Comparison of the Consciousness of Researchers in Japan, Korea, and China Regarding the Role of Rural Space and its Change

Naoko Saio*1 and Shinji Kurihara2

1 Associate Professor, Graduate School of Systems & Information Engineering, University of Tsukuba, Japan
2 Associate Professor, College of Bioresource Sciences, Nihon University, Japan

Abstract
In recent years, the tendency to promote scholarly exchanges among Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the People's Republic of China in researches in the field of rural planning as well as other fields has been increasing. For example, researchers report the field surveys of each country and exchange opinions on it; moreover, many studies comparing and analyzing each country have also been conducted. In modern society, rural space, which was earlier regarded as the producing area for agriculture, forestry, and fishing, has recently been playing various roles. This gives rise to the following question: Do the three countries possessing different agricultural policies in fact share the same interpretation of rural space or rural planning, which is the background of researches? This study clarifies the role of rural space and its change by using the results of a questionnaire survey of researchers in rural planning in the three countries. Further, a comparison and consideration is made regarding the research attitudes in Japan, Korea, and China.

Keywords: rural planning; rural planning research; role of rural space; comparison between Japan, Korea, and China

1. Introduction
In recent years, scholarly exchanges among Japan, Korea, and China have become extremely active in various fields; further, there has been an increasing trend of cohosting research seminars and symposia. Hence, it is expected that the relationship among the three countries will develop and continue in the field of rural planning as well. Active discussions on the common field of rural space have been witnessed on various platforms including international symposia. In addition, the comparison of regional cases and the sharing of research and planning themes have also been attempted.

However, to begin with, we raise the following questions. Do rural planning researchers in Japan, Korea, and China share the same interpretation of rural space or rural planning, which forms the background of the researches? On what points does their interpretation of rural space differ, given that the three countries, in actuality, have different agricultural policies?

While rural space, which was earlier regarded as the producing area for agriculture, forestry, and fishing, has now become the target of urban and tourism development, it is also regarded as a space for preserving natural resources and as a precious space where the traditional culture and lifestyle of a country or a community have been handed down through generations, even though they have been decreasing. Thus, it can be stated that the rural space has been playing various roles in the modern society.

On the basis of the abovementioned background, this study aims to clarify the role of rural space and its change by making a comparison of and considering the research attitudes of rural planning researchers in Japan, Korea, and China, using the results of a questionnaire survey in Oct. - Dec., 2006. We hope that in the future, the basic data for exchanges and comparative researches will be obtained by grasping the common points or differences in the perception of rural areas or by understanding the change of the role of rural space and the process of the change.

2. Trend of Rural Planning Researches in the Architectural Institute of Japan
Table 1. presents an approximate idea of the keywords of the research themes in the research field of rural planning at the annual meetings of the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ) from 1995 to 20043). Every year, 65 to 117 papers are published, and the number of papers published in the abovementioned decade was 888. In general, academic conferences are held by dividing into 5 to 10 sessions. The name of the session indicates the theme or keyword of the research.
Here are some of the features of the recent trend of study. First, the proportion of researches in the category "farmhouse and living space" remained at 11.7% in the decade. However, researches in the same category were earlier the mainstream, occupying more than half of the total in the 1970s, 1980s and before. This fact suggests that contents related to sphere planning such as the "structure of settlement space," "land use," and "local community," and not related to single residential architecture, have accounted for the majority.

Second, katakana, Japanese characters which are used mostly for the spelling of loan words brought into Japanese from other languages such as those for "community" and "rurban design," have been extensively used as keywords. Among others, themes related to tourism planning including "green tourism" and "ecomuseum" and themes regarding settlement planning including "groundwork" and "workshop," where instead of the government the residents of the rural areas take the initiative, have been increasing. Further, the attitude of living together with nature and learning nature, such as "ecosystem and environmental management" and "agri-environmental education and environmental study," has been observed.

