



Uzo Nishiyama's planning methodology based on investigations of common people's lives

Hiroshi Nakabayashi*

* PhD, Kobe Shoin Women's University, baya@js6.so-net.ne.jp

Uzo Nishiyama is known as a founder of dwelling science in Japan. He argued for establishment of dining rooms separate from sleeping rooms. This theory was derived from substantial investigation of ordinary houses in the 1930s. Nishiyama also made important accomplishments in town planning, and holds a unique position in Japanese urban planning. He established methodology to analyse urban situations from compound viewpoints on social phenomena, including domestic and overseas socioeconomic conditions, infrastructure development, and local government administration. In the case of urban problems, epistemology and policy theory are inseparable. Nishiyama saw that it was important to improve the planning ability of citizens to overcome negative conditions in Japanese cities; to this end, it was necessary to create a platform of 'Image Planning'. Although Nishiyama shifted to a more bottom-up approach in the late 1960s, he continued to believe that the order of living space was brought about by the accumulation of the lives of common people. Today's frontline urban planning researchers have developed theories under the influence of Nishiyama's ideas, as his emphasis on quality of life has gained a high reputation.

Keywords: Uzo Nishiyama, Japanese Planning, Image Planning, Common People's Lives

Introduction

Uzo Nishiyama is known as the founder of dwelling science in Japan. Nishiyama is also called the inventor of the dining kitchen, and he argued for establishment of dining rooms separate from sleeping rooms, even in small houses. This theory, derived from substantial investigation of ordinary houses in the 1930s, led to Japan's post-war housing policy, known as the nLDK system (several sleeping rooms + living/dining kitchen).

Uzo Nishiyama also made important accomplishments not only in the field of dwelling science, but also in town planning. He holds a unique position in Japanese urban planning. In the 1960s, Nishiyama issued four books that consolidated his findings thus far. One of these was *Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space (Chiiki kukan ron)*. Chapter 1, 'The Structure of the Base of Life' (1942), Chapter 9, 'An Essay on the National Structure' (1946) and Chapter 10, 'Mountain Cities' (1946) were translated into English by Professor Corolla Hain of Delft University of Technology and published in 2017. It is interesting that these three articles on planning theories still draw attention after 70 years. Calora Hain(2017) claims Nishiyama should be reviewed from a global perspective, comparable to Patrick Geddes, called the father of urban planning, and Lewis Mumford, famous for civilization criticism. However 'other major figures of Japanese urban planning, particularly those who had made their marks through writing, remained all but unknown outside the island nation. Among them is the architect-planner, historian-theorist, humanist and avowed Marxist Nishiyama Uzo (1911-1994), who had collaborated with Tange on the master plan for the 1970 Osaka World Expo. Nishiyama made his contribution mainly through his teaching and his many writings rather than his few works'.

This paper aims to summarize the history of formation of urban planning theory from a unique



viewpoint based on analysis of the lives of ordinary people.

Nishiyama's research background

The Edo era in Japan was such a peaceful era that natural and social sciences developed greatly, not only in the capital of Edo but also in local cities. Japan closed its doors to the outside world, but the world's newest scientific knowledge came to Nagasaki from the Netherlands and China. Thus, even though its industrial revolution was 100 years behind Europe's, development of natural and social sciences accelerated rapidly during the Meiji Restoration. During the stage when academic fields were undifferentiated, great intellectual figures emerged, like biologist, naturalist and ethnologist Kumagusu Minakata (1867-1941), who tried to record the entire phenomenon of nature and society; Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962); and Wajiro Kon (1888-1973). Uzo Nishiyama is a descendant of these figures in that he recorded human life in detail.

By the time Nishiyama entered the old-system high school, it had been decades since the establishment of the University of Tokyo, and differentiated academic fields were progressing in their development. The department of architecture in Kyoto University was established in 1920.

