



Urban planning for the Yamashiro hot spring by Eika Takayama: The history of urban planning for a tourist destination in Japan

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Though the necessity of urban planning for tourist destinations in Japan has been acknowledged by some of the professors, little progress has been made so far. In order to contemplate the urban planning of tourist destinations for the future, it is necessary to review the history of planning for tourist destinations. It is also important to clarify how urban planners in Japan previously engaged with tourist destinations. Therefore, this research focuses on Eika Takayama, one of the greatest urban planners of Japan. It explores his works on tourist destinations. He was engaged with the Japan Spa Association and did three types of activities: 1) participation in the discussions held in hot spring areas; 2) a tour to hot spring resorts in Europe with members of the committee and; 3) the actual urban planning of hot spring areas. This paper mentions his relationship with the plans for the Yamashiro hot spring town. With strong demand for the development of tourism during the 1950s, he proposed to create a new town for development while conserving the historical and unique centre of Yamashiro. His idea contributes to the uniqueness of Yamashiro today.

Keywords: tourism planning, hot spring, Eika Takayama, resort

Chapter 1. Introduction

Historically “urban planning” was developed in order to build a city in which people can safely and comfortably live. Therefore, urban planning for large cities or suburban cities are the main issues both for the academic topic or actual political works. The City Planning Act of Japan reflects these issues and divides national land into two parts: land which is controlled under the Act, and land which is not controlled under the Act. This means that city planning does not literally exist for the latter areas. Examples of the latter areas include natural environments and small villages in rural areas. These areas have no city planning regulations. This character of the City Planning Act of Japan is totally different from those in Great Britain and Germany, which cover all national land. Rural areas with tourist destinations (such as beach resorts, hot spring resorts and mountain resorts) are one type of area that the City Planning Act does not always cover but the necessity of it is mentioned^{1,2}. These tourist destinations exist for tourists to rest or play. This means that they differ from general cities both in terms of users and purposes. The reason why city planning for tourist destinations is necessary is because, in Japan, most of the tourist destinations including hot spring resorts were rapidly developed by developers in the 1950s to the 1960s. As a result, special environments (such as areas of natural beauty and historical landscape) were lost, and tall and large buildings occupied tourist destinations. The problem is that the buildings developed still exist, and the landscape of the tourist destinations in Japan is not of high quality, as in Europe.

Recently, the number of foreign tourists to Japan has been growing, and redevelopment has taken place in some of the tourist destinations. There is a possibility that tourist destinations will be rapidly redeveloped in the near future, as they were in the 1960s. Therefore, it is important to discuss the city planning of tourist destinations now. It is also important for city planners to know how they should or can relate to tourist destinations. But, before discussing it, it is more important to understand the history of city planning for tourist destinations in Japan, and how city planners have previously related to tourist destinations. Indeed, history tells us the future. In this context, this paper focuses on Eika Takayama (1910-1999), historically one of the greatest city planners of Japan³. The purposes of this paper are as follows: first, it clarifies his thoughts about, and relationships with, tourist destinations through an analysis of his contribution to the Japan Spa Association. Second, it clarifies his contribution to a tourist destination by focusing on the actual planning he completed.

Previous works of research that are related to this paper include some papers on the history of city planning for tourist destinations in Japan, and some papers on the works of Takayama. The former research⁴ mainly focuses on city planning before World War II and did not pay much attention to city planning for tourist destinations after World War II. The latter research looks at his character and works for national big projects⁵, and city planning theory that he created⁶. His relationships with tourist destinations are still unclear. Document investigation is the methodology used for this research. The author found a planning document by Takayama at the Takayama archives (Takayama bunko) at the University of Tokyo.



Chapter 2. Takayama and his relationship with the Japan Spa Association (JSA)

The JSA was established in 1929 for the purposes of the academic research of hot springs, and for the support of hot spring areas. Takayama looked back on his relationship with the JSA in 1988 and said that he had a good relationship with the JSA before World War II⁷. He became a personal acquaintance of Dr. Manabe (from the medical department of the University of Tokyo, who was a member of the academic committee of JSA) when he injured his breast while playing football⁸. In the 1930s the JSA collected the architectural design of a shed for drinking hot spring water in 1934. Takayama applied two sketches of the shed to the JSA.

Takayama had a deeper relationship with the JSA after the end of World War II. Takayama, Fumiaki Irisawa, who was the vice President of JSA, and Hideo Anzai, who was the executive editor, all graduated from the same junior high school and, thanks to this common background, they gradually got to know each other⁹. From 1954, Takayama worked as a member of the academic committee of JSA and, from 1960 until he died in 1999, he worked as an executive member.

