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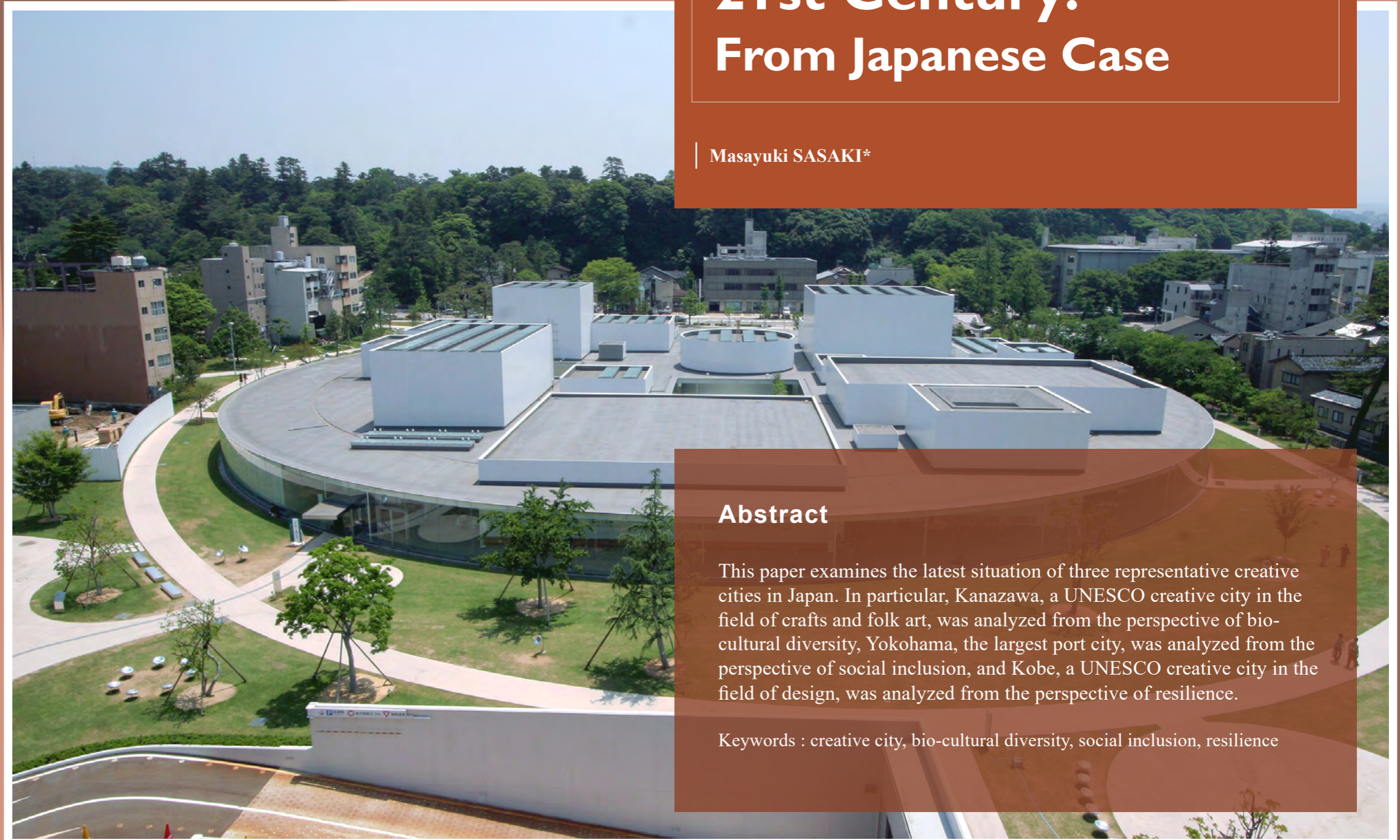
The Creative Cities of 21st Century: From Japanese Case

Masayuki SASAKI*

Abstract

This paper examines the latest situation of three representative creative cities in Japan. In particular, Kanazawa, a UNESCO creative city in the field of crafts and folk art, was analyzed from the perspective of bio-cultural diversity, Yokohama, the largest port city, was analyzed from the perspective of social inclusion, and Kobe, a UNESCO creative city in the field of design, was analyzed from the perspective of resilience.

