Proposed study on the socio-cultural and environmental management in the waterfront of Amakusa, Kumamoto Prefecture; exploring a participatory approach

OKOKO ANITA NYAPALA, NAOOTO TANAKA
Centre for Policy Studies, Graduate School of Science and Technology, Kumamoto University, Japan
Email: nyapala.anita@hotmail.com

Abstract: Waterfront is an area of a city (such as a harbour or dockyard) located alongside a body of water (river, canal or seaside). According to Amakusa city statistics, the GDP from all industries has been on a steady decrease since 1985. These coupled with depopulation, a slump in the fishing industry, a large ageing population and infrastructure would set the stage for a rapid urban decline process in Amakusa if more sustainable solutions of management are not explored and implemented. Preserving the heritage of seaside towns is essential in order to keep attracting both local and foreign tourists throughout the year and maintain a sustainable economy. Management practices must therefore accommodate a wider, more inclusive approach to heritage management and to a greater emphasis on community engagement. In the Japanese Law governing Cultural Property, the general public is encouraged to participate but parameters for participation are not very clear. Public participation therefore requires redefinition not just in law and policy but also by the public itself in order to evolve from passive to active. A participatory approach is vital to guide regeneration of historic cities to benefit the community and utilize existing indigenous knowledge and expertise to inform the planning framework.

Keywords: Waterfront, Cultural Property, Participation, Sustainable

Introduction:
Waterfront is an area of a city (such as a harbour or dockyard) located alongside a body of water (river, canal or seaside) (Kido, 2008). Urban renewal projects often focus on unused harbours and docklands to transform these neglected areas into attractive waterfronts. When an urban area starts losing business and urban places close; people lose their jobs; people move away from the area; the local economy shrinks along with the population, buildings and public places become rundown and badly maintained; which means the desirability of the area falls... it’s a vicious circle.

Preserving the heritage of seaside towns is essential in order to keep attracting both local and foreign tourists throughout the year and maintain a sustainable economy. This entails considering how culture can be used as a force of regeneration in these towns. This means finding innovative ways in which local councils, local communities, businesses and other partners can help create new cultural opportunities and partnerships whilst supporting existing historic infrastructure in the public realm. Culture-led waterfront regeneration and management is a new concept but one with highly sustainable prospects. Management of the waterfront through empowerment of the local community creates ownership and ensures sustainability. It also allows for mapping on natural and cultural heritage not just in the form of physical monuments and landmarks but also the rich stories behind the history and features of the waterfront. This mental and physical picture is very essential for sustainable social and environmental management of the waterfront as it gives the place local identity and ownership while utilising indigenous knowledge and resources, thus aligning the development with the principles of sustainability.

Waterfront management is not the same for all coastal towns. This is because of the varying size, as well as systems and institutions of society, culture, economy and governance. Most of the early civilizations were on waterfronts. They provided a convenient premise for human settlement, trade, industry and transport. They are therefore adorned with unique infrastructure, architecture, monuments, and artefacts, and over time abandoned ruins. Japan, being an archipelago of Islands consists of many waterfront towns, many of which are historic.

Amakusa is one of these towns filled with great history involving the Christian Religion. Amakusa Island consists of Sakitsu, Imatomi, Oe and Tanazoko settlements (Tanaka, ). Sakitsu area has an estimated population of 598 with 272 households; Imatomi has an estimated population of 423 with 203 households; Oe has an estimated population of 877 with 379 households; while Tanazoko has an estimated population of 1308 with 514 households. Sakitsu and Oe have the oldest churches in Amakusa, built in 1934 and 1933 respectively. Tanazoko area has Mt. Kurakatake as well as the Tanazoko Ike – stone walls.

The Landscape law was enacted in 2004 and preparation of the landscape plan followed in 2008. According to existing literature, the residents have been involved in drawing up of conservation plans; surveys based on process in each area; district briefings; walking events and preparation of committee reports. The whole of Amakusa City is a designated landscape planning area. However,
landscape and the environment have continually become the opportunity cost to safety, security and cost efficiency.

