city would spend 11 years carrying out the work.

In terms of this project's method of development, it differed greatly from the one used by the city in the past (i.e. the Complete Clearance Method- in the area to be improved, all homes are torn down or moved, the land is remade, and mid and high rise public housing is constructed.) In the results of the initial opinion poll, about 30% of the people did not want to sell their homes, and taking into consideration the 50% who wished to rebuild on their present land, a sectional renewal method was indicated as best.

In the first year of work, the measurement and surveying of homes was conducted in order to start work. To smoothly proceed with the purchasing of those private homes designated for renewal, there was an urgent need to both build public housing for the displaced residents, and to acquire land for the building of substitute homes. We mainly directed our efforts to these problems.

As a result, in January of 1985, work started on the public housing, which was the first construction in the district, and, as the start of the environmental improvement projects, a ground breaking ceremony was held. From then on, due to the strong effort made by the city, the work proceeded at a high pitch, and by the end of February, 1990, about 691 houses had been purchased and demolished or removed, and in their place, there was construction on 250 units of public housing (of which 106 were completed). Also the acquisition of land for roads and parks progressed; in general, the rate of progress reached 60%.

[The fast pace of dismantling houses - in the fore ground is the lot of a removed house. Many homes had been built in this kind of narrow space.]



[A road being built over the lot of a removed house.]



In addition, while this construction differed from the Buraku Area Improvement Projects, the Children's Center was fit into the basic plans and built. As the construction of roads planned by the city progressed, the form of the district changed.

③ Adjustment Of The Work Plans

In this situation where the work closely affected the residents, a variety of opinions expressing both positive and negative evaluations of the new district planning started to come from the residents. The construction of public housing, and the arrangements for guaranteeing substitute land proceeded with difficulty. Thus, some people worried, because their old home was torn down, and not having a place to live, they had to find temporary housing. Others worried about the disintegration of "close relationships" (i.e., their sense of community) which came from living together and helping each other in the streets of the district. On the other hand, some people viewed the construction work positively. In each case, we felt each problem as if were our own. In this sense, I can say that each family's views of the planning became very clear to us.

As I mentioned before, when the project received national work approval in December, 1985, the people in the district accepted the project with this condition: "at present, the general plan is accepted, but as for details, the views of each family must be taken into consideration during the actual work." As to why the details had not been developed by the time the construction approval was granted, there are the following reasons:

1. Before the plans's contents could be made public to the residents, the city administration required a long time for its own studies, because the plans, arrangements, and methods we proposed differed from those used by the city in the past.

2. At that time, "The Law on Special Measures for Area Improvement Projects" had only two years remaining until its expiration, so we were pressed to apply for national work approval quickly.

3. As a result, even by using several methods in a very limited amount of time, there was not enough time to fully explain and discuss the plan's details with the residents. I think this was a big factor.

In order not to lose the time it would have taken for each family to clearly state its opinions, we concentrated on developing the details. Before the expiration, in March of 1992, of "The Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning the Projects Designated for Buraku Area Improvements" (valid 4/87~3/92), which came after "The Law on Specific Measures For Regional

Buraku
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Improvements" (valid 4/82~3/87), our policy aimed at generally finishing the project. In 1988, we worked on planning revisions, and added studies to make the plan's goals more attainable. Finally, during the revisions we studied the two questions of how to create a "Kitagata Style" and how to realize it practically.

V AIMING AT CITY PLANNING THAT CREATES THE "KITAGATA STYLE"

① Studying How To Create The "Kitagata Style"

In 1987 we gained assistance from the Endo Research Center of Kumamoto University's Architectural School on the practice of resident participation in community and home design, and we took detailed surveys of the residents' lifestyles. Based upon these survey results, a group was formed to increase knowledge on how to best develop the "Kitagata Style" through design revisions and the actual progress in building housing units (public housing and private family homes), facilities, and roads. This study group was formed on a proposal made by the Planning Director of the Kitagata District Improvement Office (known as the Improvement Office). Beginning with Dr. Endo and his research staff at Kumamoto University, the group was composed of architecture teachers from Nagasaki Sogo University, designers involved with planning the Arita Town project in Saga Prefecture, the architects in charge of designing the public housing in the Kitagata District, the city's Building Bureau Director, the Improvement Office staff, and the chairman of the Progress Council.

This study group met many times between September, 1987, and March, 1988, and after many discussions concerning ideas for creating the "Kitagata Style", it was able to put in order the policies and themes of the project's revised plans. Up to the present, a number of efforts to concretely produce these policies and themes have been advanced, and some are now in progress. I would like to introduce some of them.