Keywords : creative city, bio-cultural diversity, social inclusion, resilience



21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (photo is posted on the Website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)

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2019 Annual Conference held in Fabriano (Italy)
(photo is posted on the website : <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/annual-conferences>)

In June 2019, the 13th Annual Meeting of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was held with more than 50 mayors and 480 people from 180 member cities around the world under the theme, “The Ideal City.” Mayors renewed their commitment to building on the impact of culture, creativity, cooperation and innovation to foster sustainable cities and communities in line with SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Conclusions from the meeting underscore the UCCN’s mission to build on culture and creativity for sustainable development, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UCCN member cities recommend the development of a long-term strategy for the Network’s governance and sustainability that should focus on “demonstrating and measuring impact and achievements for sustainable development at the local, national and international levels in the spirit of” the 2030 Agenda.

Age of Creative Economy and Creative City

The creative city, which has leaped out to the center stage among twenty-first century cities in place of the global city, arises against the backdrop of an age of decline and decay of the “Fordist” city that was based on manufacturing. Let us call it the city model that is appropriate to the age of the creative economy, which has developed based on the knowledge and information economy (Hall 1998; Sasaki 2001).

The essence of the shift “away from the industrial economy of the twentieth century and towards the twenty-first century type of creative economy” can be summed up in the table below.

Table 1. The Shift from the Industrial Economy to the Creative Economy

	20th century industrial economy	21st century creative economy
Production system	- Mass production - Top down	- Flexible production - Bottom up
Consumption	- Non-individualistic mass consumption	- Individualistic cultural consumption
Distribution and media	- Mass distribution - Mass media	- Networks and social media
Economic advantage	- Capital assets, land, and energy	- Creative human resources - Knowledge, wisdom, and culture
Urban form	- Industrial city	- Creative city

In other words, this is a transition in which production, consumption, and distribution all move away from large-scale concentrated systems towards systems that are dispersed networks. As many “followers of culturally creative lifestyles” who engage in individualistic cultural consumption in the marketplace emerge, the competitive factors for cities shift away from capital, land, and energy towards knowledge and culture—in other words, towards the human resources of the creative class. As a result, the form of the city also shifts “from the industrial city to the creative city.”

Consequently, the reason that the idea of the creative city attracts so much of our era’s attention is not simply because it is looked at as a promising methodology for the urban renewal and community-building of decaying cities. It is also because it is seen as a promising model for escaping from the great recession that the world is confronting against the backdrop of the “advent of the worldwide creative economy.”

As such, in the midst of our era’s transition toward the new creative economy, the idea of the creative city is something that has been conceptualized based on successful examples of “urban renewal through culture and creativity” (Landry 2000). The idea has become instantly popular around the world, spreading and diversifying itself to related areas such as creative industries



Why Creativity? Why Cities?
(photo is posted on the website : <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/why-creativity-why-cities>)

and the creative class. It has also added impetus to the competition between cities to attract the creative class (Florida 2002).

However, simply attracting members of the creative class does not automatically mean that a city becomes a creative city. In order to develop the creative industries which are the economic growth engine of the creative city, it is necessary to activate and make effective use of the intrinsic value of the city's cultural capital and cultural resources. Without forming networks and creative clusters based on the creativity of artists and content creators, one cannot hope for sustainable development of the urban economy. Also, if the concerns of urban policy are only directed towards attracting the creative class, this can lead to a heightening of social tensions (Sasaki 2010).

To begin with, the new urban concept of the Creative City was born from the experience of the European Capitals of Culture that was promoted by the European Union. This was an experiment in urban renewal of cities not only economically but socially and culturally as well, making use of culture and creativity in the creation of new industries and employment, and helping to solve problems of homelessness and the environment.

Amid the circumstances of deteriorating and threatened livelihoods brought on by the long-term worldwide recession, creative solutions to issues of "social inclusion" were brought up in response to the theory of the creative city, so that homeless people, the handicapped, and the elderly would not be socially excluded. These also include conquering the disparities that appear in a knowledge and information-based society or solving the problem of refugees set adrift by rapid globalization.

