

THE PARTICIPATION OF GENERAL CITIZEN TO THE CREATIVE CITY IN ASAHIMACHI, JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays is the age of creative city especially in Asia like Hongkong, Taipei, Yokohama etc. But, at the same time, some researchers have comment about the problem of the creative city that they almost spotlight only „creative class“ to show the city more attractive(„Be creative-or die“(Jamie Peck, 2005; Masayuki Sasaki, 2007)). As a result, supports for the general people become to decrease relatively, and it is also easy to lack citizen activities by general people.

To solve this problem, there are 2 ways. First, creative city system can use „creative class“ to encourage citizen's participation through joint workshop with local people and so on after making creative class from outsiders of the city. Second, after making local participation, they can link them with „creative class“ from outsiders or can make them be „creative class“.

In this paper, we focus on the second solution way. This article examines how ecomuseum sytem which focus local heritage and local participation makes the local people to participate, and the possibilities to have creative culture by using the example of Asahimachi in Japan.

INTRODUCTION

Asahimachi is located approximately centrally in Yamagata prefecture, and is the intermediate and mountainous area in eastern part of Asahi-dake. There have been some action projects of promoting life study project with Townsman College, tourist industry making use of nature like camp place, and community improvement with apple agriculture by government before Ecomuseum project was performed¹.

On the other hand, a [Naturalist Club] was established by inhabitants and, as for several years, continued by natural observation, native district learning activity with the primary schoolchild of the town once a month. People who shouldered the club paid attention to an eco-museum as a concept of new citizen-based town planning, and made an [Eco-museum Research Society] for the study in 1989. This is the start of the [Asahimachi Ecomuseum]. There were not only inhabitants but also the administration as members. In the society, there were study group by youth, promotion committee by business and industry society, assembly and secretariat from town office.

¹ 日本エコミュージアム研究会 (1999) 「エコミュージアム理念と実践」、牧野出版、p.128-130

As [Ecomuseum Research Society] opened forums and reported the research report, they became to be increasingly attracted the attention of governments and citizens. And, a lot of concepts were included in the third Asahimachi comprehensive plan in 1991. Further, the society became NPO [Asahimachi Ecomuseum Association].

Of course, eco-museum Asahimachi system is not only the result of the growing eco-museum curators and society. It is based on the philosophy that it is important to rely on and foster local memory, wisdom, and technology of local people; "every residence is curator". In other words, residents are to act town revitalization project which occur profit or loss, and association is just to provide only data and so on. So they can have better relations with residents, and it makes to expect having a creative in town revitalization, too².

I will analyze Asahimachi keeping in mind this character of Asachimachi Ecomuseum.

RELATED POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

1) Lifelong learning

Asahimachi has advanced a progressive approach to lifelong learning in the past. The basis for the community education was made by making of [autonomous community center] in the 1960s, [district community center] and [central community center] in the 1970s. And, after that, Townsman College was established getting together various projects and acts by the government and organizations at that time with setting [Lifelong Education Division] for demand on lifelong learning policy. It is [The Committee on Regional Development] which has relationship with community building in town in the college. There are [Asahi Enjoyable School] and [Life Experience School] and so on in the college, and they are promoting very actively with lots of local project. Sometimes they co-operated with [Naturalist Club] which was the trigger of ecomuseum's introduction. We can say that government officials who worked with local people before played a part in incorporating the concept of ecomuseum in the comprehensive plan by the government³. District community center and [Committee on Regional Development] also held [Debate 100 local people] and supported activities of the groups by the residents.

These supports breed various local organizations⁴. And, these activities became to co-operate with ecomuseum project, and made to realize the base for horizontal connection.

2) Air Shrine

Air Shrine means thanks to God for the air as the character. It was the trigger to discuss building monument in some private citizens which could be the centerpiece of the [Nature Center] opened as family leisure village in 1989. The campaign spread over about 80% of the approbation of the town involving Tourism Association, Chamber of Commerce and lots of levels. And, with the boom of the environmental movement in

² 安藤竜二 (2009) 「20 年目の朝日町エコミュージアム」、エコミュージアム研究 No. 14、p89-92

³ 星山幸男 (2005) 「自然との共生とまちづくり-エコミュージアムの農山村から-」、北樹出版、p72-141

⁴ 星山幸男 (2005) 「自然との共生とまちづくり-エコミュージアムの農山村から-」、北樹出版、p151-200

the late 1980s, it was reported with the big space by the media and changed as to the symbol of the environment protection in Asahimachi. It was completed in October 1990⁵.