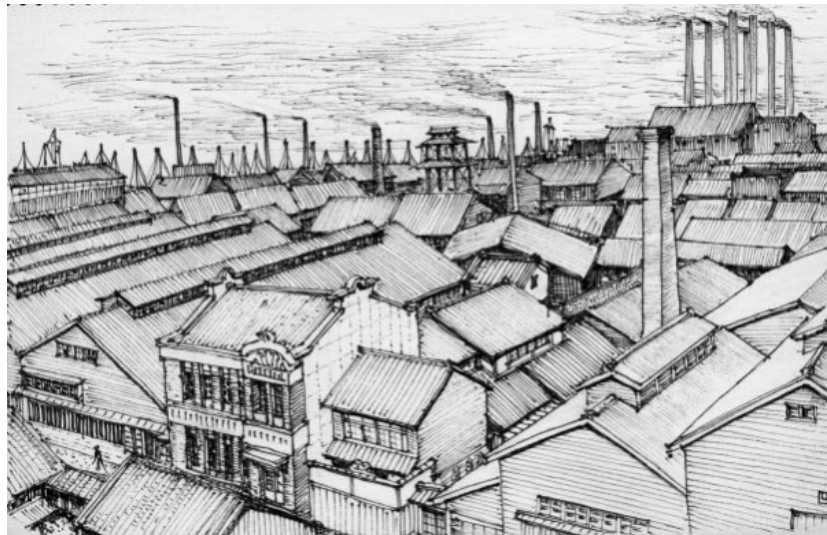


Figure 1. Nishiyama's sketch of Osaka in 1919. *His father's iron work factory extended in 1919; the European-style house at the front was their residence.*

Nishiyama was one generation younger than Wajiro Kon, whom he resembled in his enthusiastic recording of the details of commoners' lifestyle. Nishiyama considered Kon his forerunner until his later years. Having become accustomed to drawing cartoons in his boyhood days, Nishiyama habitually drew sketches to record people's physical lives.

Nishiyama (1971), in his commentary at the end of Kon's book, states the following: 'We cannot find the field of academic subjects such as "life" or "lifestyle" among the existing specialized departments. However, there is a researcher who continues to do one unique activity. Right now it is said that Kon Wajiro's "science of lifestyle" is an academic discipline to take up such a problem'.

Addressing housing problems and urban problems

Students of the Japanese old-system high school in the 1930s knew Marxism on an intimate level. Nishiyama organized an independent study group called 'DEZAM' among his high school classmates.



They studied theories associated with social progress based on historical materialism, and examined the actual situation, the survey of real issues, the solution plan proposal and the production system concept. Through such activities, Nishiyama strengthened his interest in housing problems and urban problems.

During Nishiyama's school days, the department of architecture in university had few systematic lectures on housing. However, he was influenced by two professors who were interested in housing problems at the time. These were Goichi Takeda (1872-1938), a founder of the Department of Architecture of Kyoto University who had a strong interest in housing, and Koji Fujii (1888-1938), who pioneered residential research from the viewpoint of environmental engineering.

Nishiyama began his investigation of housing in 1935. His survey was to copy the premises and housing plans stated in the housing construction notification submitted for enforcement of City Building Law. This mass survey of common households, approximately 3000 units in total in Osaka, Kyoto, and Nagoya, took two years. It was the first full-fledged research on urban housing in times when nationwide housing investigations had not yet been conducted. After his obligatory military service, Nishiyama engaged in research on wartime housing policy as a research engineer in the newly founded Housing Association's research department for about three years, from June 1941 to March 1944 (Nishiyama 1983).