A previous (Tanaka,) study noted that sharing of local issues and mutual understanding between the local community and authorities is very essential and that there is necessity to share roles and coordinate restrictions, submissions and landscaping costs. There is however no clear definition of the process and parameters of sharing of local issues as well as sharing roles. This creates a loop hole in monitoring and evaluation of what has been done, what is being done and what needs to be done in the future for sustainable landscape and environmental management.

The general purpose of the study is to redefine the role of residents in socio-cultural and environmental landscape management of the waterfront of Amakusa. The general objective of this study is to explore and elaborate the cultural identity and roles of the local community in Amakusa Town in order to develop a local community-led sustainable social and environmental mechanism for management of its waterfront. The specific objectives of the study are: To understand the structure of local identity in Amakusa town; to investigate the role of the authorities in the social and environmental management of the waterfront of Amakusa; and, to assess the role of the residents in social and environmental management of the waterfront of Amakusa.

Methods:
The first phase of this study is a document comprehensive review of existing documents on the management of the Waterfront of Amakusa. Amakusa waterfront is not just an important historic and cultural landscape for Kumamoto prefecture but to the entire country of Japan. The onset of economic decline in Amakusa would indicate an underlying gap in the sustainability of its management. This review seeks to explore significant evidence of the onset of decline in Amakusa waterfront, explore international and national documents related to the management of the waterfront as a historic cultural landscape that can provide a way forward.

Results and Discussion:
The World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention
The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), is the International Body responsible for guiding the management of Cultural Property. The Convention concerning the protection of cultural and natural heritage was adopted in 1972. The text document for the recommendations from this convention clearly defines cultural heritage, natural heritage and the roles of the different parties involved in its identification and management. The following are the responsibilities of the state as stipulated in the Convention:

1. Identify and delineate cultural and natural heritage properties (Article 3)
2. Ensure identification, protection, conservation, preservation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage property (Article 4)
3. Adopt a general policy which aims to give the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community and to integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programmes (Article 5)
4. To set up services for protection, conservation and preservation of the cultural and natural heritage with an appropriate staff and processing the means to discharge their functions. Develop scientific and technical studies and research to work out such operating methods as will make the state capable of countering the dangers that threaten its cultural and natural heritage (Article 5)
5. To take the appropriate legal, scientific, technical administrative and financial measures necessary for the identification, protection, conservation, preservation and rehabilitation of its heritage (Article 5)
6. To foster the establishment or development of national and regional centers for training in the protection, conservation and preservation of cultural and natural heritage and to encourage scientific research in the field (Article 5)
7. Establish an inventory of its cultural and natural heritage property suitable for inclusion in the World Heritage List (Article 11)
8. Consider or encourage the establishment of national public and private foundations or associations whose purpose is to invite donations for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage (Article 17)
9. Endeavour by all means and in particular by educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage (Article 27)
10. Undertake to keep the public broadly informed of the dangers threatening this heritage and of the activities carried in the pursuance of the convention.

The Cultural Landscape Law in Japan
These 10 should form the basic roles of all the states that have ratified this convention. Japan ratified the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1992. According to Kakiuchi 2014, Cultural Heritage has been protected in Japan for over 1000 years with the
national government playing the major role in the management process. Over the years, the system of cultural protection has gradually evolved with the evolution of the legislation and policy guiding it. The Laws that have been governing cultural heritage protection and management in Japan include: The Proclamation for the Protection of Antiques and Old Properties (1871-1897) by the Meiji Government; the Ancient Shrines and Temples Preservation Law (1897-1929); the Law for the Preservation of Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty and Natural Monuments (1919-1950); The National Treasures Preservation Law (1929-1950); The Law Concerning the Preservation of Important Objects of Art (1933-1950); The Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties - LPCP (1950 to Date); The Landscape Act (2004); and, The Historic City Preservation and Restoration Act (2008).