Three types of activities undertaken by Takayama can be analysed through the magazine *Onsen* (by the JSA), and his statements: 1) participation in the discussions held in hot spring areas¹⁰; 2) a tour to hot spring resorts in Europe with members of the committee¹¹; and 3) the actual urban planning of hot spring areas. Takayama was engaged in the actual planning of hot spring areas through the works of the JSA, including Asama in 1954 and Yamashiro in 1955. The planning of Asama ended in failure because the local government could not cooperate with the citizens¹². On the other hand, the planning of Yamashiro was partly achieved, and Takayama's contribution was quite considerable. Therefore, the development of the Yamashiro hot spring and Takayama's contribution will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3. The development of Yamashiro town and Takayama's plans

3.1 History of the Yamashiro hot spring town

The Yamashiro hot spring is located in the Hokuriku region in Japan. It is said that the Yamashiro hot spring was found about 1,300 years ago. A central bath called "Soyu" (総湯) and its surrounding plaza were developed, and they formed the centre of the town. A picture drawn around the 1880s shows that hotels surround the plaza. The plaza was also used as a theatre.

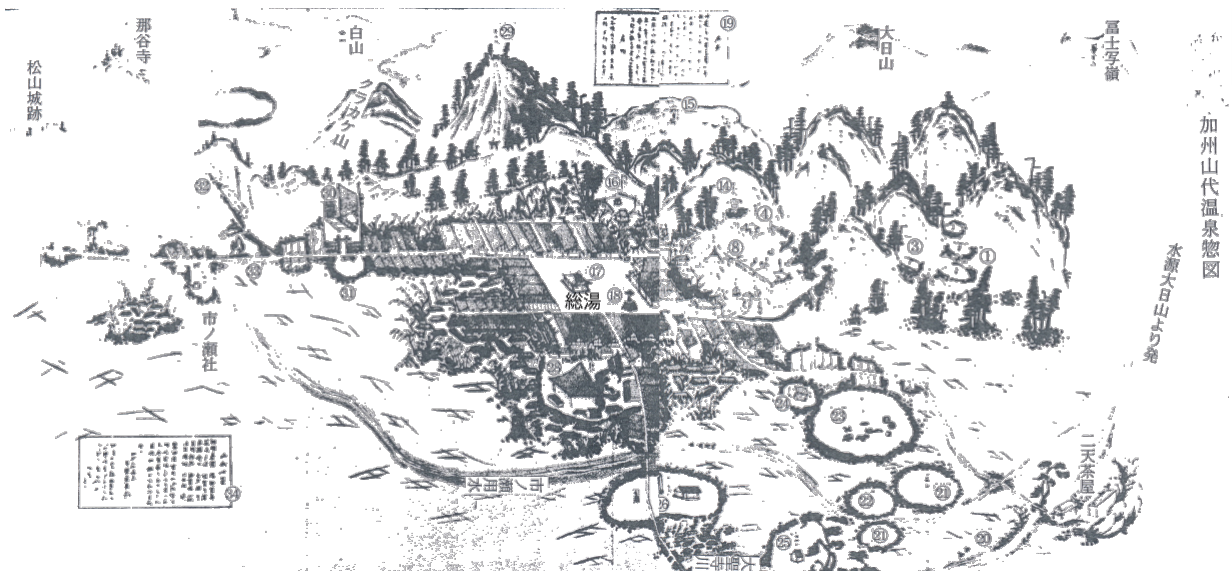


Figure 1: Old painting of the Yamashiro hot spring (around 1876 to 1883)¹³

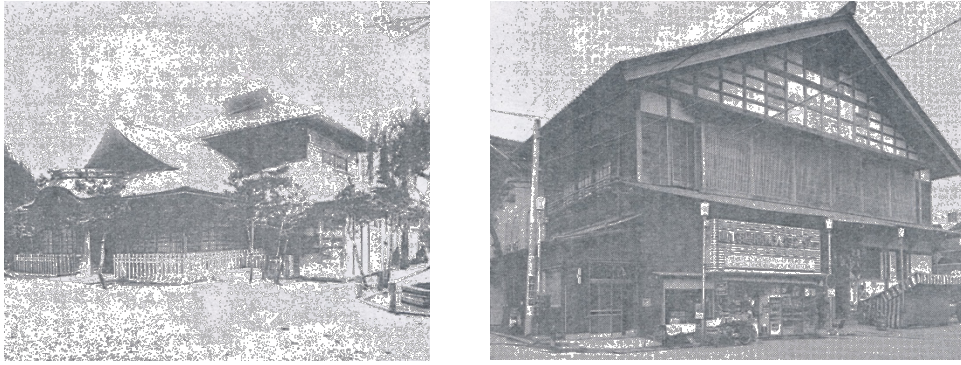


Figure 2: Architecture of the Soyu¹⁴ (Left: at the end of the Meiji era; Right: at the beginning of the Showa era)

In Yamashiro town only the 18 hotels that surrounded the central bath historically had the right to use and control the hot spring water. The group of 18 hotels were called “aza jyuhachi” (字十八). Many troubles took place between aza jyuhachi and the other stakeholders, such as the local authority and the local citizens, in relation to the hot spring water. These stakeholders wanted to use the hot spring water, but aza jyuhachi denied them use of it. In the 1930s the aza jyuhachi even resisted the Japanese army, who wanted to use the hot spring water to cure injured soldiers. It can be said that the aza jyuhachi conserved their established historic interest, but this could be a shackle on town development.