② Spurring Replacement Housing Through The "Communal Housing Proposal" And The "Communal Method"

Listening to the district's residents, one could hear the older people using the term "communal", as in "going to the communal bath", and "using the communal well." In other words, it means a number of people doing something together, or it is used to express a communal object. We felt this term expressed well the district's character, and we used it as a key word when thinking about and working on the city planning and housing designs. Just as we began to use this word "communal", a project to produce a pamphlet called the House Planning Information Box, which easily explained home design, was begun in order to help the residents in rebuilding their homes. Like the study group for considering the "Kitagata Style" mentioned above, this project was also proposed by the Improvement Office's Planning Director.

Receiving help from young architects working in Kitakyushu City, work on the pamphlet proceeded along with the study group's other activities.

The House Planning Information Box also took up "housing reconstruction through the communal method" as its main theme, and decided upon the "communal type" housing listed below. No matter which type, the lots were purchased by parents and children, brothers and sisters, relatives, and good friends, who basically considered building homes together, which easily enabled the sharing of gardens, etc

1. Kitagata Communal Type- Designed for people with single families and financing problems who have maintained their land, but cannot rebuild their home, and who hesitate to enter public housing.

2. Two Family Type- For two generations of the same family who want to live together. While ensuring each generation's way of life, it allows parents and children to live together.

3. Communal Type For The Elderly- Developed so elderly families can live together and help each other.

4. Communal Type For The Young- Intended to continue the advantages of the district by having young married couples, and young people who take pride in the district, live together.

For each type, appropriate households were chosen and visited several times, and while listening to their views, we actually designed their homes. Sadly to say, there was not enough time to do this kind of planning for Type 1 style homes, so we were not able to design these homes after hearing the families' views.

Along with proposing the model plans for each type of home designed in this fashion, we completed the Housing Planning Information Box (41 pages, printed in color on A4 size paper) by adding basic information on home design. This pamphlet was carried by the city officials as they entered into negotiations to purchase land and homes for renovation, and its designs were recommended to people who considered rebuilding by themselves.



[The pamphlet for home planning- Housing Planning Information Box]

Going back for a moment, there was one other reason for visiting each home and exchanging views on the home designs. We strongly believed that at this opportunity, it would be good for the residents to actually experience the process of house planning, allowing them to see how they think and feel about this process, and see that their views are expressed in the designs.

Actually, during these opinion exchanges, one family member might say, "a house needs to have a wide Japanese style guest room on the south side", only to have another member retort, "What!? You shouldn't be taken by such formalities. Why is it necessary to put a room only used a few times each year in the best place? Wouldn't it be better to use that space for rooms used everyday, like the kitchen and the living room?" I think this gave the residents a chance to personally think about the meaning of "designing."

From these experiences, we created a "Home Planning Consultation Corner" in the Improvement Office, and, responding to the needs of those people who came in for consultation, architects were included on the staff through a "system for dispatching home planning consultants." In these ways, we were able to increase the exchange of ideas concerning plans and view points between residents and planners.

③ "Resident Participation Style" Public Housing

Up to this point, a variety of public housing units have been designed and built. We had the architects in charge of designing these units participate in the "Kitagata Style" study group. They then designed these units with a greater understanding of the district's life style and character. Thanks to this effort, the room plans were close to a 「田」 shape, which the residents felt was easy to use. (In this plan, if the sliding doors between the rooms are opened, four rooms may be used as one big room.) Also, skill and attention were devoted on ways to utilize the communal spaces in these units, such as walkways and gardens, while roads and paths were designed to maintain the charm they had possessed until now. The units being built by Kitakyushu city are completely different from those built in the past, and I feel that the city's great effort and the epoch making nature of the project should be highly regarded.

[Five story public housing with aerial walkways on the third floor.]

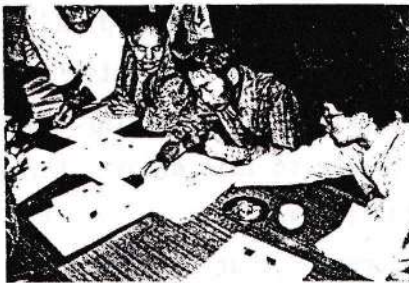


[Public housing with open verandas on the first floor.]



