A NOTE ON THE LANDSCAPE OF ASIAN AND EUROPEAN CITIES

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Preface

Human geographers have come to regard the city as a nodal point whose functions include among others the central function of the surrounding rural areas. In this sense it can be said that the city has been supported - economically and socially - by the surrounding regions. My primary concern is with the development of the city and resulting rural changes; in other words, city-region relationship. With these objectives in my mind I have studied several Asian and European cities - such as Sinchu, Chiai (both in Taiwan), Singapore, Edinburgh, Trier, Munich, Vienna, Amsterdam.

While in a city, I usually went up to a high point which commands a good view of the whole area. For example, I observed townscapes up from the top of tall tenements in Singapore, from the building of Thorn Electrics in London, from the Eiffel Tower of Paris, and from the hilltop of Marien Säule at Trier. After this I usually walked around in the city with a map in my hand. In large cities I made full use of the mass transit system - such as the street car (Frankfurt, Vienna, Amsterdam), the bus (Taiwan cities, Singapore, London, Edinburgh), the subway (London, Paris, Munich).

In this way I observed the old part of the cities, markets, the amusement districts, the residential sections, and so forth. The purpose of this report is to point out some problems in regard to urban geography, with my limited observations.

Modern Expansion of the Built-up Area and Some Characteristics of the Old Town

In modern times the expansion of built-up areas has a significant bearing on the formation of the social characteristics of the established built-up areas. Castle towns in Japan, the colonial city of Singapore, and European medieval towns transformed their surrounding rural areas to suburbs or new towns. At the same time the old sections of these cities have become civic centers, shopping districts and amusement quarters devoid of local residents.

Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, was a medieval town, which consisted of a castle on a hard volcanic spur and High Street on thesequent ridge which contrasted with the glacial gentle slope. At the early 16 century, the population was about 2,000. By the middle of the 18 century, it increased to 40,000. In order to solve the overpopulation, a new town began to be constructed on the northern opposite ridge of High Street.

"The city fathers decided on a plan with regular streets and buildings following London's example where spacious and dignified squares were laid out. -- The building of Princes Street, with its open side to the castle, and George Street, with its squares at either end, was completed in 1800 when the population of Edinburgh had risen to 100,000. The wealthier of the inhabitants deserted their flats and houses in the old town, leaving them to be divided and occupied by the poorer classes. In time these quarters degenerated into slums. -- After 1825 building activities increased, mostly prompted by private enterprise. When restrictions on trade were abolished in 1846, shops were opened in the New Town, Princes Street and George Street gradually changed
from residential to commercial centres, the former being completely spoiled architecturally. — In 1851 the town's population was 208,477. — Overcrowding and age had reduced many of the houses in the Old Town to slums that were gradually demolished in connection with the construction of new streets with modern and sanitary flats. Railways and a canal came into the city; new industries sprang up, and houses near them were built for the workers. Streets of tenements of four and five storeys were laid out without any preconceived plans.” 1)

Today, we see those tenements a few yards south of the Old Town. On the other side, the Old Town is conserved only for tourists just like many other European counterparts.

In the city of Hiroshima, too, the old town has lost its residents and become a office quarter, a shopping district and an amusement quarter. However, many high-rise apartments are appearing in the old built-up areas in modern Singapore and Hiroshima. Such renewal projects have been aimed at bringing back workers closer to their working areas.

In order to examine this type of transformation of the old town, we must clarify what the social characteristics of the old town were like and how they are changing. In this connection, Singapore's Chinatown provides a good material for a geographical observation.