The establishment of the [Air Shrine] also could be interpreted as the significant influence to incorporate the concept of ecomuseum which aims coexist between humans and nature⁶.

3) Comprehensive development plans which contains the concept of ecomuseum

After a period of preparation by the committee which consists of local people and expert committee since 1989, the Third Basic Plan for Comprehensive Development was formulated in March 1991. It incorporates the concept of ecomuseum as the basic principles of the town planning and paraphrases as [Idea for Enjoyable Life and Environment]. Of course, it was triggered by the construction of the Air Shrine and the establishment of the Ecomuseum Research Society. This is the thought that if the living style establishes that each resident have the pride of the living with the culture and nature, and lives enjoyably and actively using these senses, the idea of the [enjoyable life and environment] become realized⁷.

Specifically, in order to reflect government policy, [Ecomuseum Research] was established by the local people and town officials in 1995, and the measures was taken to make improvement plan for the ecomuseum design and make the program for the tour guide. And these principles was inherited to the fourth plan(2000~2009) as the [ecomuseum town which human in harmony with nature builds firm life].

MAIN ORGANIZATION

NPO [Asahimachi Ecomuseum Association] is consisted of 16 committee (charman, deputy, committee member) and 2 staff. The annual budget is comprised of 2.4 million yen(2002: is decreasing every year) and membership fee with other revenue like project revenue, subsidies, donation, fees for the ecomuseum room and so on⁸. The member of the group is consisted of 34 regular members and 21 supporting members. And, as student curator, the students belonging to Tohoku University of Art & Design are participating, too.

They have eco-room in Soyukan(創遊館) as the core facility(office) which is the complex social education facility of the town. And, it is consisted of 17 satellite locations⁹.

⁵ 日本エコミュージアム研究会 (1999) 「エコミュージアム理念と実践」、牧野出版、p132

⁶ 日本エコミュージアム研究会 (1999) 「エコミュージアム理念と実践」、牧野出版、p132

⁷ 日本エコミュージアム研究会 (1999) 「エコミュージアム理念と実践」、牧野出版、p131

⁸ From the interview on March 2010

⁹ 向井田善朗ら (2005) 「博物館の地域づくりとの関わりの可能性」、農村計画論文、Vol. 7、p225

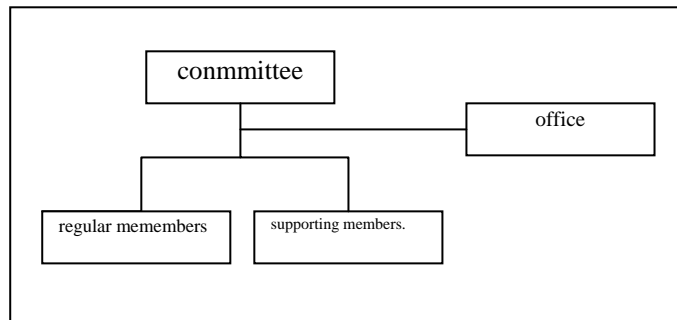


Fig. 1 Organization chart of NPO Asahimachi Ecomuseum

BACKGROUND ACTIVITY

The [Eco-museum Research Society] which has been established since 1989, hold the ecomuseum symposium in 1991 after preliminary investigation of satellite candidates and walking tour with the group meeting once a month. And until 1995, they have acted dissemination, enlightenment, exchange activities of ecomuseum. Since 1996, local resources research which has been continued since beginning of the organization has begun in earnest. Investigation research was mainly progressed by interviews from residents, research organizations and field surveys with the theme of the areas of the town. The results of them became to be put on the column, [Ecomuseum Note] little by little, and these are distributed to every household. At the end of the study, the symposium is hold almost every year with the panelists of the half of local residents and the other of experts. Finally, the book as a report, [Ecomuseum' small road] is summarized. Since 1994 to 2009, 12 books have been published. In 1996, to collect local treasure in the town, [Treasure hunt by the Junior High School's students] was hold by the research society and Junior High School in Asahi Town. 302 points of treasure were selected from 54 districts. And, [Photo exhibition of treasures in the town] was performed which was exhibited by each 2 pictures of each district. After that, these pictures and the lists were gathered together as cards, and have been reused in Cards competition(1998~), event of the schools and so on¹⁰.

ACTIVITIES AFTER BEING NPO COPORATION

1) Collection of the local heritage treasures [Asahimachi treasure hunt]

To collect more treasures of the town, they published a wanted ad for all residents of the town from 1th Nov. in 2002 to 15th Jan in 2003. As a result, there were 730 entries totally. 20 points were selected and they have been displayed in [Treasure exhibition of Asahimachi] over 3 weeks. In addition, the [Asahimachi treasure

¹⁰ 向井田善朗ら（2005）「博物館の地域づくりとの関わりの可能性」、農村計画論文、Vol. 7、p225

hunt] went through [Treasure exhibition of Asahimachi], and has been applied to [Treasure trip of Asachimachi]. These process can be interpreted that research activities of collecting local heritage as ecomuseum one developed to tourism and community development¹¹.

The ad for the local treasure has been still published, and it is reported about 1000 points today¹². The contents and the lists were summarized in the treasure report, and have been used as the reference when the workshop is hold, or the association determines the research subject¹³.

Table 1 Carrying project¹⁴

Kind of project		Detailed project	example
investigation research	investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dig and recruitment of treasures • interview with the people in the know • academic support from the academic literature and expert 	[Treasure hunt by the Junior High School's students], [Asahimachi treasure hunt], [Treasures Cards]
	data(writing and preservation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sentence • guidebook, edit education material like VTR • organize the files in the satellite cabinet • organize the data in the treasure check PC [Asachimachi Treasure Box] 	[Ecomuseum Note], [Ecomuseum of Asachimachi, DVD], [Shingorou Wada's blue hemp, DVD], [Water and Life Expedition: original Kamishibai work]
dissemination	exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibition in Eco corner • exhibition in the satellite • project exhibition 	
	data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publication of guidebook • management of museum shop • Treasure Note(file) • management of homepage • date of the PC treasure box 	[Ecomuseum's small road]
	event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workshop • symposium • others events 	[Ecomuseum's Temple school project], [Tour], [Making Stone Seminar]
	satellite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dispatch and guide of the information of satellite • joint project concerned with ecomuseum, and support • making network • exhibition (formal satellite) 	
	guide for the residents and the tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total guide of ecomuseum • work for general users • opening tours • receipt of ecomuseum tour • receipt of inspection, training 	
	public relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecomuseum Tayori • Homepage, direct mail • Eco corner • media 	
management of the organization	membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular member • supporting member 	
	Revenue project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each project • subsidy project • donation • entrusted project etc. 	
	executive office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • association's desk work 	
	Member's training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • member's study, inspection, get-together 	

¹¹ 向井田善朗ら（2005）「博物館の地域づくりとの関わりの可能性」、農村計画論文、Vol. 7、p226

¹² 朝日町エコミュージアム HP <http://asahi-ecom.jp/?p=log&l=181619>

¹³ From the interview on March 2010

¹⁴ Excerpts from [Asahimachi Ecomuseum Association]'s resume

2) Investigation and research of the local area

They have conducted surveys focusing specific area or something as local heritage almost every year. And, if they have gotten subsidy project or partnership project, they also held workshops, a serial tour to focus on more. There were lots of researches, workshops, tours, symposiums which they have held. But, in this paper, I will analyze and get in shape by [Ecomuseum's small road].

As the subject, they took up local industry like [apiculture], [apple], [wine], culture heritage like [Yakushi], [Osumi remains], nature heritage like [Floating island], [Eight swamps], etc. And, as investigation method, there are interviews of local people who have some memories about them, or are familiar with them, studies like open conversation, seminar, evidence research by the reference and experts. Finally, based on these researches, they opened symposium. And, the symposium is hold almost every year with the panelists of the half of local residents as local curators and the other of experts to disseminate to lots of residents of the town.

And, using these materials, [Guide Association] opens guide-tour events. Especially, tour which is held with [Guide Association] and [Ecomuseum Association] is opened every year. It contains interviews with local people to train a new guide spots, and to discover a new satellite.

Through these activities, it started to achieve results that some local organizations made a new starts, and local people who talked about their memories, jobs, knowledge as interviews become members of [Guide Association], and so on. And, the data is using in many different fields like footpath walks project, signs maintenance project¹⁵.



Fig. 2 Local people who are talking about their memories in 「Talk association about the memories of Meikyo Bridge」¹⁶

¹⁵ 安藤竜二 (2009) 「20 年目の朝日町エコミュージアム」、エコミュージアム研究 No. 14、p89-92

¹⁶ Excerpts from Asahimachi note No. 0706 「Meikyo Bridge's Memories」



Fig. 3 [Daikoku dance in Ogure Mt.] ; Ecomuseum Note¹⁷ No. 0903



Fig. 4 The panelists of [Imogawa gorge's Symposium] ^{18 19}

¹⁷ The results of the interviews and tours are summarized once a month as [Ecomuseum Note].

¹⁸ Excerpts from [Asahi machi] Dec. 2002

¹⁹ There are 3 local people in the 5 panelists.



Fig. 5 Panels which explains [Imogawa gorge]²⁰

3) Dissemination project [Water and Life Expedition]

This project was held as the first dissemination for the children and the fund project for rural revitalization in Yamagata. The target was elementary school students and their parents, and the goal was to study on the role of agriculture and rural development projects. Themed [water and life], it was held by walking around the old dam and pond following the flow of water and kunugidaira(楡平) which was selected one of 100 terraced fields of Japan. And, through studying reclamation history, participants learned about the life with water in Asahimachi. Finally, the result was summarized into picture-story show²¹. Of course, it was also summarized into [Ecomuseum's small road].



Fig. 6 Skit of [natsukusa-minaka-seki(夏草三中堰)]

²⁰ Excerpts from 安藤竜二 (2009) 「20 年目の朝日町エコミュージアム」、エコミュージアム研究 No. 14、p89-92

²¹ 朝日町エコミュージアム協会 (2001) 「水とくらしの探検隊」、朝日町エコミュージアムの小径、No. 8



Fig. 7 [natsukusa-minaka-Dam (夏草三中堰)]

Besides depending on the subsidy or partnership with other organizations, other activities are carried out by holding market which selling special local products, conducting [Enjoying Learning Association] to reuse local treasures to daily life.



Fig. 8 Field area of investigation / research and satellites map

The satellites can be visited by traveler personally, or visited hearing explanations with the guide or teacher from [Guide Association]. [Ecomuseum Association] receive advice on the tour.

PARTNERSHIP

During the ecomuseum activities, lots of partnerships, supports were conducted. Especially, in the case of [お江戸ではござるぬ、大谷でござる (search play)] which was dramatized from [Otani Drai(大谷往来)], it was achieved by the supports of lots of local cultural associations.

We can say Ecomuseum association acted very openly with other associations.

Table 2 Partnership project

year	project	Partnership
1993	Sometimes, [Naturalist Club] held events with [Asahi Enjoyable School] and [Life Experience School].	Cosponsor : [Lifelong Education Division] Joint planning : [Asahi Enjoyable School] and [Life Experience School].
1997	[お江戸ではござるぬ、大谷でござる (search play)]	Joint planning : acting coach by play club [From an apple Village], composition and chorus by folk club [Amekaze], appearance by local people, talking about historical local story by reading to children club [Buna's Fruit Association].
2000 ~now	[Water and Life Expedition]	Cosponsor : Land Improvement Project Groups in Yamanaka Joint planning : tour by [Guide Association] Support : elementary school, Yamagata prefecture, Asahimachi, School board in Asahimachi, Agricultural committee in Asahimachi, Village of water and soil Network in Yamagata, etc.
2001	[the Story of apple's beginning in the Asahimachi]	Joint planning : tour by [Guide Association] Teacher : local people


DEPLOYMENT PROCESS

As a result of the research in many places in the town and taking up the local people as local curators, some outcomes are becoming to appear little by little like starts of local organizations, increase of the members acting ecomuseum.

Table 4 Starts from the ecomuseum's activities²²

	Ecomuseum's activities or Events which became the opportunity	Organizations or Activities because of Ecomuseum's activities or Events
-	Regional research which is the main part of ecomuseum activities has focused to interview or have talk workshop by the local people as curator.	[Guide Association] : by the local people of history researchers, mountaineer, farmers, and OB members of the Asahimachi office, it was formed in 1999 : They take care of production of the tour course and guide. They project lots of tours by themselves. Every year, they project workshop to research new local treasure and train local people.
1 9	In the symposium of [Onuma's floating island], Japanese traditional instrument was founded. And, they tried to research and learn about it. And,	[Preservation Association of Floating Island Japanese Instrument]

²² Summarized by interview, referring to 「エコミュージアム展開における問題点」 (エコミュージアム研究, No. 10), 「博物館の地域づくりとの関わりの可能性」 (農村計画論文, No. 7), 「森づくり町づくり」 (河北新報「座標」、2008.6.)

9 9	they also called artist from outside to hear real sound of it.	: It was formed by local people of this district. Through steady practice, nowadays, they open concerts in the local festival, events.
2 0 0 0	Opened market which sells special local products, conducting [Enjoying Learning Association] to reuse local treasures to daily life.	[Street Stall Association] : They jointed in [Ecomuseum Tour] by making local food.
2 0 0 0	[Ecomuseum Tour] is the project which accepts foreign student of Waseda Uni. and trains them to learn Japanese culture in every year. Among the event, lodging facilities were not enough, so ecomuseum association requested local people to require houses as lodge. Through this chance, international exchange appeared between each houses and the students.	[Furusato Exchange Meeting] : Committee for the international exchange : Nowadays, some residents are saying it is O.K. to accept Japanese students, too.
2 0 0 2	[Wine Symposium]	Chairman of the (incorporated company) Asahimachi Wine started to join activities of [Guide Association]
2 0 0 3	Investigation and research of [Imogawa gorge]	Some residents started to join activities of [Guide Association]
-	[Group of residents teacher]	Working as a school teacher in local learning
2 0 0 4	As [Asahimachi treasure tour] workshop, ecomuseum team visited [Suzuki brewing business] with the theme of [Oraho's local sake]. They also heard about how to make sake, memories, hardship concerned with making sake. 	Fan club [Oraho's Horyu-Kura Association] was organized.

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN ASAHIMACHI

1) Conservation of Sanyo elementary school-

In the spring in 1997, learning and taking interview of the memory and wisdom in [Otani(大谷)]district, NPD [Asahimachi Ecomuseum Association] has found the value of the Sanyo Elementary school which was located there. This building is modern architecture built in 1882. This is 3rd floor made by wood. 1st floor's design is from western style, but the 2nd and 3rd one is from Japanese style. It is also assigned as culture heritage of Asahimachi.

Studying it, they also tried to reuse it. And, they opened symposium which was participated by local people and architectures. They talked each other about the memories, the value of the building as culture heritage, and the way how to reuse it. Actually, it is still empty, but at least, the value of the school was shared between local people.

2) Competition of white paper airplane(1999~2008)

In the spring in 1999, Ogure Mt. Branch School was closed because of decreasing students. At the same time, the school was about to be demolished. Lots of local people felt pity for it, and [Asahi Enjoyable School] starts to make memories before the demolition of the school, opened competition of white paper airplane.

The activities were not done only by local people but lots of people, groups, out-comers, too. Child who graduated the school helped gardening and cleaning. And, some local people helped fixing the corridor for the perfect safety and moving chairs and tables, etc. And, artist students belonging Tohoku University of Art & Design helped to make gallery in the school.



Fig. 9 and Fig. 10 Competition of white paper airplane (Ogure Mt. Branch School)²³

3) [New School] and Network of Art Studio (abolished school project by Tohoku University of Art & Design)

In 2002, as researches commissioned of Asahimachi, the university investigated local treasures in 4 districts which are located abolished schools and cases in Japan which abolished schools were reused as new style and purpose. And discussing with local people and [Asahimachi Ecomuseum Association], they proposed [New School] project and plan for each district in the town. This proposal targets community building through learning activities concerned about local's nature and life by the children in and outside of the town. For example, they proposed [small museum] which can be used for the people who came back to the town or who visit the town from outside, or [Local food Cafe] which succeed to local food culture of each districts and introduce it to lots of people.

[New School] project also caused Tohoku University of Art & Design to project [art atelier village]. [Art atelier village] is the project to make the social community to creative studio village by reusing abolished schools in Asahimachi, Tendo, Murayama and so on. They have opened workshop of the nature and art, learning course about local treasures with the children since 2006.

²³ Excerpts from the site [Competition of white paper airplane]HP



Fig. 11 Activities of Network of Art Studio²⁴

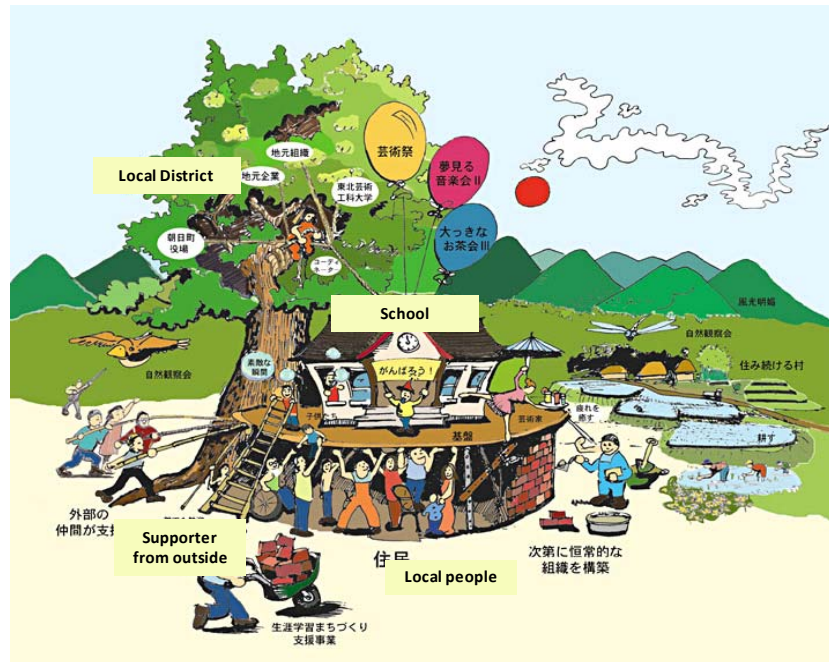


Fig. 12 Image of [New School] project²⁵

EVALUATION OF ECOMUSEUM

Like what we see, the effects of ecomuseum system became to appear little by little.

First, accumulation about the local heritages is the biggest present from ecomuseum.

²⁴ Excerpts from the site [<http://gs.tuad.ac.jp/a-gakko/blog.php?cID=5>]

²⁵ Excerpts from the site [http://www.tuad.ac.jp/asahi-a-gakko/]

Second, people in local participation are increasing gradually. For example, [Guide Association] was started by itself to show and explain about their local treasures. And, some residents became to participate in culture club, and others became to part in ecomuseum activities.

Third, local partnership is becoming growing and growing. In the case of [お江戸ではござるぬ、大谷でござる (search play)], lots of local people and clubs like play club, folks club, reading to children club joint the plan and the project.

POSSIBILITY FOR CREATIVE CITY

By chance, Tohoku University of Art & Design started to work in Asahimachi. But, after working in partnership with ecomuseum's people and system of it, the power of creative activities went to be powerful suddenly. They investigated and projected [New School] with Ecomuseum Association. They also joined [Competition of white paper airplane] project, and helped to make the school as gallery with the local people.

Through the case of Asahimachi, we can say that the ecomuseum system made local people to participate for the town or the area. And, through these small rings of local participation, creative activities spread throughout local people more easily.