

Global City and Local Culture :

2014 International Symposium of East Asian Experiences in Urban Redevelopments

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The International Symposium was organized in the ancient water city of Tongli Town in the Jiangsu Province. For more than 1,000 years it has been renowned as a water town. Here, the symposium themed “Global City and Local Culture” was held on 1st November 2014, gathering a few dozen scholars from China, Korea, and Japan. This was the 5th major conference of the “Urban Culture in the Process of Urban Redevelopment: Experience of East Asia” research group. This conference was hosted by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITRAP Shanghai) under the auspices of UNESCO, and the Department of Sociology, School of Social Development and Public Policy, Fudan University. Much appreciated support was also provided by the Tongli Township Government, Suzhou, Jiangsu, China. The origin of the overall project goes back to the inaugural symposium of 2010 an initiative to support research of Asian urban culture. That initial conference was held at Rikkyo University, which was also host to the 4th symposium last year. The second symposium was held in 2011 at Tongji University, while the third was convened by the University of Seoul in 2012 featuring creative city policies.

Prior to the sessions, the group visited various marvelous sires of Tongli town’s urban heritage. For example, the Garden of Retreat and Reflection is “a classic private garden of late Qing Dynasty, and has been inscribed on the World Heritage List.” “Tongli lies with Wujiang city and 18km away from Suzhou. In ancient times, due to its charming environment and abundance, many noblemen and distinguished families have since built their private gardens.” Tongli town is surrounded by water and has many different bridges linking the separate parts of the town. These are landmarks and preserve the urban scene with their exquisite cultural heritage. They provided a focus for the major themes for this symposium. This continuous project has provided various case studies on the roles, characteristics, and changes in certain sites in global cities where there have emerged the intertwining processes of globalization and localization.



International Symposium, "Global City and Local Culture."



Tuisi (garden) means Retreat and Reflection.



Water Village

At the beginning of the symposium, an Opening Ceremony was presided over by Professor Hai YU, Department of Sociology, Fudan University. The first session was hosted by Professor Wei LU, Executive Deputy Director, WHITRAP Shanghai. The four presentations for this session were: "The Relationship between Urban Scenes and Housing Prices in the Metropolitan Cities of Korea," Professor Wonho JANG, Department of Urban Sociology, University of Seoul; "Multicultural Urbanism in Tokyo: Residential Differentiation of Non-Japanese Residents," Professor Yasushi MATSUMOTO, Department of Sociology, Rikkyo



The second session, hosted by Professor Jian ZHOU, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, also consisted of four papers. These were: “Building a Governance Structure for Art-led Urban Regeneration: The Case of ‘Totatoga Artist in Residence Project’ in Busan, Korea,” Professor Kee-Bom NAHM, Department of Urban Sociology, University of Seoul; “The Developments of Ethnic Towns in Inner-City Tokyo,” Professor Tetsuo MIZUKAMI, Department of Sociology, Rikkyo University; “The Charm of Mix: Like Shanghai but Being Elsewhere? Reading the Consumption of Tianzifang in Shanghai,” Professor Chao ZHANG, Department of Sociology, Tongji University; and “Building up a Harmonious Power Relation in Spaces,” Professor Hai YU, Department of Sociology, Fudan University. Both sessions were followed by a stimulating period of questions and discussion.



Memorandum of Understanding between Tongji University and Tongli Town

The major event of the day was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tongji University and Tongli Town to complement the informative sessions. It was a very good opportunity for the participants to witness this significant and historic event. The day concluded with an exciting dinner after closing ceremony. The next day, many participants returned to home traveling through Shanghai.

The conferees decided that the next symposium should be convened in Cheju Island, to report on developments of these co-operative research projects. A few of the papers from the symposium have been revised and presented in this issue.