“When Sir Sanford Raffles founded Singapore city in 1819, there was a population of some 150 fishermen. By 1947 this figure had grown to over 600,000, the majority of whom were alien Chinese immigrants. From the very beginning, Raffles showed great imagination in the planning of a town which was architecturally adapted to the tropical climate and, more important, its basic plans were designed to incorporate an extremely mixed population. The original layout of ethnic quarters is illustrated in the accompanying Fig. 1.” A rapid population growth brought about a tremendous change in this planned colonial city. “The pressure of the population in the inner city began to force the Europeans to move into outer suburbs such as Tanglin, — The area to which they moved, set in rolling hills, was one of the most healthy areas in Singapore.” And in the old town, “the majority of Chinese were concentrated in the already overcrowded Chinatown, originally laid out by Raffles, some had already begun to move to the north of the town in areas which had formerly been occupied by the Europeans. The Indian community had already begun to spread beyond their original Indian area to the north of Chinatown, and to areas north of the original Malay areas. The Malay, Bugis and Arab community had remained remarkably concentrated despite a considerable increase in their population. What is remarkable is that the basic patterns of ethnic distribution laid out in Singapore's original plan, still persisted to such a considerable extent, even though the city population had grown so dramatically 2)

The population in Singapore still continues to grow at this moment. For instance, in 1957 the population was 1,446,000, but in 1968 it reached 2,003,000. To combat the situation, the Housing and Development Board is trying to reconstructing the two and three storied buildings in

Fig. 1. Proposed racial groupings in Singapore city, 1828. (after McGEE)
the Chinatown section into sky-rise housing complexes. We may be able to trace the change of the Chinatown by examining the change of addresses of offices in old and new telephone directories and street directories. It may also be useful to analyze Chinese communities as associations of the people from the same provinces or from the same occupations.

For the study of any Japanese old town, it seems to me very important to come to grips with the social significance of neighborhood (chonaikai) and of all sorts of trade associations. For only after understanding the community structure of the old town, we can discuss the transformation of the old town caused by urban renewals.

Markets in Cities

The city as the central place is supported to a considerable extent by surrounding rural areas. Therefore, the market is an important aspect of urban-rural relationships.

Trier, on the middle reaches of River Mosel, is G-place order of central hierarchy3) whose population is 103,724 (1970). Trier, although founded as a Roman town, now shows strong traces of a medieval town from a viewpoint of urban morphology. The town center is made up of Dom and Markt (Fig. 2). In 958 A.D., Trier obtained the privilege of holding a market by Erzbischof Heinrich, "Damit wurde der Markt zum Kristalisationspunkt für die Entwicklung der Stadt in Mittelalter."5)
**Fig. 5.** Shops around *Haupt Markt*, Trier (1978. 8.19.)

**Fig. 6.** The growth of Vienna (after Braun)
1: *Hoher Markt*, 2: wall of Roman castle, 3: *Neuer Markt*, 4: medieval town, 5: fortifications of 1683, 6: town inside the *Linienwall* of 1704, 7: *West Bahnhof*, 8: the retail market of Fig. 7.

**Fig. 7.** The retail market at the 1 km western point of *West Bahnhof*, Vienna (1978. 8.25. A.M. 10:00 pacing)
Today, there are several open-air stalls of vegetables, fruits, flowers and newspapers in the market plaza (Fig. 3,4). Around the market plaza, there are many retail shops which make this quarter bustling (Fig. 5).

Vienna, also of Roman origin, flourishes and enjoys the population of 1,615,000 in 1971. Railway lines spread from Linienwall which was built in 1704 encloses the old section of Vienna (Fig. 6). A modern built-up area has appeared on the outside of this Linienwall. In this area there is a market which is located on the western hill of West Bahnhof. The market stands on a patch of about 7,000 square meters (Fig. 7). In the market I saw eating places and stalls numbering 84 altogether, the latter selling vegetables, fruits, meats, bread, cheese, fish, sausages, liquors, processed foodstuff and miscellaneous goods. Moreover, on Wurmsgasse, the western path along the market, there are a group of hawkers who sell clothing (29), vegetables and fruits (18), flowers (3), accessories (2), meats and eggs (2), bags (1), and cutlery (1).

The bustle and bustle of this market was almost identical with Taiwan's retail markets on which I made a study on the other occasion.7) Chiai in Taiwan used to have three public markets before World War II. Today, there are nine markets of which six markets have appeared in the new built-up area.

Thus, the market in the city has two meanings: its origin can be traced back to the medieval period; and it now functions as a retail market in the old or new built-up areas. As a concluding remark, it may be useful for a historical study of the central place, therefore, to do research on these markets in relation to urban development and rural change. Regional characteristics of both Asian and European cities may be clarified by such a study.

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