

Genealogy of the Garden City Concept and Green Belt Concept in Asia and Oceania

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Most large cities in Asia are considerably high-density compared with their counterparts in Europe and North America. An acute lack of green spaces in metropolitan areas in Japan, in particular, has given rise not only to problems in land use but also to deterioration of the quality of the urban environment. Quite apart from the problem of environmental conservation, green spaces fulfill a number of diverse functions for recreation, disaster prevention and local topography, and are thus one of the most important elements in urban areas.

The idea of city planning based on green space development is not at all new, having its origins in 17th and 18th century Europe. The construction of modern urban parks began as early as the 19th century. In recent years, securing green spaces has become an indispensable element of urban development. Among previous studies on green space development in the academic field of city planning and regional planning, a particularly large number have focused on examples in the U.K. and the U.S., but there have been no case studies of Asian and Oceanic countries nor studies on the history and mutual relevance of green space development throughout the world. Based on the viewpoints described above, the purpose of this study is to review representative cases of green space development in order to compare the Garden City concept and Green Belt concept as applied and to examine its direction in major Asian and Oceanic cities.

The findings of this study can be summarized in the following four points.

(1) The Green Belt concept was promoted in Japan in the latter half of the 1930's, South Korea in the early 1970's, and Beijing in China in the latter half of the 1950's. However, the Green Belt was converged into an urbanization control area in Japan in 1968 when the New City Planning Law was enacted, and the lifting of Green Belt control has been performed step-by-step in South Korea in recent years. In Beijing, although the maintenance of the Green Belt ran into difficulties, the detailed plan for the Green Belt was revised from the middle of the 1990's and the Beijing municipal government has positively promoted it.

(2) The construction of colony cities in Australia and New Zealand had a great influence on E. Howard's Garden City concept. In Melbourne, the central parts were developed from the early 1830's on a Darling grid system, and the outskirts are dotted with very large green spaces. In New Zealand, Park Green Belts (Town Belts) were introduced in 1840 under the influence of the Parklands in Adelaide, Australia. In Christchurch, the Capital Town in the city center is surrounded by roads that constitute the Town Belt.

(3) After it became independent in 1965, Singapore launched the Garden City Movement to promote green space development to cope with rapid urbanization and development after independence in the latter half of the 1960's. Beijing developed a Garden City based on the Singapore model, and Shanghai is also aiming at the development of a Green City. Kuala Lumpur has developed the Lake Gardens, a man-made lake and very large green spaces, and it now aims to construct a new administrative center as a Garden City in a man-made lake.

(4) The results of previous studies and this study show that there are two major directions in such green-oriented city planning. One direction is the establishment of the concept of Multi-Regional Development, while the other has resulted in the concept of an Environmentally Symbiotic City

based on the Garden City concept. In large cities and the suburbs where extremely strong pressure to urbanize makes it impossible to keep Green Belts, it is essential to strictly control land use and adopt the Garden City concept to conserve the urban environment.

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