**2010 AIJ International Architectural and Urban Design Workshop in Karatsu**

**Karatsu Agenda 2010**

**"Innovating KARATSU through "New Exchange"**

**Toward an Attractive, Walkable City**

Since ancient times, Karatsu City has prospered as a gateway for trade, and developed as a significant crossroads. It has promoted cultural exchange through the development of elaborate traditions such as Karatsu Pottery, and has a thousand-year history of rich social exchange activities, such as the Karatsu Kunchi Festival.

On the other hand, the city is currently confronted with problems of decreasing population, aging population ratio, and, economic decline within the downtown area. Karatsu shares these problems with many small cities in Japan. A new approach to urban design can help to confront these problems and create a new attractiveness that recognizes the city's potential.

In order to address these issues, we began by analyzing the city's potential for improvement carefully, and considered the views of both the residents and visitors. We learned that the city has many natural resources and assets that have resulted Ecom a long history of trading, transportation and cultural and human exchange. However the city has lost much of its attractive character because these natural resources and assets are fragmented.

A true attractive city is a city that encourages and prompts people to walk. In order to create a more walkable Karatsu, a new design approach can be applied to Karatsu City that is based on a concept of "New Exchange:" This concept may refer to exchange of natural resources, such as the regeneration of the river ecology. Or it may refer to exchange that promotes physical interaction and commerce through the connection of fragmented and abandoned elements of the city. Exchange may "re-edit" and reveal the city's historic character as a walkable city.

As the conclusion of this workshop, we propose the following principles for urban and landscape design based on this concept of "new exchange:"

**Principles for "New Exchange" Design**

**1. Connecting Places**

- To recognize the mutual relationship between fragmented historical &sets and natural resources.

- To analyze the connectivity of historical elements or natural resources carefully and to connect the places visually, functionally, culturally and environmentally.

- To re-form a legible network of public spaces within the city.

**2. Living Heritage**

- To share a vision for living heritage, which promotes identity and a sense of belonging through an accumulation of traditions that maintain their meaning for current and future generations.

- To consider a balanced approach to preserve cultural assets and the traditional townscape while striving to improve the living environment of the city.

- To create places and opportunities for revitalized activities that promote and sustain cultural innovation, such as local, sustainable food.

**3. Eco-Walkable City**

- To share the idea that walking the city is to understand the city.

- To improve the existing streetscape in such a way that reveals Karatsu's form as a historic castle town.

- To create one-stop resting places and wayfinding that is helpful for various types of pedestrians and tourists.

- To maximize safety and comfort for pedestrians in streets and public spaces.

**4. Sense of Arrival**

- To understand the physical form of Karatsu City and its setting in the region and the land.

- To preserve the dynamic view sequences to the Karatsu Castle, Matsuura and Chouda rivers, and surrounding hills along the main approach routes to the city center as a common and unique legacy.

- To appreciate the importance of a good first impression at arrival places such as Ooteguchi Plaza and the Karatsu Railway Station.

- To promote well-designed public spaces at these arrival places that maximize orientation within the city, respect its historical context, and harmonize with its surrounding streetscape.

**5. Densifylng and Revitalizing Karatsu's Urban Fabric**

- To understand the historic subdivision patterns of the city and the process by which the merchant quarter and the samurai quarter have transformed.

- To re-create and to promote innovative and pragmatic models of low-rise and high-density residential environments that respect the historic block size, grain, and scale.

- To re-establish a flourishing lifestyle that successfully inherits the compact residential block forms that remain as a legacy of the castle city.

- To make the guidelines for a sustainable living environment by actively cooperating among residents in each of blocks.

**6. Water at the Intersection of River and Sea**

- To learn about the long multifaceted history of the water structure of rivers and canals that I have shaped the structure of the city.

- To re-generate a healthy ecological system in the rivers and canals, and to utilize wetlands as opportunities for environmental education and recreation for residents and visitors.

- To re-create a meaningful orientation to Karatsu's historic quality as a "Water City," in which residents and visitors can live together with water and identify its ecological and economic history.

**7. Partnership**

- To establish a public and private partnership system, and to activate a community and citizen participation process that conserves and utilizes the city's historical assets and natural resources and encourages beneficial outcomes for urban redevelopment projects.

Consequently, we conclude by strongly suggesting to citizens and governments that they should share this concept of "new exchange" and principles that seek to re-edit the fragmented city, and that they should have initiative to achieve sustainable development with a high quality of life and a walkable Karatsu.

Finally, we express our best gratitude for all the kindness and hospitality of Karatsu citizens, the city government, and all the contributors to support this remarkable international workshop.

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The Executive Committee of Participants of

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