From 1988, we went a step further in handling the project by starting construction on the "Resident Participation Style" public housing units. Previously housing complexes (including public ones) were supplied to occupants only after full completion. However, in the case of the "Resident Participation Style" units, we first determined future occupants, held discussions with them from the planning stage, and even though space was limited, we then planned rooms to fit the desires of each family. (In an extreme case, if there were ten units desired, the room designs differed with each unit.) Because we took into consideration the residents' opinions when planning the walkways, gardens, and the complex as a whole, our methods were quite progressive. This "planning with the hopeful occupant" technique was considered a type of the above mentioned "communal public housing", so amongst our friends, we referred to it as "publicly run communal."

This housing is publicly-managed rental housing, but unlike regular public housing in which five or ten years is normal occupancy length, there was a tendency for people to move in permanently. For this very reason, it was vital to use the "Resident Participation Style", and that is the reason for this style's high level of viability. As of February, 1990, the interviews with the concerned households were completed, and work was begun.



["Resident Participation Style" public housing - holding discussions with resident from the planning stage]

④ Planning Facilities With Personality

In July of 1988, a children's center, desired by children and adults alike, was completed. This center was constructed to function both as a children's hall, and as a physical education center (arena). Since its construction, it has been used by many children and adults everyday. It is also frequently used by people from Kitagata's surrounding neighborhoods; looking towards the future, it may now conceal the great possibility of becoming a focal point of exchange between the people inside and outside Kitagata.

Incidentally, the various projects involved in the construction were not only for the sake of planning a facility with a unique personality. When considering the city planning for the whole district, the effort and methods used were exceptional

and I would like to describe them in some detail.

Construction of the center fell under the jurisdiction of several city offices. Whereas work concerned with the improvements of living conditions came under the care of the Building Bureau, construction of the center was under the jurisdiction of both the Welfare Bureau and the Education Council (later referred to as the Welfare Bureau, et al.). In this system, construction usually begins after the School Construction Office of the Building Bureau is commissioned with the work. However, in this case, the Improvement Office and the Progress Council oversaw the project together. Concerning the planning efforts for the center, I thought a very important point was how well the Progress Council understood the children's actual playing conditions and their desires for the center. Therefore, as the need for a study group to help the Progress Council became clear, the Building Section Committee was formed from area residents. Receiving help from kindergartens and schools, the Building Section Committee started as a movement to understand the realities of play conditions and the children's desires. Furthermore, they studied other successful children's centers in Kitakyushu City, setting a new precedent, and held slide show discussions. Then, after many such meetings, their Report on Hopes Concerning the Children's Center, which contained their findings, was presented to the Progress Council. In this report, views on the practical use and placement of the center were laid out, and it brought together articles on desires for facility arrangements and room designs, as well as building designs which would bring these hopes to life. It also included drawings and visual layouts by the Building Section Committee.

Recognizing the soundness of this report, the Progress Council presented to the city its own Report on Requirements based upon the Building Section Committee's work. Some days later, the city's plans and its responses to the Report on Requirements were presented by the Welfare Bureau. In the response, up to 80% of the resident's desires were accepted. However, some remaining problems, such as the building's design and height, required further study.

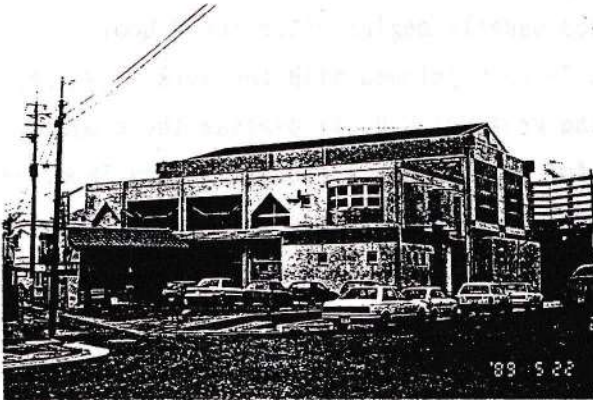
At this point, we created a group in order to consider the Children's Center designs, asking practicing young architects, kindergarten attendants, and school teachers for their help. This group brought together practical plans which would enable the center to create the "Kitagata Style", and which were then presented to the city.

Special aspects of the plans were as follows:

1. The original proposal to place the children's hall on the first floor and the sports center on the second floor was altered by placing both on the first floor so they are more accessible, and small windows were placed in the walls so people could look in from the outside;
2. The children's hall was turned into a two story facility, with open

ventilation space;

3. To capture the atmosphere of the area's streets, open verandas were placed on the first floor, in order to emphasize the connection between the children inside and the passers-by outside.