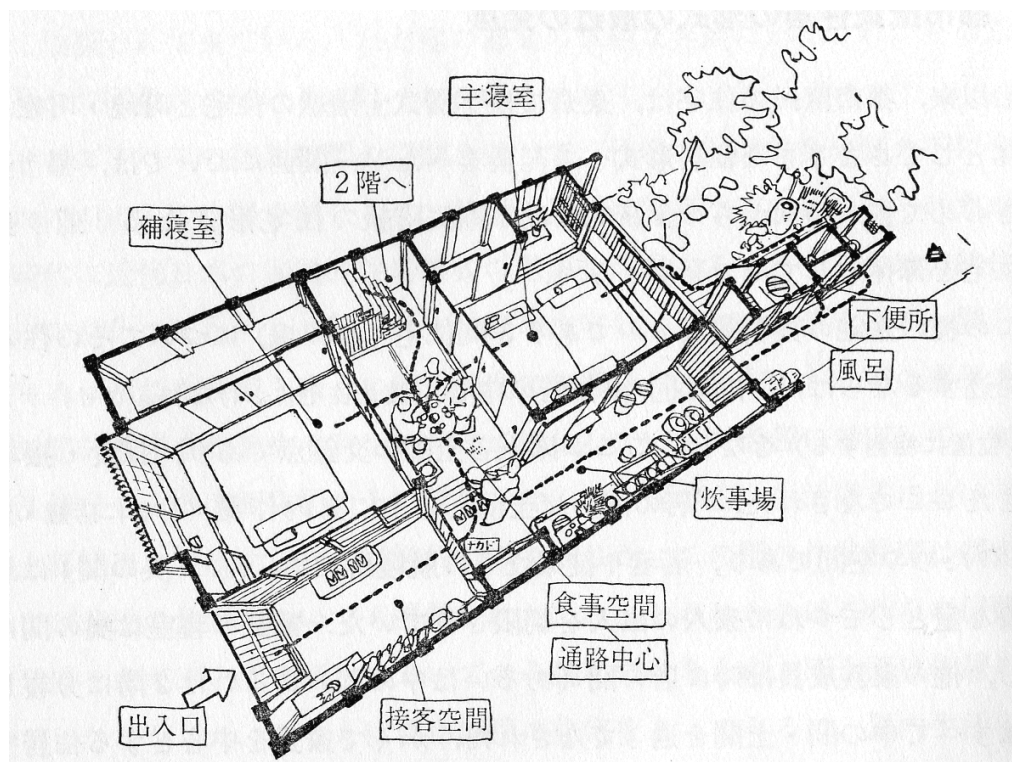


Figure 2. How to live in traditional wooden houses. This figure is important as it shows Nishiyama's discovery that most families used the middle room as a dining room, and that it was reasonable to use the dining room as a passageway.

Shoji Sumita (2008) and Moriaki Hirohara (2006) emphasize that the centre of Osaka, a high-density residential area of the Taisho Period, bred Nishiyama's ideological soul. Affecting the habitus nurtured by Nishikujo of Osaka, Nishiyama developed his analytical theory and created the novel methodology of the



‘survey on how to live’.

In 1938, the Ministry of Health and Welfare was separated from Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry established a Housing Association to stabilize people’s lives in wartime through social policy. Kazuo Okochi (1905-1984), a famous proponent of wartime social policy, was involved in this initiative. The housing policy was an important aspect of the ‘1940 regime’ that determined Japan’s post-war social structure. According to Hirohara (2006), Nishiyama had a close relationship with Okochi.

Proposal of ‘Image Planning’

Through inductive methodology, Nishiyama proved his rule of dwelling types in the area of housing. However, the theory relating to urban situations could not be derived from induction alone.

Nishiyama thus established a methodology to analyse urban situations from compound viewpoints on social phenomena, including domestic and overseas socioeconomic conditions, infrastructure development, local government administration, community mechanisms, and the history of Japanese culture.

With respect to urban problems, epistemology and policy theory are inseparable. Nishiyama saw that it was important to improve the planning ability of citizens to overcome negative conditions in Japanese cities; therefore, it was necessary to create a platform of ‘Image Planning’. He began to believe that ‘Image Planning’ was the only method by which to establish good development. But even as Nishiyama became a great scholar in the theory of housing planning, he was trying to think about the system of living space in the national land and the city. Before World War II, he studied in depth the urban planning theory of foreign countries, and developed a new urban and national theory. The typical argument was an idea that districts as small as elementary school districts each have their own characteristics and become divisional, and that large cities are organically united by these small districts. Immediately after the end of the war, Nishiyama announced the ‘mountain city’ concept of slopes for effective use of Japan’s land. He consistently defended the high-density living supported by Japan’s unique lifestyle, and in the 1960s he announced the idea of ‘Ieporis’, huge apartment houses.