Third, 142 researches in the category "foreign countries and international" have been conducted. The main researches in this category include field researches in the rural areas in foreign countries, of which 90% are Asian countries. Moreover, these researches suggest that the material for comparative researches in the Asian region can be accumulated. In this Asian region, China and Korea ranked first (35.0%) and second (17.5%), respectively, and research exchanges with these countries were conducted by various researchers.

Table 1. Research Themes for Rural Planning over the Last 10 Years (1995–2004)

| Category                              | Keywords                                                                 | Number (ratio) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Farmhouse and living space            | house and housing; living space; farmhouse and folk dwelling; style of residence and plotting; folk dwelling architecture and traditional architecture; traditional dwelling culture; living culture and local culture; ritual and space; family and aging; the elderly and their lives; evaluation of residential environment | 104 (11.7%)    |
| Community facilities                  | community facilities for revitalizing the town and village; school facilities and consolidation of schools; aging society and welfare facilities | 59 (6.6%)      |
| Structure of settlement space         | settlement space; origin and planning argument of settlement; ecosystem of residence and settlement space; settlement space and water; formation of settlement space and its transformation; settlement space of islands, fishing villages and mountainous regions | 132 (14.9%)    |
| Constitution of sphere                | planning unit and sphere; constitution of sphere; living activity and living sphere | 28 (3.2%)      |
| Land use                              | land use; land use resources; land use planning                         | 30 (3.4%)      |
| Local community                       | living and local community; community; local community and changes in the community | 25 (2.9%)      |
| Resources of the region               | use and management of resources of the region; conservation and succession of environmental assets; townscape; landscape of farming villages and settlements; landscape design; ecosystem and environmental management; agri-environmental education and environmental study | 151 (17.0%)    |
| Exchanges and habitation in the country| permanent residence; rurban design; exchanges between cities and farming villages; green tourism | 103 (11.6%)    |
| Citizen participation                 | community planning; citizen participation and community planning; method of workshop; groundwork; ecomuseum | 113 (12.7%)    |
| Foreign countries and international   | researches on foreign countries and international researches; views on houses, settlement, and environment of foreign countries | 142 (16.0%)    |

NOTE: The numbers in the right-hand side column indicate the number of published papers and their ratio in the Summaries of Technical Papers of the Annual Meeting of the Architectural Institute of Japan (888 in total from 1995 to 2004). Use of session names in the presentations at the annual meetings began in 1995.

The number of papers in each session ranges from 5 to 10, and the total in each year is 65 to 117. Only one main keyword was counted for one research, even though many researches covered several categories.

3. Questionnaire Survey of the Rural Planning Researchers in Japan, Korea, and China

3.1 Outline of the questionnaire survey

The subjects of the questionnaire were rural planning researchers in the three countries. Further, the contents of the questionnaire have been described below.

I. Attribute (age, sex, rural environment of their birthplaces, special field, and so on)

II. The role that rural space has played up till now

III. The role that rural space will have to play from now on

IV. The manner in which rural planning should be in the future (i.e., government initiative or resident initiative)

V. Opinions regarding rural planning (free responses)

The choices provided in the questionnaire for questions II, III, and IV have been presented in the following Table 2.

The distribution and collection of the questionnaire was performed in the following manner. For the Japanese researchers, the questionnaires were administered and collected primarily at the autumn meeting of the association of rural planning in 2006 (held at the University of Tsukuba), and 18 valid answers were obtained. For the Korean researchers, we requested Prof. Dong-Kun Lee, Seoul National University, to administer and collect the questionnaires via email; 12 valid answers were obtained. Likewise, for the Chinese researchers, we requested Prof. Dexuan Wang, Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, to administer and collect the questionnaires via email; we obtained 15 valid answers. In addition, we requested both the professors to ensure that a balance of all attributes was maintained. As a result, a total of 45 valid answers were collected.
The attributes of the 45 respondents (researchers) have been provided in Table 3.