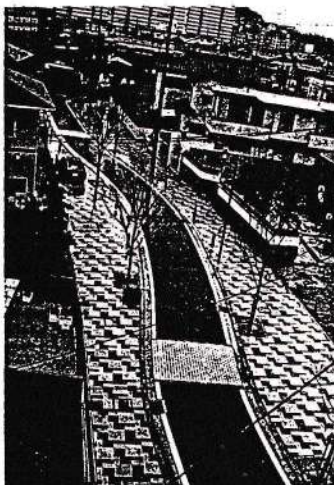


[The Children's Center-the children's hall section is in the front half, and the physical education center is to the rear.]

Eventually, the city's detailed plan, based on these proposals, was accepted by the Progress Council and construction was begun, resulting in the completion of the present Children's Center. As seen above, through a process of individualized building planning, the voluntary Building Section Committee revealed its influence. Because this group was separate from the Progress Council, and its efforts were not obvious to all, I feel it deserved special recognition. Furthermore, the self confidence gained by the residents through the Building Section Committee's work became a source of motivation for later projects. I place great hope in this new movement in city planning born from these events.

⑤ Planning Streets That Are Easy And Enjoyable To Walk Though

Rather than design dreary, noisy, and dangerous roads which give priority to cars, we studied how to create clearly defined streets that are both easy and enjoyable to walk on, and which preserve the functions and benefits found in the open air walkways until now. At present, work on these roads is progressing.



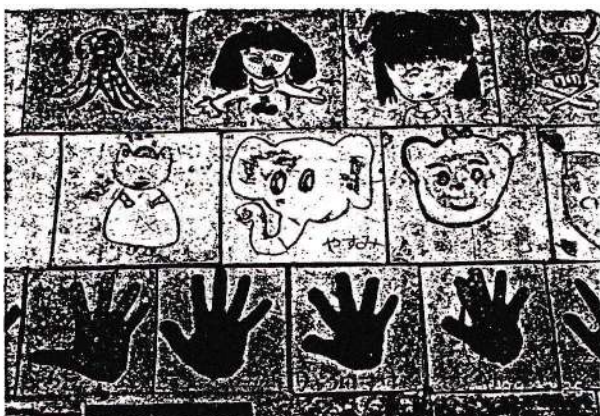
[One completed section of "streets that are easy to walk along."]

⑥ Realizing The "Enjoyable City Planning" Movement

Along with efforts towards planning facilities and homes giving life to the "Kitagata Style", as noted in sections ②-⑤, the following projects were carried out to increase the district residents' interest in town planning by including elements of "fun and play."

1. Inlaying hand made tiles in one part of the Children's Center.

While building the Children's Center, we received help from kindergarten, first, and second grade students by having them make tiles by hand. The finished tiles were then inlaid in one area inside the center. Not only will the tiles be a good memory for these children in the future, they will also increase adult interest in the center.



[Tiles made by children.]

2. Holding continuous events for the Children's Center's Inauguration.

Two months before the center's inauguration ceremony (July 19, 1988), we began talking to youths in the district about what kind of activities to have in commemoration of the event. About one month later, the Committee for Implementing the Children's Center's Inauguration Ceremony was formed (referred to below as the Inauguration Committee.) It consisted of the Steering Committees from both the Children's Center and the Civic Center, representatives from the Progress Council, and both elementary and junior high school teachers. The following events were adopted from this committee's findings:

- A. On the day of the ceremony, July 19th, there would be the handing out of Japanese "mochi" rice cakes, a puppet show, and a performance by the junior high school brassband;
- B. From July 21st to the 23rd, there would be the formal opening of the theater, and a grade school volleyball tournament, both in the physical education center;

C. A lecture on city planning was arranged for July 26th;

D. September 11th was the day set for the "Great Maze Festival."

Each event was carried out with careful preparation, and with the participation of many area residents, all were a great success.

Among these activities, the grade school volleyball tournament had a strong effect on the Kitagata District. Originally, this was an annual event at the grade school gym, but aside from parents, very few people went to see it. However, because it was held that year in the Kitagata District Children's Center, there were many spectators; ultimately, many adult teams were formed by people inspired by the playing students. In any event, young and old alike enjoyed volleyball on the same court, and when I saw everyone share in the fun, I chuckled with joy; it was truly a splendid sight.