The modern architectural movement in Japan has been influenced mainly by CIAM through Le Corbusier and Gropius. Hirohara (2006) emphasizes that Nishiyama may have learned the most of CIAM

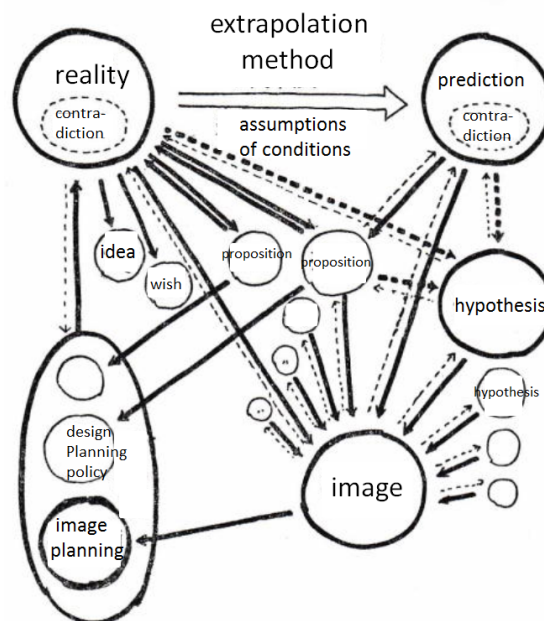
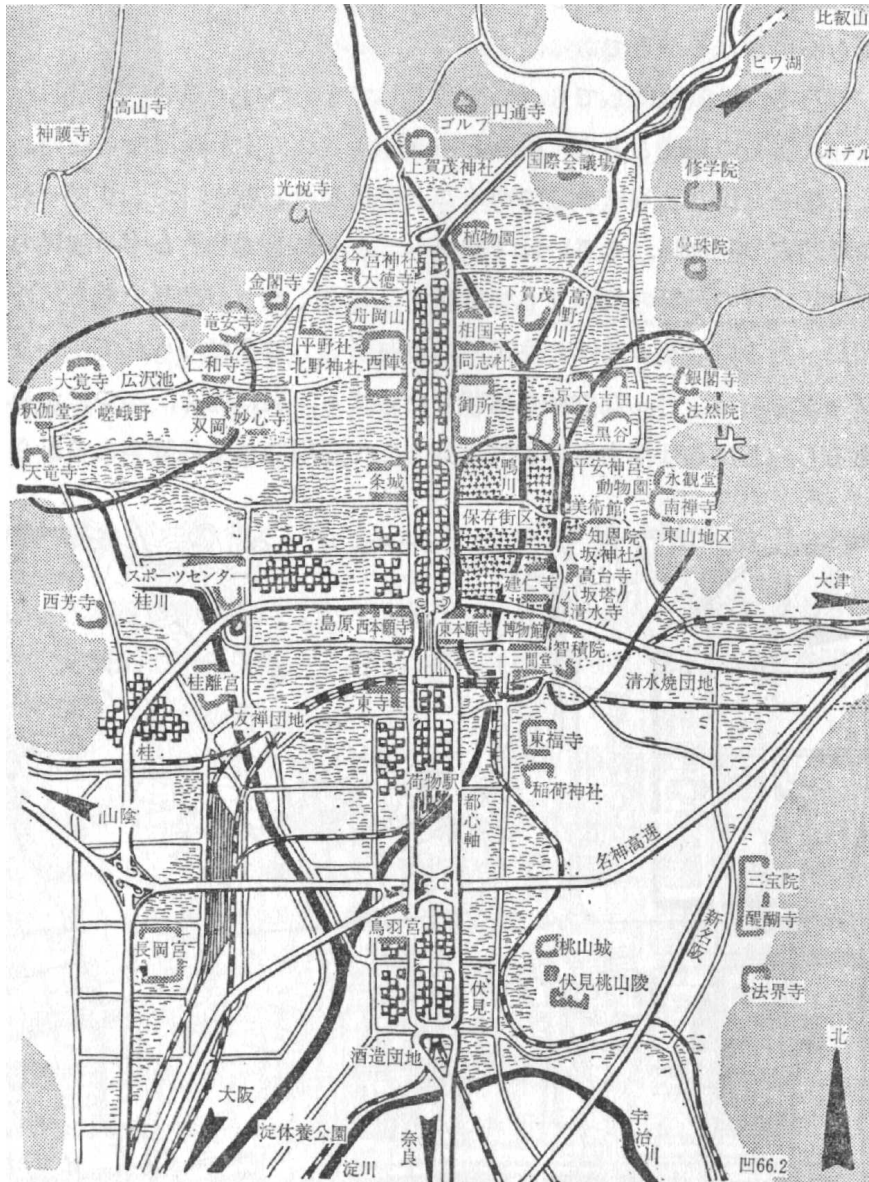


Figure 3. Relationship between prediction and planning.



through the theories of Ernst May (1886-1970), a German architect and city planner who worked on many Ziedrungs in Frankfurt am Main during the Weimar period. Nishiyama's theory was similar to his in that May consistently tried to consider housing and city planning jointly to physically express the life of a new era, and continuously pursued the ideals of the metropolitan area. Regional space consists of various elements, making it difficult to draw a simplified ideal figure for such space. Nishiyama proposed Image Planning as a method for discovering contradictions in living spaces and revealing the visual perceptions of a space. Image Planning, as used by Nishiyama, was a starting point for synthesizing the actual conditions and demands of people, and for presenting a concrete plan that visualizes the future. This



method enriches the plan and can extract further contradictions. In addition, Nishiyama believed that it was important to determine what kind of difficulty was present to paint the 'inferno', which indicates the damage caused to the environment as the development plan progresses.

Figure 4. Kyoto Plan 64.



A particularly famous work of Image Planning by Nishiyama is 'Kyoto Plan 64', which rearranges the centre axis of high-rise housing in downtown Kyoto. This proposal aimed to avoid the destruction of the cultural assets of other districts and to build a non-cluttered urban structure, independent of motorization. Various scholars and town planners have evaluated this plan. Nishiyama described it as a way to protect the mountain skyline and maintain the appearance of a historic city. Furthermore, he argued it to be half the meaning of 'inferno'. Sumita (2008) note that Nishiyama's affinity for high-density living was a result of empathy for Osaka's traditional terraced house districts, which he had seen in his childhood.

Patrick Geddes (1884-1932), called the father of town planning, placed great value on observational technique, and believed that urban areas should be planned in accordance with local lives and needs. Nishiyama's Image Planning methodology is very similar to Geddes's thought.

Criticism of motorization and emphasis on recreation and tourism

An analysis of human life is at the centre of Nishiyama's methodology when dealing with the city and region. In particular, he had a strong interest in control of vehicular traffic and development of recreation. These two points were foresights of Nishiyama's, and can be considered outstanding insights into human life.

Nishiyama was the first to develop criticism of motorization. He insisted that a lifestyle relying too heavily on the car disturbs the order of the region, resulting in poor living space. In the mid-1960s, the number of vehicles owned was less than ten percent of the current number. The concept plan 'Kyoto Plan 64', announced in 1964, shows a solution that would be like this if car traffic were kept out of a large city. In the 1970s, Nishiyama presented the idea that the street car system, which was meant to hinder automobile traffic and was abolished in various cities, was a very human form of public transit. He also headed the campaign to protect Kyoto's street car system, which would be abolished in 1978.

