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TAKAYAMA

A STUDY OF TOWN AND TOWNSCAPE

IN 1973-1974

ENGLISH SUMMARY

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PREFACE

This is a report on the historic town of Takayama. Since the latter part of the 16th century Takayama had been the center of the Ancient Province of Hida. Up to the present the historic townscape survives in it and there are many old houses. The town, called "Little Kyoto", draws an increasing number of visitors on account of its historical character and charm. Since Takayama is a living city with 60000 people, it must become a city convenient and satisfactory for those who live in and work there. On the other hand it is desired to conserve the historic quarters.

The historic towns of Takayama, Kurasiki, and Hagi were committed to study by The Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1973. The purpose of these studies was to contribute to the conservation of historic quarters in each city. The study in Takayama was taken in hand by members of the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute and a member of Architecture Division of the Agency, with the cooperation of the City and Gifu Prefecture.

THE CITY IN HISTORY

Early Takayama was built by the Kanamori family in 1586, as the center of their rule over the Hida domain. They constructed the Takayama Castle and built the town to the north of it. Surrounded by Miya River on the west, Enako River on the east and north, and the castle on the south, the town was well built for defence.

After the first rulers were changed to another domain in 1692, Takayama was under the direct control of the Shogun until 1868, the last year of the Edo period. Many retainers of the Kanamori family moved with their lord, and their dwelling area gradually became a merchant sector. The merchant town Takayama prospered as the center of government, trade, and culture in Hida country. Through the Edo period a few merchants attained to wealth and they were the main supporters of the original culture of Takayama.

Since the Meiji period (beginning in 1868) notable change did not appear until the early 1930s, so that the town developed slowly, preserving traditional folkways. One of the changes was that the Takayama Line of JNR was opened to traffic. The Takayama station was located well to the west, so that new dwelling and shopping areas spread west over Miya River and reached to the station.

SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY AREA

1. The study area: There are many historic quarters in the older part of the city, the east area to Miya River. Out of them we selected as the study area Kami Ichi no Machi, Kami Ni no Machi, Kami San no Machi, and Katahara Machi streets. Ebisutai-gumi in Kami San no Machi Street is famous for its historic townscape and other streets make an united area with it. We selected this area for two reasons. Firstly, this area will be the first conservation area if the inhabitants and the city decided to conserve their

own town. Secondly, we expected many objects for survey and analysis of the town, townscape, and old houses.

2. The street pattern: The original street pattern is composed mainly of south-north streets and east-west streets connected with them. This pattern was founded basically at the time of building the town, but it scarcely changed except for the widening of a few streets after world War II.

3. The age, construction, usage, and facade of houses: Many houses are in the old traditional style of a gable roof, an attic-type low second storey, and an appendant roof under the eaves. This style continued until the 1930s. Since then the upper eaves became higher and the upper floor changed to dwelling space. But the facade style remained the traditional shape. New styles different from them appeared after world War II. For example, timber-framed and cement plastering, reinforced concrete, and three storey buildings. In the study area, many (about 70%) of old houses are for dwelling and trade, and the rest are for dwelling only. In Kami San no Machi and northern part of Kami Ni no Machi the trade is mainly with sightseeing visitors. In both parts there are many houses conserving the old traditional facade.

4. Street and houses: The streets are narrow (3m-4m) except for the southern part of Kami Ni no Machi and Kami Ichi no Machi streets. The upper eaves and the appendant roof have become higher over the years. In the old traditional style (from the end of Edo period to Meiji period) the eaves are 3.3m-4m and the appendant roof is about 2.1m, in the next style (from early 1930s to World War II) the former is 4.2m-5m, and in the new style (after World War II) these heights have been not controlled.

The narrow streets and old houses make a human scale environment and attract many visitors.

GENERAL PROBLEMS OF CONSERVATION

We were commissioned to discover how to reconcile the old town of Takayama with the future without knocking it down. In this report, we propose new town planning preserving the architectural and historical character of the town of Takayama. The conservation of the town has to be town planning for the inhabitants and by them. For making up the planning, it is necessary to coordinate inhabitants, local government and professionals. If the conservation area is decided with the inhabitants' consent, new building and re-building will be regulated and at the same time assisted by national law and the municipal regulations for the conservation of the town. To apply it the city had better take as the chief designer someone who is familiar with old traditional houses in Takayama.

Recently old anonymous houses, stores, etc. consisting of townscape or villagescape have been regarded as architectural heritage, and historic environments have come to be regarded as our valuable heritage. And now, reflecting these opinions it is proposed to amend the Law for Protection of Cultural Properties.