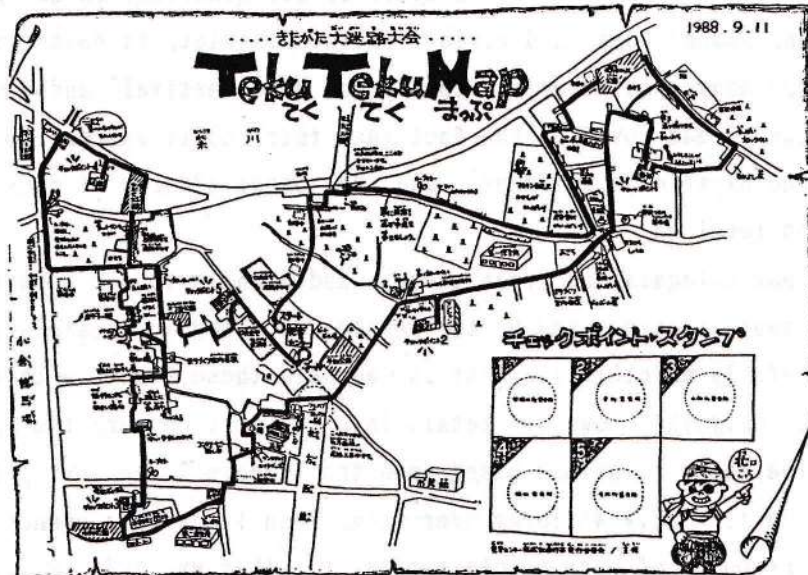
3. Holding the "Great Maze Festival".

While this was included as one event connected with the Children's Center Inauguration, in my own mind it was a main event in the town planning movement (i.e., one way to look at the district in a new light.) The "Great Maze Festival" project was a way to expose residents to both advantages and disadvantages of their district, and to do so in an enjoyable way - under the premise of a treasure hunt game. Children and adults would walk together through the maze-like roads and paths of Kitagata. During the walk, they would stop at check points, which consisted of games or factual questions about the area. Everybody then saw for themselves the realities of the district and the construction' progress.

However, when we thought of holding this, the Inauguration Committee and I worried about what kind of events would be suitable. I knew that the Endo Study Group of Kumamoto University held "Street Corner Orienteering" every year, so at this point I quickly borrowed a video tape, and after watching it together with the Inauguration Committee, we studied what activities would work for our "Great Maze Festival."

The start of the preparations coincided with summer vacation, so the teachers and staff of the Children's Center worked with children in the afternoon to build equipment, while volunteers, starting with the Inauguration Committee, worked in the evenings. For a month one could see unskilled and inexperienced youths working side by side with old men who made stilts and squirt guns with apparent ease and skill, while old ladies neatly and deftly twisted straw into rope. Even now, I cannot forget the lively and cheerful faces of those men and women.

[People started the "Great Maze Festival" with this map in hand.]



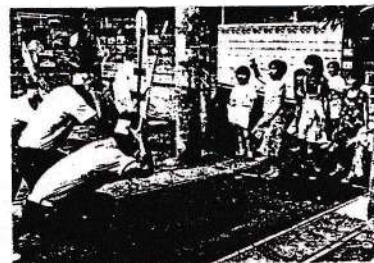
[Everyone making tools.]



[Walking and walking with map in hand.]



[Carefully discussing plans.]



[Competing against the "Paper, Scissors, Stones Man" - at each check point in the "Great Maze Festival", an adult wearing a paper mask, known as the "Paper, Scissors, Stone Man", stood guard. In order to pass the check point, a child from the touring group had to beat the guardian in a game of Paper, Scissors, Stone.]

On the day of the "Great Maze Festival", 50 teams made up of adults and children (about 300 people) participated, and with a staff of 100 kindergarten and grade school teachers, men, women, boys, and girls from the district, it became a great event. Leaving behind many good memories, the "Great Maze Festival" ended safely with complete success. I was moved by the fact that this result was due to the thoughtfulness of the district's residents, and the honest efforts of many of people from the preparation level on.

We discovered that Kitagata has great energy, and along with our hope that this energy would always be treasured by the people, we vowed to create city planning that would carefully maintain it. That is, we held these events with the following ideal: "if only this town can retain into the next century the merit of rich and trouble free human relations based upon the streets." The lively faces of the children; the adults kindly watching over them. When I saw this scene, I felt that this valuable resource of many people working together was left intact. Furthermore, the events' success created a self confidence in the district residents which I hope will continue in future projects.

[A newspaper article describing the "Great Maze Festival".]



