

Management of protected areas in urban fringe area of Tama Hills, Tokyo, Japan

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Introduction

Study Site Description

Tama Hills (*Tama Kyuryo*) are located between Tokyo Metropolis (*Tokyo-to*) and Kanagawa Prefecture (*Kanagawa-ken*), west of central Tokyo and north of Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture, including a part of the first and second largest populated cities in Japan. Surrounded by several rivers, those areas are about 300 square km, used to be countryside and fringe of urban areas, conserved balanced natural and cultural environment including paddy field, farmland and coppice (*satoyama*) owned by both private (mostly farmer) and as common district. However, since highest point of the hill is about 220 meters above the sea level, development especially for residential area started from 1950s because of the convenience to commute to downtown Tokyo and Yokohama. Two large developments, Tama New Town in Tokyo and Kohoku New Town in Kanagawa, in 1960s to 70s changed almost all the land.

Methods

The author analyzed the history of Tama Hills concerning land use – decreasing natural areas and farmland, including traditionally used paddy fields and increasing protected areas – and collected historical information on activities and management body/person in the hills through literature, discussions with personnel of local governments and member of non-profit organizations.

History and transition of land use and management

Government-leading conservation of the land is initiated as well as development. Fortunately, there are some fragments of protected areas designated by local government in recent years. For example, from 1978, Tokyo Metropolis government started to conserve Zushi-Onoji Historical Environment Conservation Area in Machida City, Tokyo. This plan included about 50 hectare and designated about 36 hectares until today (2012), but abandon of traditional land use and impact of visitors are becoming new issues to conserve.

Consequently, not only the power of ‘new’ local communities are leading to make volunteer groups in order to oppose to the development in early days but changed gradually to manage those areas for conservation and recreation (Ueda, 2012). In other hand, ‘old’ local communities which have abundant of traditional and precious knowledge and techniques to conserve those hill environments are in the spotlight again as one of the areas for conducting the concept of “New Public Commons” (Cabinet Office, 2010) in Japan. Additionally, objective of conservation is set not only the patch of the two- (or three-) dimensional “land,” but also the one- (or long two-) dimensional “path” from around 2000, regardless of land ownership. The first guide map to introduce as the footpath in Japan about the countryside walking route as footpath has been published in 2002 (Midori no Yubi, 2002). This will guide to the hidden paddy fields and lost environment in urban fringe in Tokyo, not as old mountaineering course, and that was one of epoch making event in Japan. These activities and publishing were made by one of the NPOs in Tama Hill. Eventually not only in Machida City but in some cities/towns such as in Hokkaido, Yamagata and Yamanashi Prefecture have started making routes for footpath or designation by various organizations, too. Hokkaido is one of the northernmost islands in Japan with elements of countryside landscape similar to those in England, birthplace of the footpath. In 2009, “Japan Footpath Association” (translation of “Nippon Footpath Kyokai”) was created and the headquarters is located in the Machida City. These movements of conservation has changed and broadened the purpose of the conservation body to promote restoration of the beautiful landscape and improve visitors health.

Table I. Transition of farmland and natural area in Tama Hills, Tokyo

Period	~1950s	1960s~70s	1980s~90s	2000s~
Status of the Land of farmland and natural area	Traditional public common (from 1600s circa)	Development for (converted to) housing and road	Land conservation by government	New public common
Typical land use	Paddy field, farm, coppice, grassland and undeveloped natural area	Housing, road, abandoned and undeveloped natural area	Housing, road, abandoned and undeveloped natural area, and protected area	Housing, road, undeveloped natural area, protected area, including restored rice paddy field and coppice
Management of farmland and natural area	Mostly farmer	Government and farmer	Volunteer (non-farmer) farmer, and government	Traditionally-skilled volunteer and new volunteer, and government

Cabinet Office, Government of Japan (2010) Declaration of "New Public Commons." 15pp. Tokyo. <http://www5.cao.go.jp/entaku/en/pdf/declaration-english.pdf> (last cited: June 17, 2012)

Midori no Yubi Ed.(2002) Tama Kyuryo Footpath I – Sansaku Guide Map – (Tama Hills Footpath I – Walking Guide Map-), Midori no Yubi (Nonprofit Organization for Specified Activity), 14pp. Tokyo. (in Japanese)

Ueda, Saori (2012) A study on the continuity of green environmental volunteer activities in the public suburb green environment, Tokyo University of Agriculture, 74pp. Tokyo. (in Japanese with English summary)