Each Law introduced a new dynamic to cultural management ranging from the categories of cultural property to the roles of different parties in their management. Currently, there are six categories of cultural property: Tangible Cultural Properties, Intangible Cultural properties, Folk Cultural Properties, Monuments, Cultural Landscape, and, Groups of Traditional Buildings. The roles have evolved from the National government taking full responsibility for designation and management, to a more democratic and devolved process where local governments can designate cultural property in their regions and residents can also take part in protection of the cultural property. However, the national government still plays a major role.

The challenges of cultural property protection cited include: scarce resources both in the national and local governments allocated to culture compounded by lack of a unified approach from related sectors; Economic expectations for utilizing cultural property that are being enhanced by tourism but being dragged by a slump in traditional industries like the fishing industries where mass production and distribution can be done by multi-national companies as a lower price; the need for a more comprehensive approach for protection to address the yet to be protected cultural property, the continued loss of historical buildings and landscapes as well as the difficulty to find skilled labour and original raw materials for restoration and maintenance of cultural property; and, unclear prospects for the future brought about by ageing and depopulation as well as the necessity for Japan to implement socio-economic reforms to meet international and local environmental demands (Kakiuchi, 2014).

The 2008 Act on The Maintenance and Improvement of Historic Landscape in communities provides the beginning of a strategy to address some of these challenges. Here, the government authorizes plans drafted by municipalities to maintain and improve historic scenery, including unique historic buildings, as well as the traditional way of life of the people in the region. This Act embraces a multi-sectoral approach bringing together the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Tourism, The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) to jointly supervise its implementation. It provides support to projects that includes: Repair, purchase and renovation of historic buildings; Improvement of old buildings; Utilization of historic buildings through promotion of traditional festivals; and manpower development. The ACA has configured the Guiding Scheme on History and Culture as a system reflecting on the Basic Act for Promotion of Culture and the Arts that is anticipated to incorporate the following measures: Framework for co-operation and coordination with local residents, Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs), Businesses and private organizations; Policy for developing human resources to protect a region’s cultural assets; Policy for cultivating inheritors of folk cultural assets and foundations of support; and, Policy for securing raw materials and tools necessary for preserving cultural assets (Ikebe, 2012).

The roles and responsibilities in management and protection of cultural properties are elaborated in the LPCP and the Landscape Act (2004). This law requires government to take the necessary measures for protecting heritage. The roles of the national government are:

1. to designate important cultural properties and national treasures of high historic, artistic and/or scientific value and impose restrictions on repairs, export and alteration to existing appearance;
2. to undertake a range of measures for protection that include both preservation and utilization;
3. subsidize costs for repairs and disaster prevention actions and exempt some taxes to enable owners to afford preservation of cultural property;
4. extend financial support through zoning, and, if necessary restriction of private rights of land owners;
5. Taking measures to protect heritage sites and buffer zones; raising awareness on the importance of cultural properties and their environs;
6. Make provisions for support of cultural activities by local governments, Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) and citizens.

The roles of the local government are: designation of cultural property of regional interest and value and financial support in preservation and maintenance. The role of custodians and private owners and administrative organizations of cultural property are making an effort to protect the heritage by: protecting the condition of the designated property; carrying out regular repairs and disaster prevention actions; and, reporting any changes to the condition of the cultural property to government. The role of the general public
in LPCP is to co-operate with the government (Kakiuchi, 2014). Also, the Landscape Act encourages NPOs and citizens to be actively involved in its implementation. These roles imply that most control of activities surrounding cultural property still lies with government and the role of the general public is not yet clearly defined. The general public is encouraged to participate but elaborate parameters of participation, are not very clear. Public participation therefore requires redefinition not just in law and policy but also by the public itself in order to evolve from passive to active.