However, after World War II, with the need to develop the town, the local government tried to overcome the situation. On July 1st 1953, a general assembly of the JSA was held in Kanazawa, close to Yamashiro town. In the meeting, a chairman of the Yamashiro town parliament was in attendance and requested discussing plans for Yamashiro hot spring. This was passed unanimously. It was the first time that the JSA agreed to cooperate for one hot spring area. Just two days after the general assembly, four specialists visited Yamashiro town. On July 22nd, Takayama visited Yamashiro town for the first time. He was commissioned as a specialist of urban planning from JSA through the introduction of a tourism association called “Zen Nihon Kanko Renmei” (全日本観光連盟). The field study record is found at the archives of Takayama. According to the memo, Takayama walked around the town in the afternoon and talked with the local people, including citizens and parliament. In the memo Takayama wrote: ‘It is important to fix the characteristics of this town’ and ‘relations between the new town and the old town are important’. This means that the creation of a new town was already in his mind.

Discussions in parliament had also started. On March 4th, 1954, a meeting for the development was held and in 1956 a committee for the development was launched, and Takayama was commissioned to be a member as a specialist of urban planning. On March 2nd, 1956, the town mayor Kadoya said that, in Yamashiro town, there had been many conflicts between many stakeholders which had interrupted the development of the town since before World War II. Nonetheless, the importance of development was gradually getting noticed by the citizens. Therefore, it was urgent that scientific planning by authoritative professionals was undertaken for the future development of Yamashiro.

Regarding a matter of hot spring water, with the progress of technical development, new hot spring sources were found. It was an important factor for Yamashiro to develop.

3.2 A plan by Takayama

Takayama visited Yamashiro three times and made a plan. A planning document was found at the archives of Takayama. The title of it was as follows; ‘Yamashiro model hot spring planning, October 1956, Takayama laboratory, Architecture Department, Faculty of Engineering, the University of Tokyo’ and was 60 pages long. In the introduction of the report, it says that Takayama laboratory was commissioned to make a plan and Takayama and his assistant professor Shigetugu Kojima (both from the University of Tokyo) and Kazushige Deguchi and Susumu Takahashi (both from Zen Nihon Kanko Renmei) was in charge of the report. An index of the report is as follows.

Chapter 1 Current state of Yamashiro town

1. Geographical and natural aspects



2. Social and economic aspects

- a) Increasing rate of population
- b) Industry
- c) Areal composition and residential condition
- d) City planning
- e) Current state of the development area

Chapter 2 Background of the development

1. Direction of the development of Yamashiro town
2. Characteristics of the development area in relation to the old town

Chapter 3 Planning

1. Area composition
2. Traffic planning
3. Process and land use planning
4. Facility location planning

Chapter 4 How to realise the plan

1. Establishment of Yamashiro town politics
2. Survey and statistics
3. Funding
4. Source of hot spring
5. Contact with city planning department
6. Finance and methodological issues
7. Building

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Chapter 1 is an analysis of the current state of Yamashiro. 1) Accessibility, 2) the amount of hot spring, 3) weather, 4) increase rate of population, 5) industry, 6) employment rate and number of employees, 7) labour force population, 8) area composition and residential condition, 9) city planning in the past, and 10) land owners of the development area are reported. Items one to eight were compared with towns around Yamashiro, such as Yamanaka town and Katayamazu town – both of which were also famous for hot spring resorts. Chapter 2 shows the direction of the planning based on the analysis shown in Chapter 1 and discussions with stakeholders. Yamashiro town could choose to develop as a farming town or a commercial town. Further, the report mentioned that Yamashiro town should be commercially developed by using the hot spring water more effectively. Indeed, because there is enough hot spring water, the citizens wished Yamashiro town to be a commercial town, and companies outside Yamashiro town wanted to invest for development. Yamashiro town was surrounded by famous hot spring resorts, but the report said that it was not wise to compete with them. Rather, they must make clear the differences between them, and avoid competition. Chapter 3 contains the plans. The report mentioned that the old houses around the Soyu were built by wooden architecture and needed improvements but lacked funding. Therefore, it was chosen to create a new town. The characteristics of the new town should be a recreational district with modern facilities to meet the needs of the citizens living around Yamashiro town and the west side of Japan. Chapter 4 summarises the points to realise the planning. It includes financial aspects. Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

3.3 Details of the plan

The plan is composed of four detail plans: areal planning, traffic planning, land use planning, and facility location planning.

(1) Areal planning



In the Yamashiro old town, only along with roads from the central bath to the two stations had a hot spring atmosphere in the old town and the other areas were densely built-up by wooden architecture. Thus, he planned to create a new town with a hot spring atmosphere, and to connect the old and new town by commercial zones. Furthermore, circulating commercial zones were planned for walkways. The residential areas and commercial areas were separated by a pedestrian path, which means to separate zones for residents and tourists.

(2) Traffic planning

Traffic planning was composed of regional roads and inner-city streets. The latter included streets that connect between the old city and the new city; the old city and the natural scenic area; the new city and the natural scenic area; and commercial areas and a silent pedestrian pathway.

(3) Process and land use planning

It shows a gradual process of realising the plans. It was proposed to create a park after a land readjustment project. It was planned that the new town and the park close to it would be realised during the first stage, and the residential areas during the second stage.

(4) Facility location planning

It was planned that every building would be built with uniformity. An auditorium with 1,000-2,000 seats and a recreational facility with enough public space were planned to conserve the landscape and for use as parking lots. The recreational facility had a hot spring pool and a gym. It was planned that a two or three-story building (with a library, exhibition hall or hot spring research centre) would be a community centre. They planned to have fruit farms in some areas of the new town, which intended to use the hot spring water to grow fruits. It was planned that a total of 20 accommodation facilities with 80 beds on average would gather along the river. It was planned to have 30 commercial shops, some of which were with accommodation.

From the drawing, accommodation facilities, commercial facilities, community centre, and a public bath were located along one straight road from the station to the auditorium. It was planned that the auditorium would be a symbolic building.

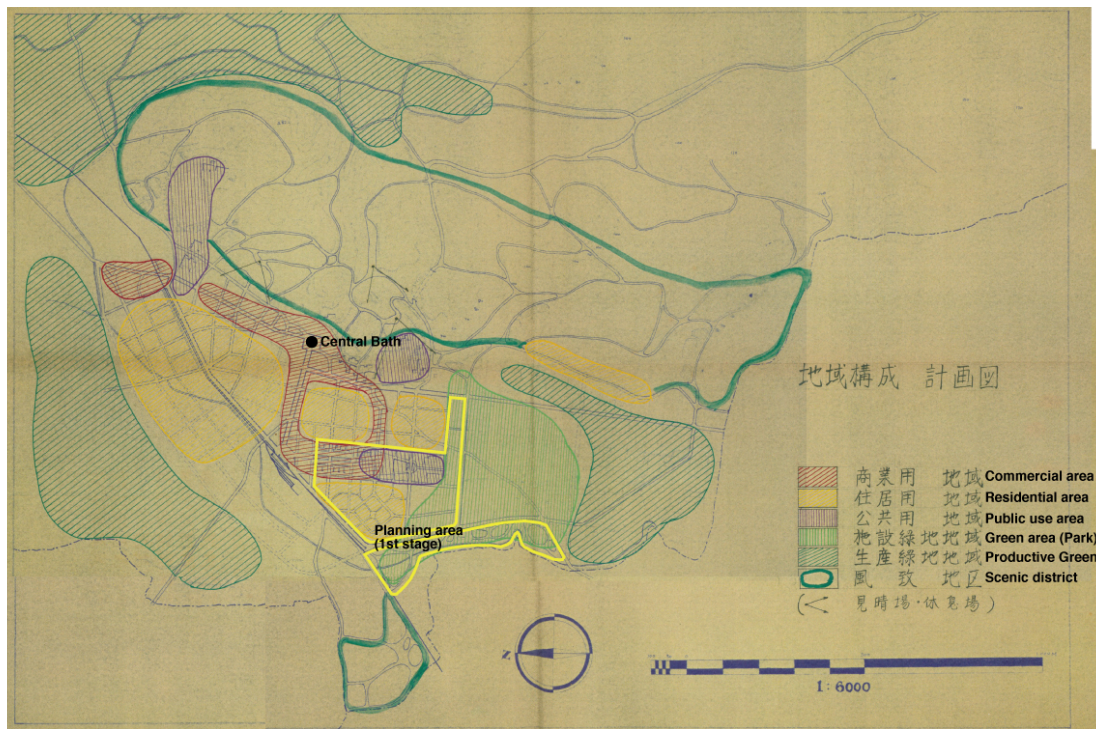


Figure 3: Areal planning

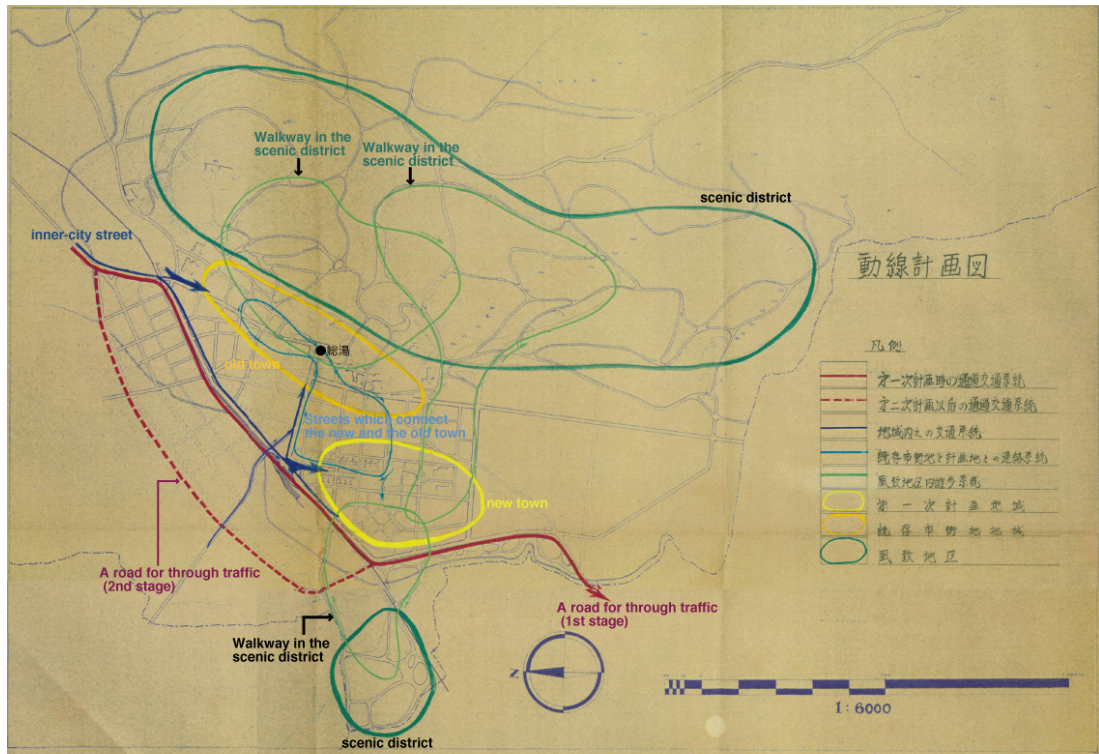


Figure 4: Traffic planning

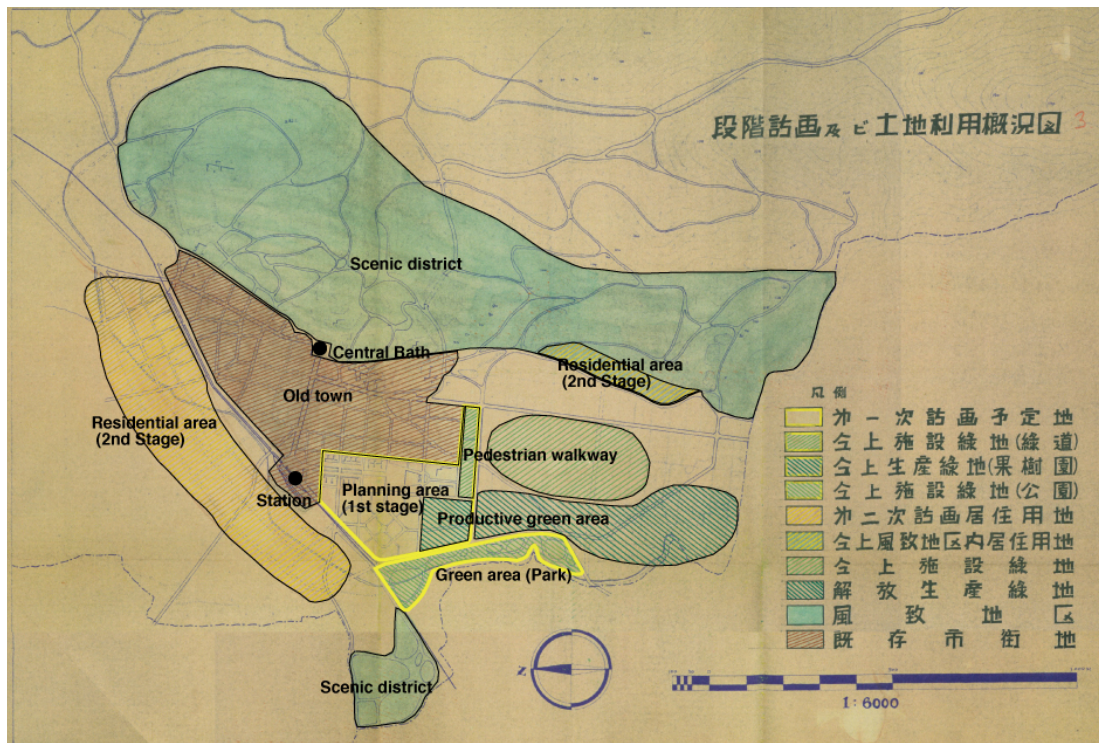


Figure 5: Land use planning

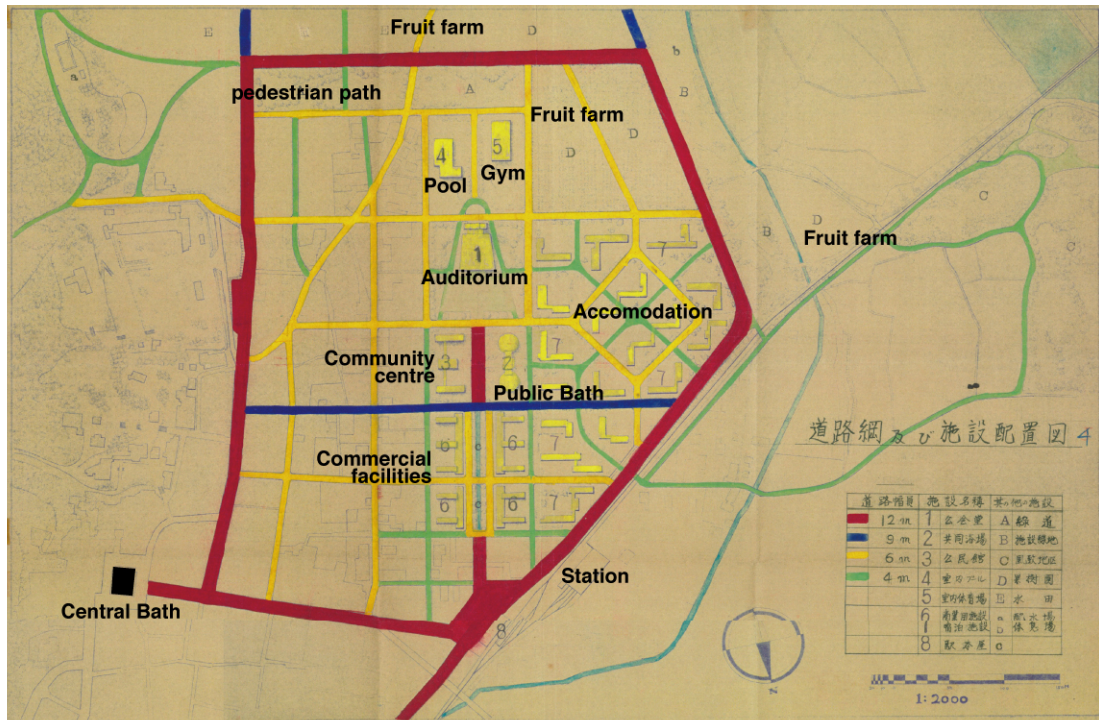


Figure 6: Facility location planning

3.4 Why was it proposed to build a new town?

As seen above, creating a new town was the core proposal in Takayama's plans. Why did Takayama propose to create a new town? In the report it was said that the old town was full of wooden architecture and needed improvement, but the lack of funding made it difficult to do so. Therefore, it was proposed to create a new and safe town.

However, from the words of Takayama himself, there seemed another reason a new town was proposed. In later years, Takayama looked back on the Yamashiro plan and said as follows¹⁵:

The old town of Yamashiro is a good town like Kyoto. When I engaged in the planning, local people wanted to modernise the town by building a dance hall and so on. I advised them that this modernised town should be located outside the old town and keep the old town as it was. As in Yamashiro, it is important to listen to the needs of younger citizens and at the same time harmonise the old and the new.

From this statement, it seems that it was Takayama's will that intended to conserve the historical old town by creating a new town. It can also be analysed that Takayama played an important role in the core idea of the plan, though there were other specialists related to the report. Other documents such as the magazine *Onsen* published by the JSA in 1953 introduced the Yamashiro plans as follows¹⁶:

The Yamashiro hot spring has a historical atmosphere and is famous for the elders, but local citizens are anxious about delaying the development when comparing with close hot spring resort as Yamanaka and Katayamaz, which were modernised. Therefore, a study of planning to balance the new and old has started.

From these facts, it can be said that the plan for the new town did not just intend to create a new town but inducing tourism development to outside the city and conserving the old town.

3.5 Implementation of plans and their influence

The land readjustment project decided to create a new town in 1957. However, the plan of the land readjustment project did not reflect Takayama's plans and the local government modified the plan to a simple grid pattern. The exact reason for that is not clear due to a lack of documents. Some facilities were implemented along with Takayama's plans. A tourism centre with pools and gyms was built in 1960, and a children's park was created in 1963, which is analysed as the implementation of the recreational facility planned by Takayama. But the front



façade of the tourism centre was different from Takayama's plan. His idea to locate a symbolic building along the street from the station was not realised.

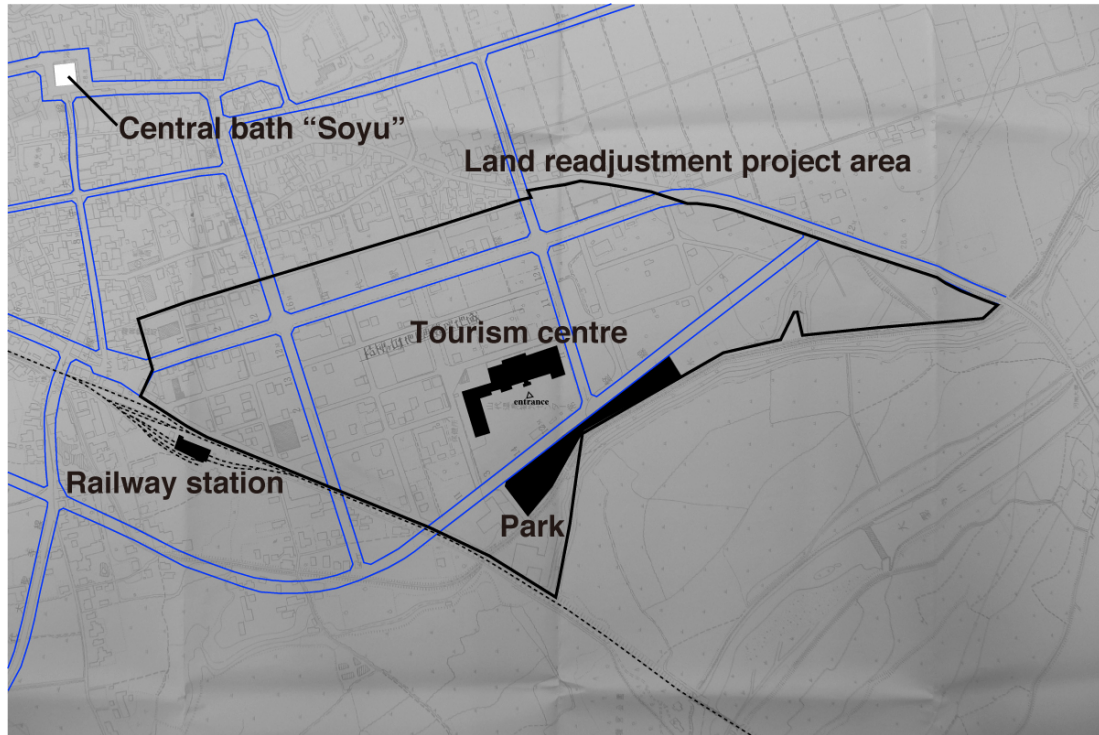


Figure 7: Land readjustment project area and practical location of facilities¹⁷

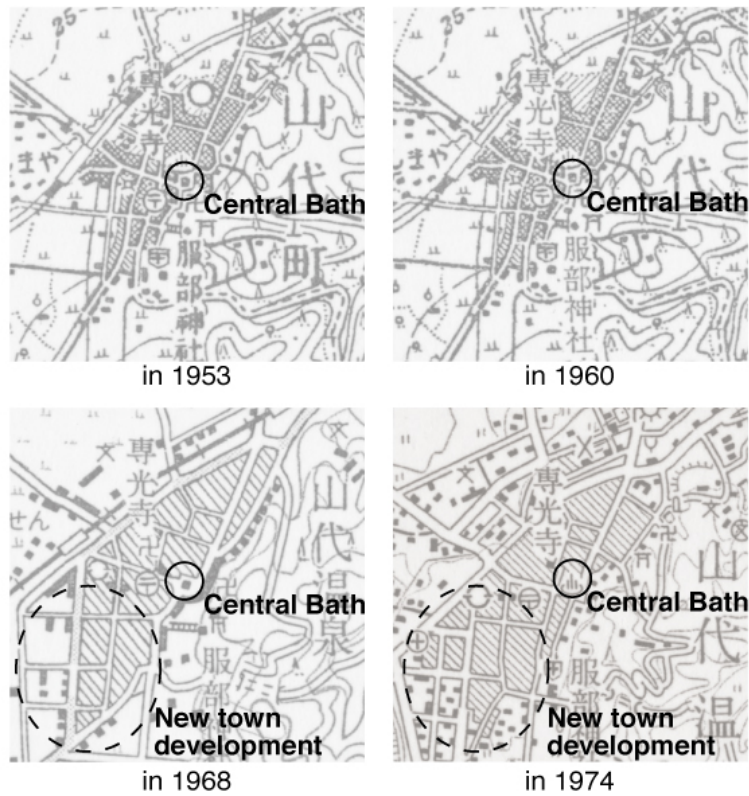


Figure 8: The process of creating the new town



Some hotels moved from the old town to the new town by the owner's option and were enlarged by the 1970s¹⁸. It means that the hotels that intended to modernise searched for new land, as Takayama advised to do. By preparing new land for development, though the old historical town and the Soyu were not declared as historical town or monument, developing the old historical town was avoided. Topographic maps show the process of the development of the new town (Figure 8).

Chapter 4. Effect and influence of the plans in the long term

What did the plans leave for Yamashiro town? This chapter analyses the effects and influences of the plans.

4.1 Development of Yamashiro town after the 1960s

A travel guidebook published in 1961 wrote that many hot spring resorts had been modernised but Yamashiro town still had a historical atmosphere¹⁹. A hot spring specialist Koji Sato wrote in 1964 that Yamashiro got a new centre, in addition to Soyu, the historical centre²⁰. A tourism research report in 1962 wrote that the plans were of great value as the tourism centre got a new attraction in Yamashiro²¹. That is to say, both the old and the new town were highly recognised and evaluated just after the development.

On the other hand, about 20 years after the development, Yamamura, who is a specialist in hot spring resorts, reported that tourists can enjoy the historical atmosphere in the old town but not so many tourists visit there²². It means most tourists went to the new town to enjoy the modernised facilities and the old town was left unvisited.

When we compare the development of Yamashiro with the surrounding hot spring resorts, the number of tourists in Yamanaka was the largest until the middle of the 1960s. There were not many tourists in Yamashiro until the 1960s, but they gradually increased, and in 1979 Yamashiro had the most tourists. This was because hotels were able to expand their businesses by using enough land, as Tsukita pointed out²³. That is to say, Takayama's proposal to prepare new land for development to conserve the historical centre made hotels possible to expand as much as they wanted.



Figure 9: The number of tourists in Yamashiro town and the surrounding hot spring towns²⁴

4.2 Yamashiro town at present

The tourism centre finished the operation owing to changes to the tourist needs, and the site is used as a parking lot. A large hotel that was built in the new town in the 1960s closed due to worsening business conditions. In general, the new town area is of low density and the hot spring atmosphere has not remained. On the contrary, in the old town around Soyu (総湯), many improvement projects have been implemented recently, proposed by the local government and funded by the national government. From 2005 to 2009, a new central bath called "Shin-Soyu" (新総湯) was built, power lines were laid underground, a park was created, and façade of buildings along the street to Soyu were improved. In 2010, an architect Hiroshi Naito reconstructed the central bath "Soyu". Many tourists visit the old town to enjoy the historical atmosphere of Yamashiro. A group of these projects received a high evaluation and got a good design award in 2012.



Figure 10: Improved central bath (Soyu, 総湯)

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Eika Takayama, one of the famous urban planners of Japan, worked for tourist destinations through the activities of the JSA. His accomplishment as a planner of urban areas are already clarified in previous works of research; this paper clarified his work for rural tourist areas. One of his practical works for tourist destinations was the planning of the Yamashiro hot spring area. He proposed to create a new town and the detailed planning drawings were prepared. He planned a town for tourists to stay comfortably through the planning of walkways, green areas, tourist facilities and so on. Planning theories such as connecting the old and new town by commercial zones, circulating commercial zones as walkways and so on were seen in his plan. The new town was built in the 1960s but the street pattern was totally modified in actual and his idea to create a new town was partly realised through the building of tourism facilities and parks. By creating a new town, it was possible to meet the needs of business demands in the 1970s and has contributed to increase the number of tourists.

However, in terms of his contribution to the Yamashiro hot spring it was his idea to conserve the old town by creating a new town that was most important. In most of the hot spring towns in Japan, the uniqueness of the town such as natural scenic beauties and historical buildings were lost by lack of urban planning and hotel developments around the 1960s in general. But Takayama's proposal made it possible for Yamashiro town to conserve its uniqueness, the spatial feature of Soyu and the old town. Its uniqueness is a special tourist attraction today. In Japan the movement to conserve historical towns started around the beginning of the 1970s. Nevertheless, the example of the Yamashiro hot spring plan indicates that, already in the 1950s, the desire to conserve historical towns was already in the mind of a famous Japanese urban planner, Eika Takayama.

It was the hidden and unique planning theory of Yamashiro by Takayama to meet the needs of tourism development and to conserve the uniqueness of the town at the same time.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflicts of interest are reported by the author.



Notes on contributor

Ryo Nishikawa is an assistant professor at the College of Tourism, Rikkyo University. He writes papers on the history of urban planning for tourist destinations. His doctoral dissertation thesis was entitled “History of urban planning in tourist destinations in Japan from the 1920s to the 1960s”

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- Figure 2: Takeo Funami, *Kasyu Yamashiro Onsen Souzu* (Enunokuni, 2004), 91-95
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- Figure 4: Yamasiro hot spring planning documents (Takayama Archives)
- Figure 5: Yamasiro hot spring planning documents (Takayama Archives)
- Figure 6: Yamasiro hot spring planning documents (Takayama Archives)
- Figure 7: Kaga city city planning park decision document in 1961 archived in the national archives
- Figure 8: A topographical map of Daishoji in 1953, 1960, 1968 and 1974 (published by Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)



Figure 9: Created by the author

Figure 10: Photograph by the author (in August 2015)

Endnotes

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