「大迷路大会」の準備に夜遅くまで打ち合わせが続く(北方児童センターで)

主幹するのは北方児童センター
タチ造成実行委員会(会長
桑村正徳氏)。

町内改訂事業で街並みが大きく変わろうとしている九州最大の同和地区、北九州市小倉南区の北方地区(千九百三十四、四十八丁)で、前々から自分たちの街をいつまでも記憶にとめておくこと、子供たちが中心に参加する「さたがな大迷路大会」の準備作業が地元の人たちの手によって進められている。

主幹するのは北方児童センター、タチ造成実行委員会(会長桑村正徳氏)。

今年六月に実行委員会が決定。八月から翌一回の会合を重ねるたびに、地元の人たちも企画の趣旨に理解を深めるようになった。七月に開催した北方児童センターで、ゲーム用の竹馬作りなどが夜遅くまで続いている。

同実行委員長桑村氏の談。四月から五月と大会は今年十一月、北方三丁目を舞台に、五町内にある集会所を回って結ぶ形で「大人の足で歩いて二時間弱かかるコース」を用意。一人一人が通れるかどうかの狭い路地なども含めて無事ゴールになりつづけるかどうかを競う。

「保存所は一つである。〇か×か」といった具合。この迷路大会は集会所の「ヨココウ」として親しまれている中津川さん。中津川さんは、同市から北方地区の街づくりについて委託された「まちづくり研究」の一環として、北方地区の街づくりに取り組んでいる。北方地区の街づくりに取り組んでいる。北方地区の街づくりに取り組んでいる。

街並み記憶迷路大会

小倉で改善事業前に

VI ASPECTS OF CITY PLANNING FOR BURAKU AREAS WHICH I HOPE ARE BETTER UNDERSTOOD

① Progressive Planning For Buraku Areas

One thing I hope people will acquire from the Kitagata District planning is that when engaged in city planning for other areas, the positive usage of the results and knowhow gained from the Kitagata work can raise the standards of cities/towns/villages as a whole. That is, efforts made in Buraku areas will be a breakthrough in raising the level of the whole town in question. As to why I say this, unlike the redevelopment of areas in front of train stations, or the building of new housing tracts, Buraku Area Improvement Projects are directed towards rebuilding previously populated residential areas. Aside from these projects, there are few examples of this kind of work in Japan. Furthermore, unlike past planning, which came from the "top", in Kitagata's case, the residents could participate from the survey and planning stages, and by unifying their efforts, they had the chance to actually bring to life their desires by themselves. Considering these facts, the Kitagata District planning is advanced in nature, even on a national level.

For example, based upon the results of this Buraku Area Improvement Project in Kitagata, the Construction Ministry decided to adapt these methods for work on improving living conditions in "general areas." Thus, the Kitagata planning was so advanced that it created a new planning technique called "community based residential improvement work" (residential improvement work in currently populated areas.)

I sometimes heard people say, "only that area gets improved", or "why does only the Buraku area get special treatment?" It is never possible to escape from this kind of negative reaction, but in the end I believe it had no effect on the district's improvement as a whole. Yet, I do think there are problems with some government officials' attitudes. Also, the administration only thinks of the Kitagata project (living area improvements) within the framework of a "Buraku area project"; it cannot see the project from a wider perspective as a significant part of city planning as a whole.

② The Suffering Of The Residents

Due to the progress of the work, many residents lost their homes - in which they had been living for a long time - and were unable to acquire new ones; therefore they were forced to enter public housing or to live in rented housing. Yet, I believe that people outside the district do not understand the hardship and grief experienced by the residents.

Even if old and narrow, one's home of many years is still one's home. For people living in their own house, scratches on the pillars came from things they will never forget. I think most residents truly did not want to move until they had to, and I

believe almost all of the people who assisted us in the project had the conviction, "if it makes the district's living conditions better, and it leaves a good town for our grandchildren to live in, then I should help." However, for people who had been renting, once their house is torn down, they must start anew by buying land, and on top of that, they must build a new home, too. That alone requires a great deal of capital. In "The Law on Special Measures for Regional Improvements", a system of long-term, low-interest loans was created, but that is insufficient. Even if other forms of financing are used at the same time, for people without stable employment, there still remains the doubt of whether they can repay the loans or not. This is also true for the elderly. People like this cannot help but give up the hope of owning their own home, and so must move into public housing built by the city. Furthermore, because the city paid compensation money to those whose homes were torn down, people who had been receiving social welfare payments ended up losing such support. That is, by tearing down a home, which is an asset, a home owner receives compensation, which is also an asset, but unless a certain amount of this money is expended, that person becomes ineligible for social welfare money. Furthermore, even if someone thought of using the compensation funds to start an independent business, it is provided by a system which dictates that the compensation must be used primarily for living expenses, thus it does not allow one to use the compensation as a means of fulfilling one's dreams of financial independence. I hope we continue with the district's planning while bearing in mind the residents' worries and troubles.

③ City Planning Pressed By Legal Time Limits

The present "Law on Specific Governmental Budgetary Measures Concerning the Projects Designated for (Buraku) Area Improvement" expires at the end of March, 1992. With this, the basis of the renovation work, i.e., the Buraku Area Improvement Project System, also disappears. In the Kitagata case, it is impossible to finish the renovations in the time remaining (about two years at this time); situations like this are probably not uncommon throughout the country. After the law expires, citizens groups in each area will be faced with the question of how to respond to remaining problems, many of which are not just limited to renovation work. In the Kitagata District, one can see the damage from having to carry out city planning while pressed by a time limit. On the city's part, it was a situation of wanting to do the work quickly by buying as many homes, building as many roads and housing complexes, and acquiring from the national government as much assistance as possible in a limited amount of time. Originally, upon entering negotiations to buy the homes and land, there were to be detailed discussions with residents concerning the purpose of the project and the contents of the plan. The work was to have started only after fully understanding the views of each household. In reality, the city had to proceed with the work quickly, without being able to devote enough time to this

process. Even for the city officers in charge of the project, I think the situation was not in tune with everyone's original intentions.

This fact, in turn, increased the sense of mistrust felt by the residents towards the government, and it may have been connected with the problem of not being able to increase substantive resident participation in the planning. In other words, many people thought living environment improvements must be made, but some could not adapt to the changes, while others could not accept what was happening. Because the project was under a time limit, and we were not able to completely discuss things with the residents, I was concerned that negative factors in the environmental improvement work might come strongly in play, i.e., once the improvements were made, there would be those people who could use them effectively, and those people who could not, and as the stratification between the two groups grew more marked, I worried over the possible loss of the community's spirit and sense of unity.

As the project continues, no doubt the living environment will be put in order. However, if the people needed to support the community are not raised along with the changes in the community itself, I do not think we can call this city planning in the truest sense. I think there is now the question of whether the community has the strength to overcome the damage from having to plan and work while being pressured by the law's time limit.

EPILOGUE

I started the Kitagata District's city planning in 1983, and before I knew it, six and a half years had passed. I returned to Kochi in May, 1989, having spent six years in the district. The children who came to play while we worked in the one room of the Civic Center have graduated from high school. Those boys and girls of the "Watakake Private Children's Hall" now gather in the completed Children's Center and are good "big brothers and sisters" for other little children, so I end up feeling, "yes, the time has really passed."

Since returning to Kochi, I visit the Kitagata District about once every two months, and it seems there are always many changes and fewer old houses. Sometimes I ask myself if all the planning and rebuilding was worthwhile, and I wonder if the residents will believe it was beneficial. At these moments, there is something I always remember. Fifteen years ago, when I was a college student, I began working on Buraku area city planning, and at that time I had an unforgettable experience. One day, I visited an old woman living in a Buraku area in order to conduct a survey and when I asked her if she was willing to sell her home, she said to me, "young man, please look at this pillar. For me, it contains memories whose value can't be measured in money. Improving this area's condition is necessary, but this pillar is why I don't want you to ask me so lightly if I willing to sell my home or not." I

was shocked by these words. Since that incident, I have always tried to work on city planning with them in mind, but when I walk through Kitagata, I ask myself uneasily, "haven't I ended up doing the same thing in this place, too?"

At present, the district is in a transitional phase from "destruction" to "construction", so it truly has the sad appearance. Presently, along with arranging the roads, construction of homes and public housing complexes will start here and there, so in several years, a new town will start to show its face, but at that time, I wonder what the men and women will say? Will they kindly tell us, "I'm glad we rebuilt", or will they say, "the old neighborhood was better"? No doubt, they will give us their answer a few years from now. In the meantime, in order to create a community that they will approve of, I think the only way is to do our best and take up the problem with wisdom and ingenuity.

In those six years, I met many wonderful people - the residents of the Kitagata District who kindly gave us their support. I was married in Kochi, and on the night of our return to Kitagata, we were surprised with a reception secretly prepared for us by some of the residents. What is more, they gave us a three day, two night trip to Beppu as a wedding present. Even now, it is a memory I cannot forget.

Also, there were city officials who worked hard to make the Kitagata project a model case for city planning in general, and the architects and the college students who gave their help in order to give life to the "Kitagata Style." These people gave assistance, and through them, work in the area has progressed. Amidst all of this, for me, Kitagata became a place I can call home.

Written February, 1990

NOTE 1 As a city branch office, it is a public facility that functions both as the area community center, and as an office charged with giving advice to area residents, coordinating communications with the main city office, etc.

NOTE 2 Based upon the grading standards for a building's condition, state of disrepair, and its structure (as determined by the Construction Ministry), all homes are ranked by a survey; those buildings with even one point over the predetermined standard are called "substandard." On the other hand, if the total points fall below the standard rating, the structure is referred to as "good housing."