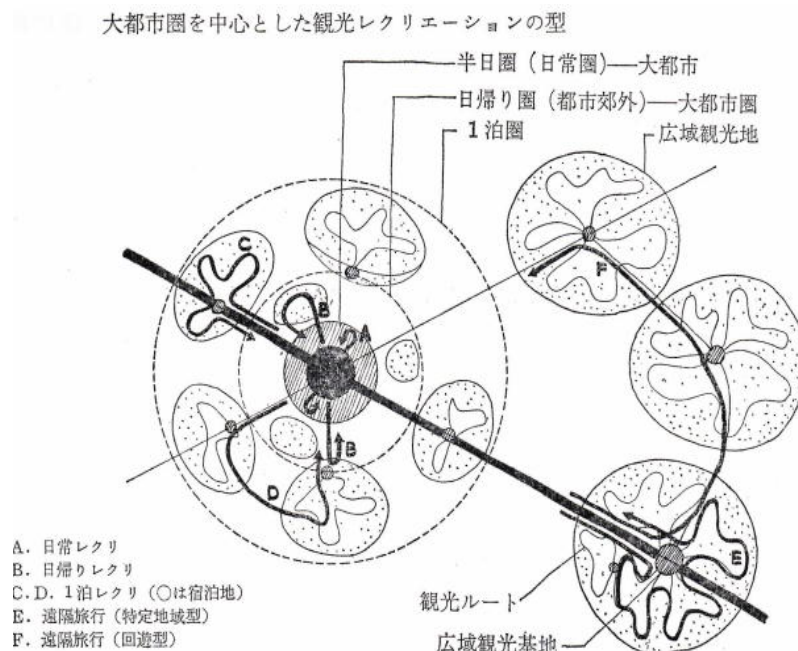


Figure 5. Types of tourism for metropolitan area residents. A --- daily recreation; B --- single day recreation; C/D --- overnight trip; E --- remote trip (particular district); F --- remote trip (migration route).



Another outstanding insight of Nishiyama's was how to capture human recreation. Recreation is time for self-realization in modern society. Nishiyama argued that both the region and human beings themselves would make healthy developments through recreation and sightseeing. In housing planning, evolution from the nDK to the nLDK plan --- that is, addition of a living room --- insisted on incorporating awareness of enjoying life. Likewise, Nishiyama believed that regional order was created in free time separate from controlled labour. As recreation evolved, he saw the potential for arts, research activities and volunteer activities to blossom greatly. The year following the Great Hanshin Awaji earthquake in 1995 was called 'the first year of volunteers' in Japan, but this was the year after Nishiyama's death. As early as the 1960s, Nishiyama already had the idea that volunteer activities would be incorporated into a new social structure. Nishiyama considered sightseeing a high-dimensional form of recreation and considered preservation measures for scenic sites and cultural properties with great interest. At an interdisciplinary meeting, he proposed that sightseeing was important to the future of Japan, and lamented that other researchers did not sufficiently understand its significance. Based on that idea, he criticized the fact that tourism development, which damages an area's good resources during periods of high growth, was inconsistent.

The perspective of considering development of an area based on human life was handed down to Nishiyama's disciples, such as Hiroshi Mimura, his successor at Kyoto University. They contributed in creating the foundation of tourism studies to clarify tourism methods supporting regional development, not biased toward management theory for the tourism industry.

Bottom-up planning theory

From the end of the war to the high growth period, the nation-led plan did not proceed as smoothly as Nishiyama predicted. During this time, the townscapes of historical cities such as Kyoto and Nara were damaged, and a number of pollution problems occurred across the country. Obvious wrongs emerged in various places in Japan. By 1970, Nishiyama shifted his thinking significantly to a bottom-up planning approach. But despite this shift away from a top-down planning approach in the late 1960s, he continued to believe that the order of living space was created by the accumulated lives of common people. To investigate these issues, he proposed a new course at Kyoto University. The Department of Architecture established the Regional Living Space Plan Course in 1965, the year following the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Nishiyama was constantly conscious of Kenzo Tange from the University of Tokyo. At the Osaka World Expo in 1970, he worked as a comprehensive producer with Tange, but proposed a completely different approach to the region. In a nutshell, Tange championed regional development of the large-scale, expansive type after the period of high growth, while Nishiyama aimed to enhance daily life spaces, occupational proximity, and suppression of car traffic. He sought a sustainable and compact city in the true sense.

Nishiyama demonstrated an outstanding ability to build a theory for living space, but to facilitate good regional development, steady support for the concept that residents and experts need to cooperate was required. Following the 1970s, the prospects of urban planning were seen in the grassroots movement. Nishiyama also tackled real regional problems. In his later years, his activity focused on townscape issues, such as high-rise condominium problems in large cities such as Kyoto and preservation movements concerning traditional townscapes in various places. He asserted that traditional-style houses were cultural assets with the accumulated wisdom of life and should not be destroyed.

Nishiyama was busy in the years after his retirement from Kyoto University in 1974. He completed three volumes of the great book '*Nihon no Sumai*', a full-length study of all kinds of houses in Japan in



1985. In addition, he published five books on his own history. Finally, he wrote a novel modelled after his father, a story with '*Ajigawa Monogatari*', a kind of an urban development history of the Meiji and Taisho eras in Osaka.

As an important trigger for the preservation movement concerning the townscape of Ise Kawasaki in 1979, Nishiyama participated in surveying historic townscapes of various places, such as Okayama Ashimori, Kagawa Sadamitsu, and so on. He stated that 'the local residents' movement itself is a real city plan'. He was beginning to shift his thinking toward the bottom-up approach at this time. Nishiyama ultimately made a great contribution to the preservation of traditional townscapes in various districts and the rise in popularity of tourism to such places in Japan.



Figure 6. Nishiyama's sketch of Ise Kawasaki. *The traditional townscapes on one side were removed for river improvement.*

It is noteworthy that Nishiyama took a global perspective to the issue of townscape preservation. Because the Japanese government did not readily ratify the UNESCO World Heritage Convention established in 1972, the 'Santo Shimin Forum'-a solidarity organization in Nara, Kyoto and Kamakura with Nishiyama as a representative-urged the government to ratify it and to call for direct contact with UNESCO (Nakabayashi 2008).

Nishiyama was involved in the formation of several movement organizations, and he was active as a social movement researcher. Such organizations included 'Shin Kenchikuka Gijutsusha Shudan', which focused on architectural design and urban planning for social progress; 'Santo Shimin Forum', an association of efforts to preserve the landscape of the ancient capitals of Nara, Kyoto and Kamakura; and 'Kyoto Machidukuri Shimin Kaigi', a liaison organization for the movement against destructive development in Kyoto. Furthermore, Nishiyama stood at the forefront of peaceful and democratic movements beyond the areas of housing and planning; for example, he was the first chairman of the labour union at Kyoto University.

Conclusion

With a view toward the realities of contemporary Japan, on the one hand, the traditional townscape has been eliminated from the centres of large cities, which have become non-residential areas. On the other hand, metropolitan areas have spread and suburbs are filled with empty houses in this era of population decline. Nishiyama foresaw this disaster. Although he confronted the modern situation after wartime, his



ideas are relevant even today.

To summarize, policies emphasizing large-scale development have been implemented consistently in Japan. National land and urban planning are both very immature in terms of accumulating the wisdom and creativity of the people. As mentioned above, through the experience of the 1960s, Nishiyama's urban planning attitude changed from a top-down theory, such as the proposal of Image Planning, to a bottom-up theory. His method also moved from a priori approach to an inductive approach. However, Nishiyama consistently adopted the attitude that space should be organized through the accumulation of residents' lives, both when planning a new vision and when preserving historical streets.

Nishiyama knew that the resident movements in the 1970s and 1980s had tried to protect the traditional townscapes and to create districts that controlled for car traffic. He was particularly interested in the development of recreation activities and allowances for motorization. Therefore, he reconstructed the theory of urban planning in terms of residents' movements.

The ideas of Nishiyama, which insist that residents' movements and even oppositional movements are a clue to positively creating new space, have an important meaning even today. It is no exaggeration to say that today's frontline urban planning researchers have developed theories under the influence of Nishiyama's ideas, since his emphasis on quality of life has gained a high reputation. It is necessary to re-evaluate the method presented by Nishiyama in order to create a new urban planning system built on the demands of and knowledge regarding residents' daily lives.

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Image sources

Figure 1: Nishiyama, Uzo, *Ajigawa monogatari* (Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha).

Figure 2: Nishiyama, Uzo, *Jutaku keikaku* (Keiso Shobo, 1967).



Figure 3: Nishiyama, Uzo, *Chiiki kukan ron* (Keiso Shobo, 1968).

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Figure 5: Nishiyama, Uzo, *Chiiki kukan ron* (Keiso Shobo, 1968).

Figure 6: Kanko sigen chosa houkoku Vol.8, *Ise Kawasaki no machinami* (Kanko Shigen Hogozaidan, 1980)