With the paradigm shift away from the "Global City" to the "Creative City" firmly established, the "Plan for a Creative Cities Network" was put forth by UNESCO with the intention of preserving and strengthening cultural diversity in 2004.

What is the Creative Cities Network ? - Lyon
(photo is posted on the website : <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/content/about-us>)



Creative City Network of Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <http://ccn-j.net/>)

As to why UNESCO focused its attention on cities, the following three reasons can be given:

First, cities are where the cultural activities that support the creative industries are concentrated, and the chain of behavior linking together creative activities, the fabrication of products, and their supply arises in the city;

Second, by providing spaces and venues, cities have the latent potential for tying together groups of people who carry out creative activity; and also by tying together groups of cities, the potential arises for linkages on a worldwide scale;

And third, compared to nation states, cities are just small enough in scale to exert influence on the cultural industries within them, but are also sufficiently large enough in scale to function as windows for distributing goods, services, and people onto the world market.

Ever since UNESCO advocated a Creative Cities Network, new developments in the movement "away from competition between cities and towards networks of cities" have come into view at every level.

In Japan, for instance, the Creative Cities Network of Japan (CCNJ) was set up in January of 2013 in Yokohama City. 116 local governing entities have since joined this network, and they are looking at recruiting a target of 170 members, or 10 percent of all local governing entities in Japan, by the year 2021 when the Tokyo Olympics will be held.

Also in the East Asian region, the East Asian Cities of Culture project was launched by the three nations of Japan, China, and South Korea. It has the following three objectives:

First, to promote the formation of mutual understanding and a sense of solidarity within the East Asian region;

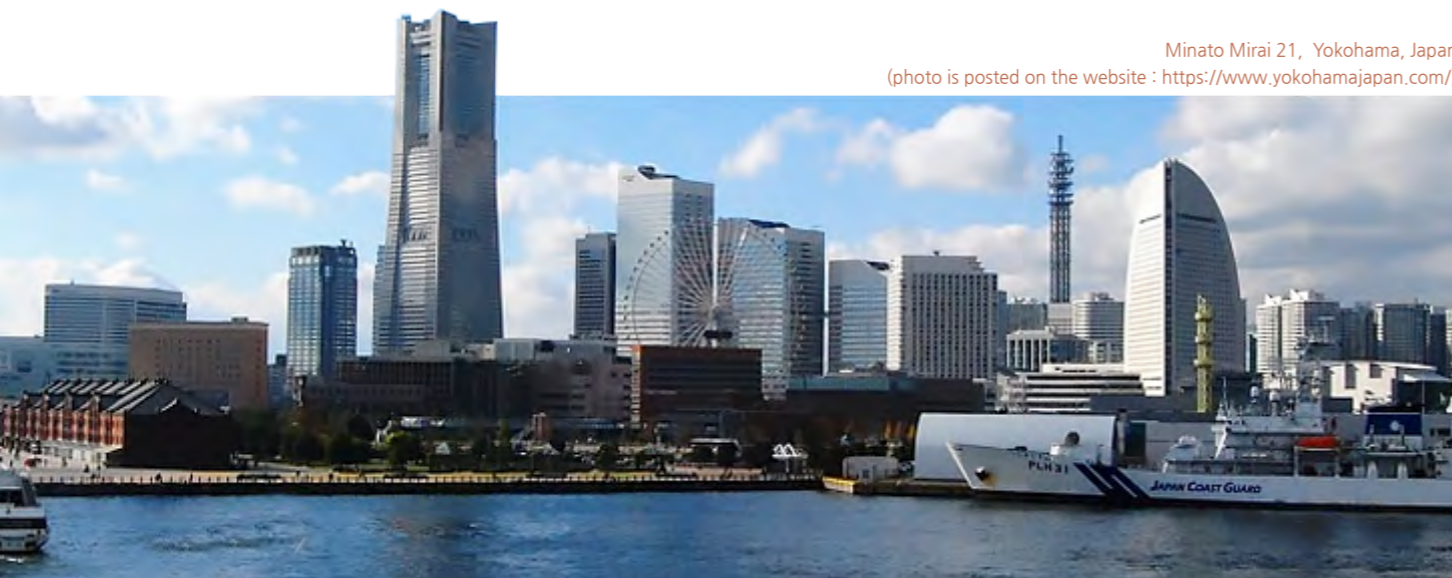
Second, to strengthen the international presence and voice of the diverse cultures of East Asia;

And third, to develop the sustainability of the cities, by mobilizing their cultural characteristics, through planning for the promotion of culture and the arts, the creative industries, and tourism.