NOTE 3 Buraku Area Improvement Projects focus on living environment improvements in Buraku areas containing massed substandard housing (see Note 2.) The project system for this redevelopment is as follows:

- ① The purchase and removal of substandard housing. (Strictly speaking, even if the home is substandard, if the occupant does not wish to sell, then the house is left as it is, with the possibility of the owner repairing it in the future by himself.)
- ② Basic arrangement of the whole area. (Planning for such public facilities as parks, roads, sewers, etc.)
- ③ Building public housing complexes; those who wish to own their own home build a new house by themselves.

NOTE 4 For those people who lose their homes due to the Improvement Project (see Note 3), the local government will build and rent out public housing.

NOTE 5 The contents of the Sectional Renewal Method are as follows:

Based upon the idea of leaving behind both "good housing" and those substandard homes whose owners do not want to sell (with the assumption they will repair their homes individually in the future), all other homes are purchased and torn down. Along with planning the basic layout of roads and other public facilities, the size and shapes of the vacant lots are altered, and it is decided whether individuals will build new homes there, or, in places where lots can be put together, public housing units are to be built. The arrangements are clearly planned in this fashion.

Advantages of this method are it is possible to receive more individual opinions from the residents, and arranging can be done while leaving behind the valuable open spaces. Problem points are the planning must be very detailed, and it is vital to create an organization which will co-ordinate governmental and residential activities.

NOTE 6 For people who build by themselves a new home to live in, the "New Home Building Loan Project" was developed, as was the "Land Purchasing Loan Project" for those wanting to buy land on which to build a private residence.

- 1) New Home Building Loan - April, 1989
At Present
Loan Limit.....¥6,400,000
Term of Repayment.....Within 25 years
Annual Interest Rate.....2.8%

2) Land Purchasing Loan - April, 1989

At Present

Loan Limit.....¥5,000,000

Term of Repayment.....Within 25 years

Annual Interest Rate.....2.8%

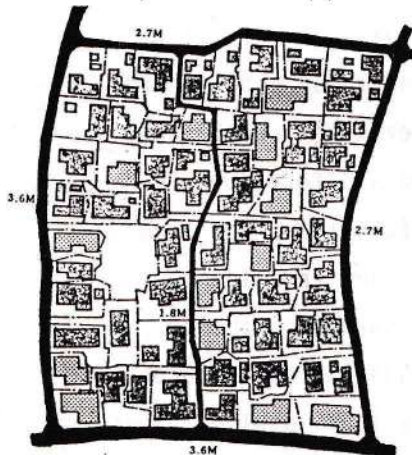
2) New Home Bldg. Loan Apr. 1989

Loan Limit ¥6,400,000

Term of Repayment Within 25 years

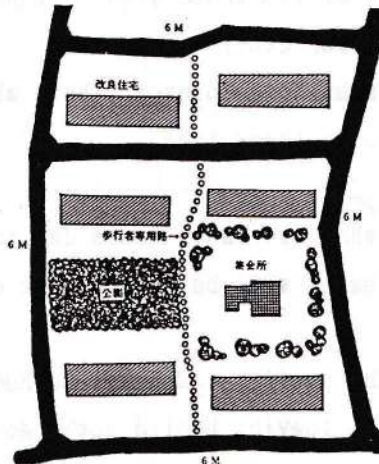
Annual Interest Rate 2.8%

Area's Present Situation (model map)



Good Housing.....13 units
 Substandard Housing.....48 units
 Land with no road frontage..... 8 units

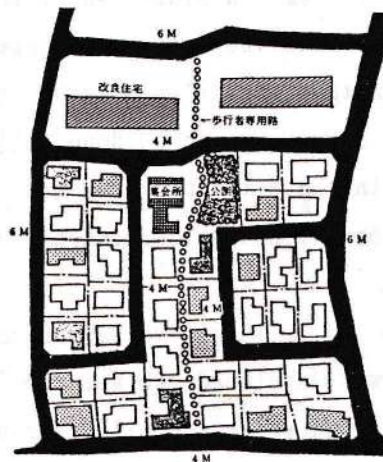
Complete Clearance Method



Public Housing.....144 units

(Purchased and Removed Homes.....61 units)

Sectional Renewal Method



Public Housing.....48 units*
 Rebuilt Private Homes.....24 units
 Good Housing Left Standing.....10 units
 Substandard Housing Left Standing.....4 units

* 3 units from Good Housing and 44 units from Substandard Housing.