The Proposed Study Area
The proposed study area, Amakusa is located at the South West of Kumamoto Prefecture with an area of 638.28km². Between the five villages of the Amakusa town, there used to be as many as five elementary schools, four junior high schools, and one high school, with the total junior high school population reaching as high as 800 students. While there are still elementary schools in every village, a steep decline in the population has reduced the junior high schools to one, now located in Takahama. The junior high school student population is around 90, while total elementary school population is around 160. According to the 2010 census, the population of Amakusa is about 89,065 people, 34,272 households and an average household size of 3 people. There has been a steady decline in population from 118,765 in 1985 to 89,065 in 2010 which is a 7.7% decline from the 2005 population. According to Amakusa city statistics, the GDP from all industries has also been on a steady decrease since 1985. These coupled with depopulation, a slump in the fishing industry, a large ageing population and infrastructure would set the stage for a rapid urban decline process in Amakusa if more sustainable solutions of management are not explored and implemented. This would call for the roles played by various stakeholders in the management of this historic and cultural landscape to evolve in order to accommodate the impeding challenges and ensure sustainability of both the cultural heritage and the local community in Amakusa.

Rationale for a participatory approach
According to UNESCO’s World Heritage Resource Manual of 2013, multiple objectives in both the socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts characterize the management of most cultural properties and as such increased participation is essential to address them. This is because greater complexity requires advances in management practice. Management practices must therefore accommodate a wider, more inclusive approach to heritage management and to a greater emphasis on community engagement.

Cultural properties do not exist in a vacuum. They exist in communities where members are working to earn a living and exist together on a daily basis. They are therefore parts of the community within which they exist. For members of the community to participate actively in their management, these cultural property must be meaningful to or add value to their daily activities and play a part in bringing harmony to their existence. They must therefore be actively involved at all stages of cultural property management including research, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Participation is difficult and has its challenges for instance: the credibility of the management system, power imbalance between stakeholders, as well as political and socio-economic factors in the wider environment. However, a participatory approach to management is necessary in the heritage sector as heritage is the shared property of communities and a factor in ensuring the sustainability of those communities (UNESCO, 2013). Hayeong Jeong, in his article “Participatory approach to water management”, provides an outline of necessities to ensure that a participatory process is effective. The first component will be Capability. This will encompass assessment of the resources available and their potential for sustainable management (What is there? And, how can it be used optimally). The second component will be social capital. This will consist of the assessment of the available human resources and interactions and their potential for sustainable management (Who is there? And, how can they contribute optimally). The third component will be Social Responsibility. This is the core of this study as it will determine the course of the action plan. This will include roles, responsibilities and accountability. The fourth component will be Social Impartiality. This means that all input to the research by all the members of the community that will be involved will be equally important. Therefore, all roles and responsibilities resulting from the study will also be equally important. The final component will be Social identity. The cultural and social identity of the community will be referenced to at all points of the study and the community calendar of activities will be consulted before scheduling any research activity. Cities and urban centers are increasingly demanding that planning and design must take history, culture and meaning into account and given the projected continued growth of urbanization in the world and increasing demand for modern and technologic life, pressure on cities and their historic centers will continue to mount. There is no doubt that the historic texture of a urban center cannot be merely seen as an accumulation of significant monuments but rather needs to be considered as a living organism and vital living space for its inhabitants making it necessary to speculate on how to integrate modern life into
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One of the challenges in the new millennium is management of change within traditional cities and urban villages. Other cities which retain significant traditional neighbourhoods are often overwhelmed with the pressures for redevelopment and have no such strategies in place. But even where heritage planning frameworks exist, the implementation of these well-intentioned strategies is sometimes thwarted, misguided or lacking in expertise (Elizabeth Vines, 2005). What is needed in cultural landscape preservation is local management methods for inviting participation and the two places for collaboration created as a result. (Tanaka …) This is because participation makes diversity, changes and sustainability possible. A participatory approach is vital to guide regeneration of historic cities to benefit the community and utilize existing indigenous knowledge and expertise to inform the planning framework.

Conclusion:
This proposed study is seeking to explore a participatory approach to research on the management of the Historic and Cultural waterfront landscape of Amakusa. From the existing documents above and the changing dynamic of historic city preservation all over the world, seeking to understand the change and structure of local identity from the resident communities of such cities and their role in the management of these cities is vital in forging an advanced management model. The proposed study intends to involve a representation of all the members of the community from neighbourhood heads, to farmers, businessmen, fishermen, school children, teachers, local government officials, the youth and the aged. In this way, the results and solutions of this study will be holistic and sustainable both socially and environmentally.

References: