

A STUDY ON WATERSIDE SPACE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE VIEWPOINTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEHAVIOURS

----attracting the younger back to the city

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1. BACKGROUND

When you walk along the streets of Saga, rivers and creeks can be seen here and there. The city is called “water city” according to the fact that the city of 103 km² has an over 2000 km length of water system, which might be the top level in Japan. Water brings the city the precious resource and unique views. The government also has taken serious on this point and a series of plans and projects are undertaken. Most rivers and creeks are becoming clearer and well-arranged nowadays, some for agriculture use while some for landscape in the center part of the city, and also some open spaces around the waterside can be used for recreations for residents.

However although the waterside spaces in the city are becoming well-arranged as we supposed, they are seemed to be lack of attractiveness. We took a questionnaire among the college students about the usage situation of waterside space. 45.6% of the students said they never went to the waterside space and other 33.3% just at a low frequency such as once a month. As asked to tell some places impress you most, 68.4% of the students answered the fosse, a famous spot for its historical symbolization more than its environmental value. Now the younger almost forget the exist of this treasure of the city and give up living with the unique resource.

The central part of the city is becoming empty for a lot of reasons, which can also be found in many Japanese cities. The city is keeping decaying, which has been a social problem. But as to Saga city, waterside space may be one of the key points to deal with this situation. We'd like to attract people to be back to the city by this unique resource.

Many architects and civil engineering researchers have been kept on researching about waterside space for a long time. Most of the studies can be classified into the following 4 types: research about physical characters, research about usage of waterside space, research about water space design and researches from the viewpoints of environmental psychology.

In this study, we care about how the waterside space affects on our mind. How does it work on our feelings and consciousness? And some combination of different aspects will be considered.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

We present the process of the research as Fig.1. Subjective and objective are two main aspects of the research. The users may have demands on their subjective mind, but not everything will come true for the physical condition limits a lot. If there is no demand, there are no needs to change the physical condition. Both the two factors should be taken into consideration.

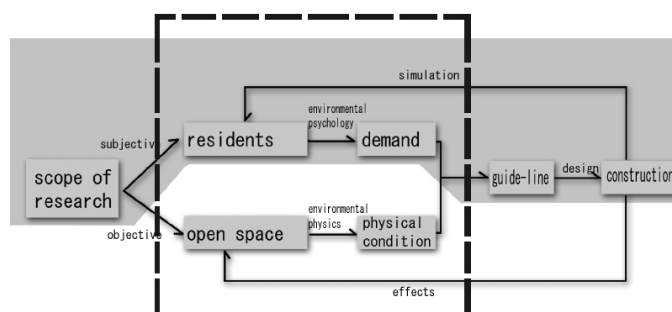


FIG. 1 Content of waterside space system

The younger here do not indicate an age range, just representing those who have a high level of capacity of movement. They can decide where to go and complete it at ease such as college students, workmen and etc. They are tending to be more sensitive to the environment.

Firstly, a questionnaire about consciousness of waterside space was taken among the college students. We asked them to give some comments on the waterside spot they remember or like most. In the questionnaire table, utilization duration and frequency, reasons for coming, hopes, images of sights, feelings, impressions of water and etc were included. Secondly, observation surveys were conducted at 6 spots around the Tabuse River and 3 spots around Saga Park lake, according to the location and usage. They are two different types of water style. Tabuse River has a shape of line while

the Saga ken park lake is an around area. Totally, 72 samples were collected in the end and a report of utilization in each investigation spot was obtained.

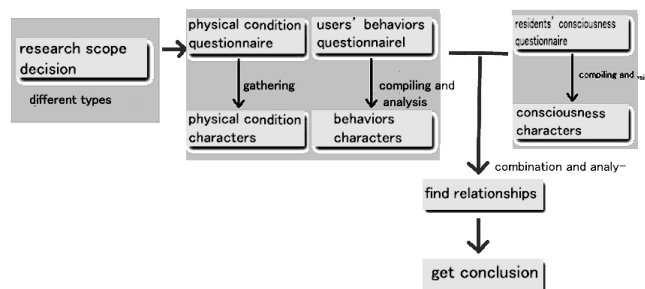


FIG. 2 Flow chart of research

3. RESULTS

3.1. Consciousness of waterside space

What impresses people most in the space is not only water itself but the whole environment around. According to the questionnaire, 40.3% of the people answered that the view around the space impressed on them most while following 31.6% chose the flowing of water. More details are given in the following graphics.

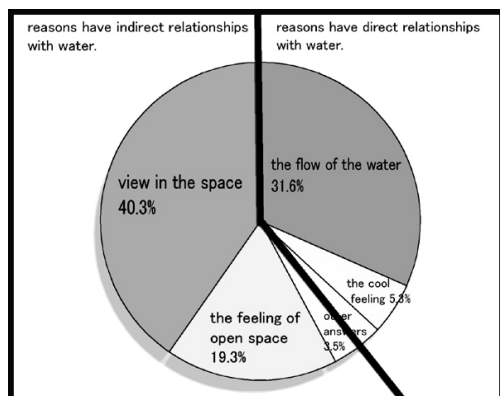


FIG. 3 Graphic of waterside space consciousness

When asked to use a word to describe the feeling of view, hearing, smelling and touching, almost all the people use "Green" to describe from the sight, "Sound of water" for the hearing, "Smell of the plants" for the smelling and "Cool feeling" for the touching.

So we found water itself is an important element rather than all.. We think water as a movement material. It brings us the feeling of unstable. Too much active element surrounded will impede behaviors like stay or rest. But water is still giving indirect effects beyond our consciousness.

3.2. Satisfaction and demand

We listed several reasons of satisfactions and demands to let people to chose. Why do people come and what they get

and want in the waterside space can be indicated in the following table.

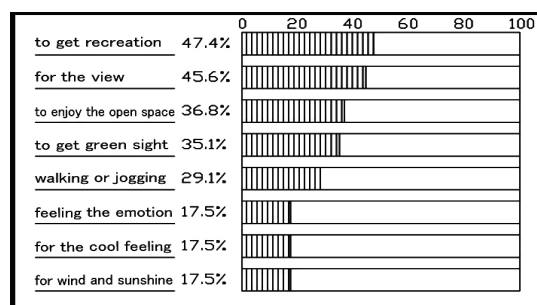


FIG. 4 Graphic of satisfaction

Firstly people want to get some through natural original open space such as the beautiful view, doing some light sports. But waterside spaces also provide some unique properties such as the cooling feeling, some waterside birds and fishes can be seen. Although most waterside space have provide a pleasant view, but people still ask for more. They put large expectation on the scenes, and which had put an impression on their sub-consciousness. They take it for granted but the fact is disappointed. And it becomes even worse in certain seasons.

3.3. Behaviors.

Most people stay in the waterside space just for a short time. 26.3% of the people just stay less than 10 minutes and another 28.1% less than half an hour. Just 10.5% of the people stay over than 2 hours. This is because most spaces in the Saga city just designed as a part or expanse of the sidewalk rather than a place for recreation. They are close to the city streets or just small areas within several meters along the rivers. The places are seemed to have more connections with the city rather than with the nature. And also most accesses are put just for crossing, where spaces in line style, with little space left for staying. This also may bring interruption for other users, and also considered from the privacy view, not many people would like to share the space at one time.

This also can be shown from the observation research. In many spots along the Tabuse River, just some passing behaviors occur such as walking through or jogging. But in the area near Saga Park Lake, some conversations were recorded and more kinds of activities occurred.

4. FURTHER PLAN

More detail analysis will be taken in the next step. And researches will be taken in the comparisons of waterside space with common open space to see the advantage.