In other words, by promoting cultural exchanges between the cities and developing the sustainability of the urban economy through cultural industries, the project aims to achieve peace and mutual coexistence in East Asia. Moreover, it has taken on the great challenge of showing whether a city-to-city network can overcome national boundaries and obstacles, amid an atmosphere of rising frictions between the nations over historical problems and territorial issues.

Since 2014, when the cities of Yokohama, Quanzhou (China), and Gwangju (South Korea) were selected to join the UCCN, Niigata City, Nara City, Kyoto City, Kanazawa City, Toyoshima (a Ward of Tokyo) and Kitakyushu City have continued to engage in mutual exchange projects with partner cities in China and South Korea. Continuing on, the plan is to select another three cities every year, and the issues are now to connect all these cities in a network and to expand it to the entire Asian region. In developing the East Asian Cities of Culture program, just what are the characteristics of urban culture in Asia? The cultural commonality of East Asian cities is that rather than the subjugation of nature by humans, the organic unity of nature and humans is stressed. Also, the forms of art which learn from the creativity of nature itself are seen as important, and it is anticipated that this project will cast a new light on the diversity of urban culture.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network is in this way expanding on the three different levels of global, regional, and national. Does this mean that it is departing from the twentieth century, which was the “century of great national powers,” and preparing the way for the “century of cities” that is appropriate for the twenty-first century?



Minato Mirai 21, Yokohama, Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <https://www.yokohamajapan.com/>)

Kanazawa: Bio-Cultural Diversity and Creative City

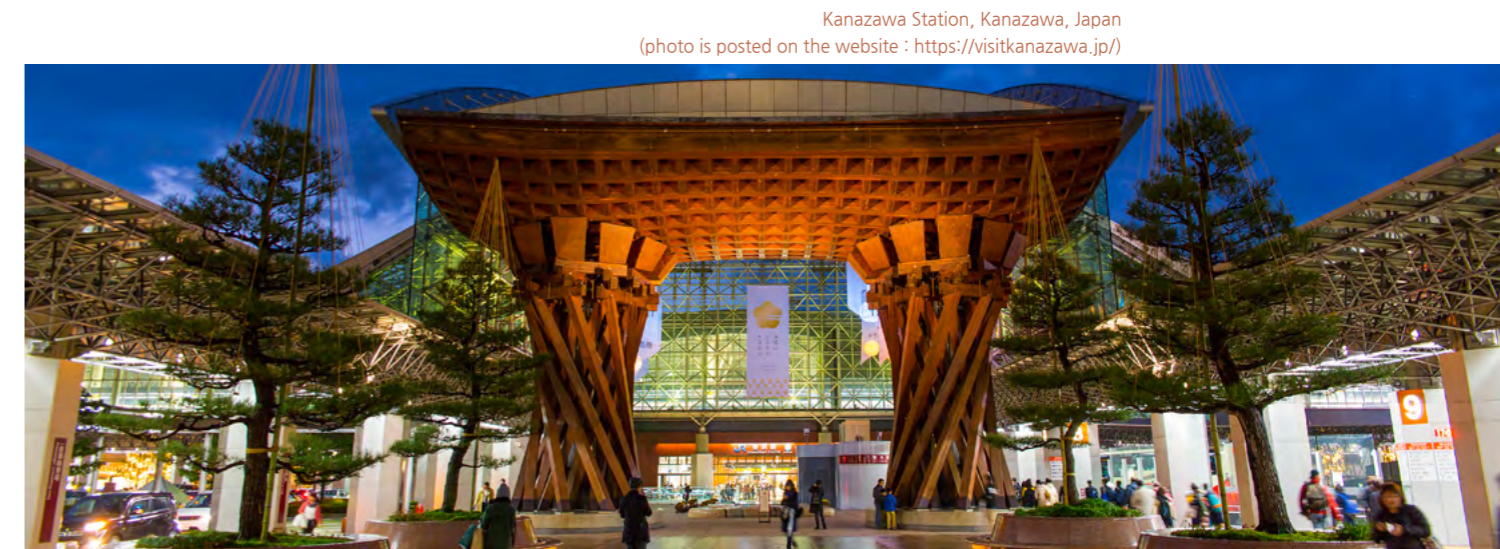
In the area of support for and preservation of the global environment, the United Nations has been engaged in multiple undertakings aimed at supporting biological diversity from the perspective of sustainable development. In recent years, there have been growing concerns about “biodiversity in the city” and the relationship between biodiversity and cultural diversity, and as such, the concept of “Bio-Cultural Diversity” is now attracting attention.

One could say that Kanazawa, a UNESCO Creative City, provides an ideal venue for discussing Bio-Cultural Diversity in the city.

Designated as a UNESCO Creative City in the field of crafts and folk art in 2009, Kanazawa, with a population of 450,000, preserves a unique economic base: the traditional townscape and businesses provide livelihood and culture that foster traditional arts and crafts, and the city itself is blessed with a rich natural environment, surrounded by verdant mountains and with two clear streams that flow through the city. As a medium-scale city that has found a balance between economic development on the one hand and culture and the environment on the other, Kanazawa has been greatly admired from both the aspects of biological diversity and cultural diversity.

What has preserved the bio-cultural diversity in Kanazawa is the respect for the handwork of the artisans who have created artistic craft items. In other words, it is a result of the adroit combination of the “cultured and craftsman-like mode of production,” the existence of a “cultured lifestyle” among the citizens who incorporate the use of craft items into their daily lives, and the undertakings of the government which supports these.

The traditional crafts of Kanazawa City flourished largely due to the Kaga Maeda clan which ruled this area during the Edo period, and down through the generations



Kanazawa Station, Kanazawa, Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)



Kaga Yuzen Silk Dyeing, Kanazawa, Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)

encouraged their production and made it a policy to invite exceptional craftsmen from all over Japan. Kanazawa crafts number as many as 23 different industries, beginning with the 6 craft industries that are nationally designated: Kaga Yuzen silk dyeing, Kanazawa Shikki lacquerware, Kanazawa Haku gold leaf, Kanazawa Butsudan Buddhist altars, Kutani ware porcelain, and Kaganui embroidery. It also includes many others such as Ohi Ware pottery and Kaga Zogan gold and silver inlay. In the realm of crafts, Kanazawa boasts a quality and volume that in Japan is equaled only by Kyoto. For most traditional crafts, beautiful fauna and flora, as well as good air and good water, are essential for the raw materials, the designs, and for the process of fabrication. For example, in yuzen silk dyeing, flowers that bloom in local gardens are needed for the designs, the belly fur of the tanuki (raccoon dog) is used for the paint brushes, starch paste made from rice is needed for the drawing of the designs, and in the finishing process the fabrics must be washed in the clear waters of the Asano River that flows through the city. When this happens, ayu (sweetfish) school together in the stream to eat the starch that washes off. In this way, artistic craft objects enhance the cultural diversity of Kanazawa, and at the same time their production is sustained through biodiversity. For this reason, the city of Kanazawa has been involved since early on in protecting the environment and in protecting the cultural landscape.

Kanazawa's economic development policy has been to restrict large-scale industrial development based on models from the outside and avoid sudden and drastic changes in its industrial structure and urban structure. As a result, the city has protected its traditional townscape and the natural environment of its surroundings, along with protecting its unique traditional industries since the Edo period. The city is proud of its beauty in which amenities have been richly preserved. The city's unique economic structure has prevented the draining away of the income produced in the local region, and it has made possible the continuous innovations of small and medium-sized enterprises and their investments in culture.

At present, within the city of Kanazawa, there are about 820 businesses related to traditional craft goods, or 20 percent of the total businesses, and they employ about 2,500 people or five percent of the work force. Crafts are the creative industry that represents Kanazawa, but they take the form of very small-scale workshops and studios, with many of them having display and sales at their storefronts. Workshops and studios of 139 craft artists and 74 of their shops are concentrated within a five kilometer radius of the former Kanazawa Castle, located in the center of the city, forming clusters of craft work scattered in the middle of town.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ① | ② |
| ③ | ④ |
- ① Gold leaf, Kanazawa, Japan
 - ② Kaga Mizuhiki String Craft, Kanazawa, Japan
 - ③ Kutani Ceramic Ware, Kanazawa, Japan
 - ④ Kanazawa wagasa umbrella, Kanazawa, Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)





21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan
(photo is posted on the Website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)

However, in the lifestyles of contemporary Japan, the times and places where traditional craft objects are used are gradually declining, the volume of sales is decreasing, and the number of employees continues to decrease. As a result, through the fusion of the contemporary art of 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art and the media arts of eAT KANAZAWA, and through collaborations with avant-garde designers, the city has launched the “Lifestyle Crafts Project” to create original new works and is hastening to reconstruct the creative industries.

As such, the city of Kanazawa is not only promoting crafts as a creative industry, but also emphasizes them as cultural assets, and has advanced a city plan to improve and support the neighborhoods of historic houses and the urban townscape where the craft workshops are located as a cultural landscape. Additionally, it has undertaken a cultural policy that networks together many galleries and museums centered around the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, and they have formed a “Cultural District” in collaboration. It was the high value put on such undertakings that led to the city being registered as a UNESCO Creative City in the category of crafts and folk art.



①	① Nishi Chaya District, Kanazawa, Japan
②	② Kenrokuen Garden, Kanazawa, Japan
③	③ Onosho Canal in Nagamachi District, Kanazawa, Japan

(photo is posted on the Website : <https://visitkanazawa.jp/>)

Kanazawa’s unique cultural perspective has penetrated into every area of urban policy. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the city established the Kanazawa Municipal University of Arts and Crafts and embarked on a program of fostering the human resources that would support the modernization of the craft industries by nurturing young successors in the traditional crafts such as yuzen (dyeing), maki-e (gold-sprinkled lacquer), and in the performing arts. Also through the adoption of industrial design, they invited prominent professors such as Yanagi Sori from the outside. Moreover, well in advance of the rest of Japan, the city became a national leader in the preservation of traditional townscape, enacting the “Traditional Environment Preservation Ordinance” and the “Water Supply System Preservation Ordinance.”

Thus we can say that the cultural production mode that rejected mass production was a major factor that has helped to protect Kanazawa’s bio-cultural diversity.

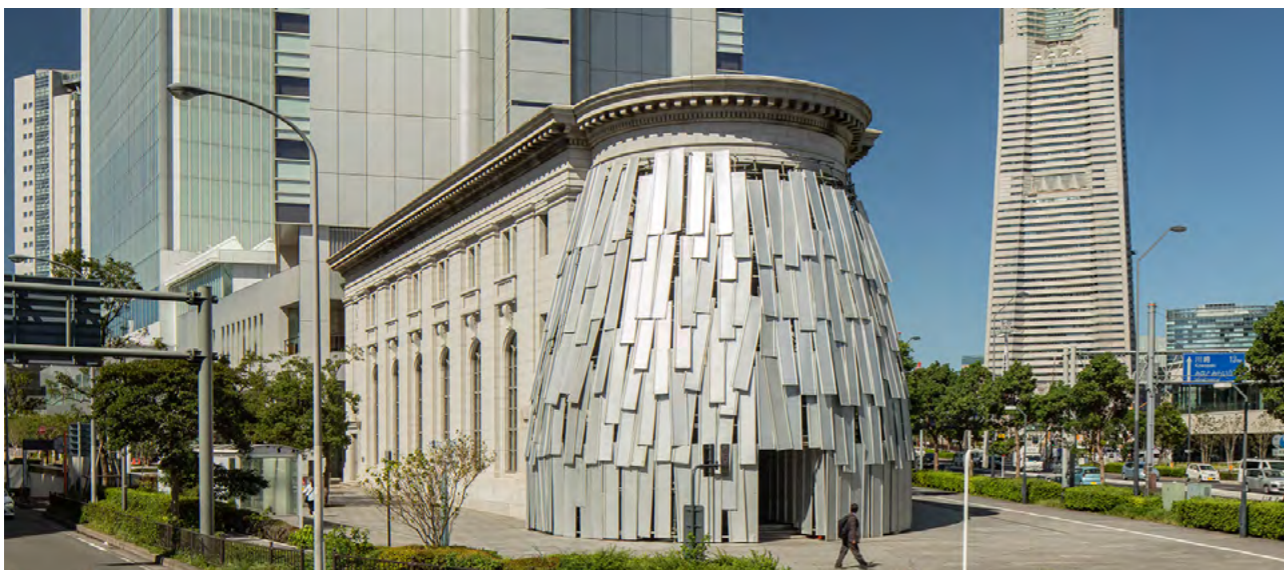
Yokohama: An Inclusive Creative City

In stark contrast to the image of Kanazawa as an Edo era castle town with a long and rich history is the image of Yokohama, a port city that is 150 years old and has become one of Japan's largest urban centers. At the height of the bubble economy, the city of Yokohama pursued a large-scale waterfront development project to create a new central business district with the aim of shedding its image as a city of heavy industry. However, with the collapse of the bubble economy and subsequent construction boom in central Tokyo, Yokohama suffered a double blow. From the beginning of 2004, however, Yokohama embraced a new urban vision and embarked on a project to reinvent itself as a "creative city of arts and culture."

The contents of this new urban vision were fourfold: 1) To construct a creative environment where artistic and creative individuals would want to live; 2) to build a creative industrial cluster to spark economic activity; 3) to utilize the city's natural assets to these ends; and 4) to utilize citizen initiative to achieve this vision of a creative city of art and culture. The city aimed to attract close to 2,000 artists and nearly 15,000 workers to its creative industrial cluster by 2008.

From April of 2004, former Mayor Nakada opened a special "Creative City Yokohama" office. The main activity of this office has been the establishment of several "creative core" districts in the general vicinity of the port. These creative cores utilize numerous historic buildings such as old bank buildings that was built in 1929 and now vacant offices to house new "creative spaces" for citizen artists and other creative individuals. The "Bank ART 1929" project was the start of this ambitious undertaking. This project is under the guidance of two NPOs that were selected via a competitive process and are in charge of organizing an array of exhibits, performances, workshops, symposiums, and various other events that have attracted participants from Tokyo as well as Yokohama.

Bank ART 1929, No.1 Bank, Yokohama, Japan
(photo is posted on the website : <http://www.bankart1929.com/>)



"Koganecho Bazaar" - KOGANE-GHOST Parade2019, Koganecho area in Yokohama, Japan
(photo is posted on the Website : <http://koganecho.net/koganecho-bazaar-2019/>)

Since its inception, the creative corridors have expanded as they have incorporated numerous vacant buildings and warehouses in the vicinity. Around this symbolic Bank ART 1929 building, there locate over 150 small offices in the genre of fine art, film and picture, design, town planning, photograph, music, drama, so on. As a result, many young artists consisting of various genres and creators gathered, and formed a creative cultural cluster. Established in 2005, the location promotion grants for films, contents production companies, and creators helped to make old vacant neighborhood filled with "creative atmospheres" effectively. As of March 2007, the economic ripple effect of the creative corridors for the local economy is estimated to be in the range of twelve billion yen. And in July of 2007, an arts commission composed of public and private individuals and institutions was established to support and attract artists and other creative individuals to the region.

The experimental "Kogane Cho Bazaar" of Yokohama is an illustrative example that represents the numerous activities that are underway in Yokohama. This event was planned in an area that was filled with gang activities and prostitution during the chaotic period of the immediate postwar years. The area later became a shopping district that had over 250 shops, yet many of them closed down in recent years, as the whole area was in decline. Many young students and artists collaborated with local businesses in the bazaar's projects. The diversity on display during the planning sessions for this event was a clear illustration of how cultural projects can lead to social inclusion. Indeed, these planning events featured the participation of local residents, university students, artists, and all manner of specialists to create an art event to enliven an area blighted by a plethora of vacant shops.

The case of Yokohama is remarkable in the sense that the policy goal of utilizing the creativity inherent in art and culture for the purpose of urban regeneration also led to a restructuring of the politics related to cultural policy, industrial policy, and community development. In other words, the new organizations that emerged to revitalize Yokohama as a city of art and culture transcended the bureaucratic sectionalism that typically plagues policy formation and administration in the fields listed above, while also constructively engaging NPOs and citizens in the formation and administration of policy. Throughout Japan it seems that urban policies and projects based on art and culture have given rise to a socially inclusive politics.



Central Kobe, Japan
(photo is posted on the Website : <https://design.city.kobe.lg.jp/>)

Kobe: A Resilient Creative City

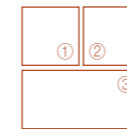
Entering the present century, the rapid deterioration of the global environment and the frequency of natural disasters such as giant tidal waves, floods, and earthquakes have become major obstacles to the sustainable development of cities. As a result, the sustainable development of global society and how to make cities resilient are becoming ever more important themes.

In the task of recovery from such disasters, the role that the arts and culture plays in the empowerment of citizens and communities that have been the victims of disaster, and the fact that arts and culture increase the resilience and recoverability of cities have come to receive a lot of attention. In the city of Kobe, where many of its citizens became casualties of the great earthquake disaster of 1995, the process of recovery from the disaster did not stop with simply physically rebuilding, but rather through having many of the citizens actually experience the power of the arts and culture to create sympathy for other people, heal the wounds of their spirit, and give them courage. This trend towards “urban renewal through culture and the arts” gradually spread. Thus, on the occasion of the earthquake’s tenth anniversary, the city issued the “Kobe Cultural Creative City Declaration” and the city had come to aspire to building a vigorously evolving creative city that actively mobilizes culture and the arts.

In 2007, the city held the Kobe Biennale, a festival of arts and culture. Along with presenting a widely diverse range of arts and culture, including contemporary art, performing arts, traditional arts, design, and fashion, the city worked hard to renew its resources and to reinvigorate a lively urban milieu. Not only had culture given the victims the courage to go on living, but it helped to bind together the volunteers who were assisting in the recovery as well as the members of the environmental

protection movement. This ultimately led to forging new bonds between communities within the city. Through the accumulated results of such undertakings, the Design City Kobe Promotion Conference, made up of citizens, university staff, people from the world of business, and from the government, was established (with its office at the Kobe Chamber of Commerce). The goal of the conference was to create “a city where people with abounding creativity live together, and by having creative activities in culture and industry develop vigorously, create a city of vitality and abundance where the citizens enjoy a high quality of life.” By comprehensively promoting the ways of “community design,” “lifestyle design,” and “manufacturing design,” the unique design city of Kobe was registered in the design category of the Creative Cities Network, advocated by UNESCO on October 16, 2008.

Since the recovery process from the enormous damage caused by the earthquake and tidal wave that struck Japan’s Tohoku region in 2011, it has gradually become clear that it is not only through the restoration of the physical infrastructure, but also through traditional performing arts and festivals, and through giving people hope for living and strengthening community ties, can the resilience of society be increased. We can regard this new policy domain of the “resilient creative city” as now spreading widely.



① ~ ③ Kobe Biennale 2013: Encounters with Art in the Port, Kobe, Japan
(photo is posted on the Website : <https://design.city.kobe.lg.jp/>)



Conclusion

So, we now come to the conclusion. If one were to propose a fundamental shift of the contemporary social system to the creative society, that would mean:

First, a shift away from finance-centered globalization based on market-principle ideologies and towards globalization that recognizes and accepts cultural diversity;

Second, a shift away from the mass production and mass consumption system of Fordism and towards a “creative economy” based on cultural production that rejects mass production;

Third, the re-empowerment of creative work that produces intrinsic value that is backed up by cultural values, and the emergence of “practitioners of a culturally creative lifestyle” who create their own living culture that transcends false consumption booms;

Fourth, while guaranteeing a basic income and not relying on the existing type of welfare payments, a blueprint for a social system that is inclusive and allows full participation, so that each and every citizen can fully manifest their own creativity;

Fifth, I believe it is important that there be more research on creative cities that are also resilient and can overcome extreme changes in the global environment and major disasters.

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