| II. The role that rural space has played up till now (choose any 3 responses from the 11 choices provided) |
|---|
| 1. Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing |
| 2. Ideal permanent residence space |
| 3. Secondary natural space |
| 4. Recycling social space |
| 5. Space for conserving the ecosystem |
| 6. Space for a cultural landscape |
| 7. Space for retaining the traditional culture |
| 8. Space rich in environmental resources |
| 9. Resorts for tourists from cities |
| 10. Space where people can learn to live together with nature |
| 11. Buffer space in case of natural disasters |

| III. The role that rural space will have to play from now on (choose any 3 responses from the 11 choices provided) |
|---|
| 1. Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing |
| 2. Ideal permanent residence space |
| 3. Secondary natural space |
| 4. Recycling social space |
| 5. Space for conserving the ecosystem |
| 6. Space for a cultural landscape |
| 7. Space for retaining the traditional culture |
| 8. Space rich in environmental resources |
| 9. Resorts for tourists from cities |
| 10. Space where people can learn to live together with nature |
| 11. Buffer space in case of natural disasters |

Table 3. Overview of the Respondents' Attributes

| Overview of the attributes of the 45 respondents (researchers) |
|---|
| Age |
| 20-50 years |
| Sex |
| Man-woman ratio = 35:10 |
| Birthplace |
| Indicated on a scale of urban area to rural area in 5 tiers |
| Divided into two opposites |
| Special field |
| Agricultural civil engineering, landscape architecture, architecture, environmentology, geography, etc. |

3.2 The role of rural space and its change (research results and discussions)

This section provides a comparison of the responses made by the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese researchers.

Of the 11 choices provided, the respondents were required to select 3 responses for questions II and III (the role of rural space). The 11 choices were based on the materials provided by the Rural Planning Committee of AIJ.4

With regard to question II (the role that rural space has played up till now), "Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing" was the most popular choice among the researchers from all countries (18/18 in Japan, 11/12 in Korea, and 8/15 in China). "Space rich in environmental resources" (5/18 in Japan, 4/12 in Korea, and 7/15 in China) and "Space for retaining the traditional culture" (8/18 in Japan, 3/12 in Korea, and 5/15 in China) were also popular response choices among the respondents. Further, a majority of the respondents in Japan and Korea chose "Secondary natural space," while this was not a common choice in China (6/18 in Japan, 5/12 in Korea, and 1/15 in China).

With regard to question III (the role that rural space will have to play from now on), the most popular responses among the Japanese researchers were as follows, in descending order (see Fig.1): "Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing" (10/18); "Space for retaining the traditional culture" (9/18); "Recycling social space" (8/18); and "Space where people can learn to live together with nature" (8/18). "Ideal permanent residence space" (8/12); "Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing" (7/12); and "Space for a cultural landscape" (5/12) were the 3 most popular responses among the Korean researchers. Among the Chinese researchers, "Ideal permanent residence space" (8/15); "Space rich in environmental resources" (8/15); "Space for conserving the ecosystem" (6/15); and "Space for a cultural landscape" (6/15) were the most common choices, in descending order. Based on the most common responses, it can be stated that with regard to the role that rural space will have to play from now on, the perspective of the Japanese and Chinese researchers were completely different. The Korean viewpoint appeared to share the perspectives of the other two countries (Fig.2.).

Furthermore, the change in the role of rural space was analyzed by separately comparing the responses to questions II and III. Based on the analysis, it was found...
that "Production space for agriculture, forestry, and fishing" was considered as the most important role up till now as well as from now on, that is, as a constant function despite the changes in the times (Fig.3.), in Japan (10) and Korea (7). On the other hand, it was not considered important in China (2). However, it was selected as "the role that is not considered important any longer" (Fig.4.) by researchers from all three countries (8 in Japan, 4 in Korea, and 6 in China). Moreover, with regard to "the role that is not considered important any longer," "Space for retaining the traditional culture" and "Space rich in environmental resources" were selected by researchers in Japan, "Secondary natural space" was selected by Korean researchers, and "Space where people can learn to live together with nature" was chosen by researchers from China. Regarding "the new function that has not been considered important
in the past" (Fig.5.). "Secondary natural space" and "Space for retaining the traditional culture" were chosen to a great extent by Japanese researchers and "Ideal permanent residence space," "Space for a cultural landscape," and "Space rich in environmental resources" were chosen considerably by researchers from China.

Based on the above, we can observe that while the role played by "production" farming villages has been considered the most important till date, it will not be considered so important in the future, as recognized by the researchers in Japan, Korea, and China. Further, we can observe the differences in views of Japanese and Korean researchers regarding the role of rural space as a "Secondary natural space" and those between the Japanese and Chinese researchers regarding the role of rural space as a "Space rich in environmental resources."

Subsequently, we analyzed the 4 choices to question IV (Fig.6.): the first choice was government initiative, (a); the fourth choice was resident initiative, (d); and the second and third choices were common initiatives, (b) and (c).

The result indicated that although the ratios were different, resident-led planning was preferred in Japan and Korea, while choices related to government-led planning were more common in China (a:b:c:d = 0:1:6:10 in Japan, a:b:c:d = 0:1:3:8 in Korea, and a:b:c:d = 1:1:6:6 in China). In addition, there is an opinion in Japan that "the residents of farming villages should make positive efforts to express their opinions in order to build a national consensus and gradually change their villages"; this is in accordance with the focus on more macroscopic planning that extends beyond farming villages. In China, the opinion is that "the plan of each farming village should be is decided on the basis of a governmental plan that is based on research related to the natural and social conditions, and should incorporate the opinions of residents."

Table 4. summarizes the responses to question V "Opinions regarding rural planning in the future (free response)."

Responses of the Japanese researchers are as follows.

Opinions regarding the system of the rural planning study: (1) "apprehension that discussion about 'production,' or the most important role of farming villages, will be weakened"; (2) "it is important that the attitude toward the manner in which rural planning should be in the future is free from conventional concepts"; and (3) "development into a comprehensive regional planning study by means of including researchers from broader fields (public administration, cultural anthropology, folklore, pedagogy, etc.)."

Opinions regarding the activities of the association: "theoretical and practical research should be linked further." Moreover, "the association's dissemination of information to society is slightly insufficient."

Opinions regarding the relation of the associations between Japan and Korea: "to record 'farming villages' in both Japan and Korea is a common task and is important" and "we should jointly hold further settlement investigations, planning, and study tours."

Korean researchers expressed the following opinions: (1) "maintaining the function of food production, which is the primary function of farming villages"; (2) "it is necessary to prepare a comprehensive method that allows regional revitalization while completely utilizing the feature of farming villages and taking into account culture, ecologies, and the environment of the region"; and (3) "a new and drastic change in the knowledge of rural planning is needed."

According to opinions of the Chinese researchers, emphasis was placed on harmonious development, more specifically, with the environment. "China is now constructing a harmonized society" and aims at "the harmonious development of ecologies and society" by "taking into consideration and giving priority to environmental issues." To this end, they also pointed out the importance of (1) "participation of residents in a plan that is set in cooperation with a planner"; (2) "sufficiently encouraging the residents, thereby promoting the participation of many people"; (3) "adequately taking the propositions of the residents into account"; and (4) "leading members in the farming villages should listen to the opinions of the public." A harmonized society will result in the "development of the economy of farming villages" and "improvement of the economic conditions of farmers." The common thread among these opinions of the Chinese researchers is the need to build a "new socialist countryside," which the Chinese government is actively promoting.

