

## **The Impact of the "Urban Renaissance" Policy in Japan The Analysis of Deregulation in the Building Standard Law of Japan**

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This paper aims to investigate the impact of the "Urban Renaissance" Policy in Japan with particular emphasis on deregulations in the Building Standard Law. In the last few decades, a number of revisions to the Building Standard Law were made under the name of "Urban Renaissance" Policy or "Toshi-saisei" Policy in Japan. Most of these revisions aimed at easing regulations. Each deregulation was partial and small, however, the result of interaction of all revisions was significant. They brought about great changes in building shape, size, and especially height, and had decisive effects on environment and cityscape in urban areas. The paper analyses the details of deregulations and evaluates how they changed the shape of buildings, taking two model cases of actual developments. Due to the consecutive revisions in the Building Standard Law, building shape, size and height have changed dramatically. The changes were especially obvious looking at condominium buildings on relatively big sites. These condominiums are problematic, since they enjoy their comfortable living environments such as sunlight or view by giving negative impacts on the living conditions in the surrounding neighborhoods. To narrow the gap between living conditions of new developments and surrounding areas and to prevent further deterioration of relationships between new and existing communities, detailed district regulations and planning consultations should be adopted by local governments.

## **Inner City Revitalization through Manga Characters -A Case Study of Shigeru Mizuki's Manga Characters in Sakaiminato, Japan**

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze the economic effects and development of new types of tourism and revitalization in a local city brought about by the use of manga (cartoon) characters. This study analyzes the results of an interview survey of visitors to the "Mizuki Shigeru Road" in Sakaiminato City in Tottori Prefecture, Japan. These results are utilized for an analysis of the economic ripple effect on Tottori Prefecture as seen in its input-output table for the year 2000.

Sakaiminato is a seaport on the Japan Sea coast which is famous as a fishing port that takes large quantities of fish and crabs. However, the city's former shopping district has been on the decline because the city market place was moved due to construction of a new port and the motorization of society.

The local administration tried to stop this decline by promoting the development of new types of tourism based on the use of Japanese manga characters drawn by the manga artist Shigeru Mizuki. As one example, the city set up statues modeled on famous manga characters on the sidewalk along its main road downtown.

A Mizuki Shigeru Memorial was established by the local administration, and a shrine, dedicated to his manga characters, was established by a private company. It is unique, not only in Japan but also all over the world, that manga characters play such an important role in promoting tourism and the revitalization of a city.

This study shows clearly that the "Mizuki Shigeru Road" has produced a large economic ripple effect on the local economy which has exceeded the amount of money invested by Sakaiminato City.

## **Alternative Approach to Improve the Slum Settlements**

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Informal settlements are an integral part of the urban landscape in developing countries. These settlements are widely distributed within cities with environment hazards. In most cases, residents of these settlements do not have access to basic services and amenities. In some cities more than 50% of urban population is living in slums and they make the cities. It thus becomes a vital task to search for an approach that may improve the quality of life of slum dwellers.

In this paper, the author examines the current scenario of the slum dwellers in the world and the impact of previous policies & interventions, on the welfare of residents of these slum settlements, who are typically the urban poor. Paper analyzes and raises an issue towards the definition of slums as different definitions are being adopted by various cities and nations across the world. The paper is in favor of a adopting a tangible universal definition with an input of quantitative parameters in it. Paper also raises an issue towards the categorization of slums into different categories. When such a mass of population living in slums, it becomes vital to divide these slums into various typology or categories (as per UN- HABITAT, 1 billion people lives in slums). Such categories will able to present the real situation and shall assist the professionals, researcher & administrators in making a true comparison of the slum settlements among the different nations and cities. This categorization will also help out the decision makers in drafting out effective and workable solution/policies towards the different categories of slums. By this categorization of slum settlements, the priorities can also be decided by decision makers. To support the case, a comparative study has been done between different cities & nations.

## **Study on the possibility of designating main streets as view corridors in hillside urban areas -a study of downhill scenic views in Kobe City, JAPAN**

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The purpose of this paper is to consider the possibility of designating main streets as view corridors in hillside urban areas. The area of our study was north-south-aligned streets in the hillside urban area in Kobe City, where it is possible to get downhill scenic views of the buildings on the waterfront. In this study, we had two main considerations. The first consideration was to clarify the existing scenic views and the factors of visibility and obstructed visibility; this was performed by fieldwork and analysis of four separate items. The four items are: inclination and altitude of viewpoints; the distance between the viewpoints and the visual features; the type of scenic view, such as panorama and vista; and the landscape component of the scenic views. The results of the first consideration were that there are three main factors relating to obstructed scenic views. Following this first stage of work, five streets were selected as having potential to be view corridors. The second consideration was to understand the relationship between physical landscape components and psychological impressions. The method used for this is the semantic differential method. The second consideration found that there are three characteristics factors of downhill scenic views: familiarity, openness, and uniqueness. We conclude that two rivers can be designated as view corridors in their present condition, and two other rivers will need improvement before they can be designated as view corridors. We also indicate the possibility of designating some bridges as scenic viewpoints.