
HSC017-10

Room: 202

Time: May 24 16:15-16:30

The Commodification of Rurality and its Sustainability in the Jike Area, Yokohama City, the Tokyo Metropolitan Fringe

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In this paper the author focuses on rurality as an option to urbanity in the Jike area, Yokohama city, the Tokyo metropolitan fringe, and discusses the sustainable commodification of rural space in the area. Following his discussion, the author identifies some conditions that supported the commodification of rurality and their interaction in the outer fringe of the Metropolitan area. In the Jike area, the areal decrease in area of rural forests (satoyama) has led to the decline of rural landscape; the development of affordable housing lots in the outer fringe and the continuous inflow of urban residents into the newly developed areas have led to serious conflicts between rural and urban land uses. Recently however, activities that aim at recreating rurality, such as conservation of rural forests, have been promoted as a means to mitigate such conflicts, and to develop these areas as nodes of rurality and urbanity. Thus, the perpetuation of rurality has been assured by the sustainable relationships between rurality and urbanity. The conservation of rurality facilitates the commodification of rural spaces, a process which has played an important role in developing rurality-based tourism.

Keywords: rurality, rurality, ecological environment, agricultural land use, community, rural tourism