4. Conclusion
We believe that this questionnaire survey of rural planning researchers in Japan, Korea, and China, although small in number, demonstrates to some extent the tendencies of their interpretation of rural space and rural planning, which is the background of researches. We assume that further studies including factors lying behind researches and planning, such as differences of policies among countries in rural planning and differences in the relation between city and farming villages, will reveal the common tasks of the countries and the possibility of sharing among them. Moreover, it will further promote joint researches and information sharing.

Acknowledgment
This research is based on a research conducted as part of a study entitled "Study on the function-oriented association of community planning activities in the modern local rural community," supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research as Exploratory Research (research representative, No. 17658101) awarded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and
Table 4. Opinions of the Researchers in Japan, Korea, and China Regarding the Future of Rural Planning

| Maintaining the function of production space | Retention of agricultural culture | Diversification of the functions of rural space | Necessary improvement | New approach of knowledge | Involvement between theoretical and practical research | Resident-led |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Japan                                       | Korea                            | China                                         |                      |                          |                                               |             |
| - The main role of farming villages is production. Ideally speaking, rural space should be an area where people can gain an adequate income from production and live a quality life. - Similarity and synonymy at the root have continued to exist in the transmission of "Nou (agriculture)" and the flow of agricultural culture, although the present situation and form has changed. It is important to record them before the ties break. | - Along with maintaining the function of food production, which is the primary function of farming villages, it is necessary to improve the space so as to raise the level of satisfaction of the residents of the farming villages. | - Improvement of the farming villages for an aging society. - Improvement of the infrastructures of food production for multiple purposes including tourist facilities. - Securing and educating human resources in rural planning. | - Harmony and coexistence of humans with nature. - Exerting the superiority of the rich natural resources in the farming villages, China will build a new countryside for development and, at the same time, will conserve the features of the region. | - The method of approaching the issue from an economic perspective cannot resolve the fundamental problems. Thus, a new and drastic change in the knowledge of rural planning is needed. - Performed using a method that is different from urban planning. - It would be better to adopt a method of selecting and concentrating, which means first conserving the places rich in resources, then developing it, and finally using it in harmony with the environment. | - Theoretical and practical research should be further linked together. | - Residents should participate in rural planning in cooperation with a planner, and then they should determine the plan of the farming villages. - With reference to the cases of foreign countries, we hope for the harmonious development of ecologies and the society by adequately taking into account the opinions of the residents. - Leading members in the farming villages should, to a great extent, listen to the opinions of the public. - Residents should choose a plan from the several plans made by a planner, after listening to the opinions of the residents. |

References
1) Saio N. and Kurihara S. (2006) Results of Questionnaire for Rural Area and Rural Planning in Japan and Korea, Journal of Rural Planning Association, 25 (3), pp.223-224.
2) Shimizu N., Karasaki T., Kurihara S., Saio N., Shima T., and Shimizu Y. (2005) Reference of "Sphere" in Rural Planning Research. Journal of Rural Planning Association, 24 (1), pp.24-35.
3) Architectural Institute of Japan (1994-2005) Summaries of Technical Papers of Annual Meeting (Architectural Planning and Design, Rural Planning, Urban Planning, History and Theory of Architecture).
4) Ito Y. (2006) Letter from the chairman of the Rural Planning Committee, AJI No.15 (20060811) (http://news-sv.aij.or.jp/nouson/s6/), (accessed 2006-10-04).

We wish to express our gratitude to Prof. Dong-Kun Lee (Seoul National University) and Prof. Dexuan Wang (Northeast Institute of Geography and Agroecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences) who administered and collected the questionnaires, and also to express our gratitude to Dr. Young-sam Yun (Konkuk University) and Ms. Yin Yang (Tongji University) who translated the questionnaire, and Prof. Sangug Sim (Jeonju University) who advised us on the contents of the questionnaire.

Moreover, we would like to thank the rural planning researchers in Japan, Korea, and China who responded to the questionnaire, and we are grateful to them for their invaluable opinions.