

Growth of Rough Sleepers in Osaka and the Recent Evolution of Actions of Government, NPO and Volunteer Organizations

Toshio Mizuuchi

Graduate School of Geography, Osaka City University, Osaka, 558-8585, Japan
mizuuchi@lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp
http://www.lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp/geo/e-st_mizuuchi.htm

1. The Kamagasaki area in Osaka city

As shown in Figure 1,2, two railway arteries, the JR Osaka Loop Line and the Nankai Electric Railway Line, which provide direct links to Kansai International Airport, cross at Shin-imamiya station in the southern part of Osaka city where the area of Kamagasaki can be closely seen from the windows of the JR airport express “Haruka” and the Nankai airport express “Rapito” which both run along elevated lines. The main subway artery of Osaka city, the Midosuji Line, only runs underground here, but it is just one stop to Namba, the center of Osaka city and to Tennoji, the main center in the southern part of Osaka city. The area around Shin-imamiya station is a highly convenient place with a municipal art museum, the Tennoji Park and Zoo, and a major municipal hospital. However, the gigantic elevated station was built in the pre-war days of the 1930s, and now has an old, dreary and dirty atmosphere. Relative to the huge number of transfer passengers at this station, not so many passengers get off here. In front of this station is the Airin District Center where the largest day laborers market functions (Kamagasaki is part of Airin District located in Nishinari ward). Early every morning, labor sharks and laborers meet face to face on the first floor of this center and employment contracts are made. The scene on the first floor is that of a gloomy open space with a line of blackish concrete pillars (Photo 1,2). It is filled with the smell and sweat of the crowd of manual laborers and people sleeping rough. Along the side of this center, the stands and stalls of street vendors occupy the street and are reminiscent of the scenes of chaos and disorder immediately after Japan’s defeat in WWII .



(Photo 1)



(Photo 2)



(Photo 3)



(Photo 4)

Photo 1,2 Kamagasaki in the Early Morning at the Beginning of the 1990s

(Left-hand side: Between the Airin District Center and the Nankai elevated railway line)

(Right-hand Side: Ground floor of the Airin District Center)

Photo 3, 4 Urban hostels in Kamagasaki in 2003

There is no one who would not feel indifferent or perplexed when facing this scene. Frankly speaking, it appears a dirty place, a fearful place, a place that smells bad, and whenever we talk about this area using terms like these, it becomes connected with a sense of separation and, even worse, discrimination. However, even if people have not actually experienced Kamagasaki firsthand, discrimination. Feelings of contempt and prejudice about Kamagasaki are shared by many people in Osaka and have become commonly held beliefs. People do not want to see or visit the area, and just label it as a different and negatively stereotyped place, a day laborers' and homeless people's ghetto, and this labeling continues. Negative and specific imaginative geography is imprinted on the place name of Kamagasaki by the people in Osaka.

The slum and skid row quarter of pre-war Kamagasaki was burnt down and destroyed by aerial bombing in March 1945. However, immediately afterward, it revived as the largest skid row 'slum' in Japan, and the Kamagasaki Riot in 1961 quickly focused attention on that curious place and led to the introduction of a policy of control. The will of the government that this 'slum' of skid row and squatter barracks must be improved and controlled resulted in the Airin Management System ('Airin' means lovely neighborhood and is also the name of an actual district with an area of 0.69 km², which includes the Kamagasaki area within it. Photo 3, 4 show urban hostels that are the basic 'infrastructure' of Kamagasaki day laborers). The thorough clearance of squatter barracks in and adjacent to Kamagasaki along the elevated Nankai Line and the disappearance of the slums marked a successful declaration of the end of "Sengo" (the post-war recovery era) after the EXPO held in Osaka in 1970. This policy was valid only for the Airin District and was a very special system started through the joint efforts of the city government, prefectural government and police, which had jurisdiction for welfare, labor affairs, and public peace, respectively. Kamagasaki, then, continued to be a problem area for more than thirty years. All the problems within the Airin District, such as those faced by the day laborers including their employment, daily life, their health, gang / mafia problems, sleeping rough or dying on the street were specifically dealt with. That is, specific local policy, which was valid only for this area, was carried out to combat the accumulation of violence, the labor union movement, and the day laborers' struggle against the enemy of poverty for their survival.

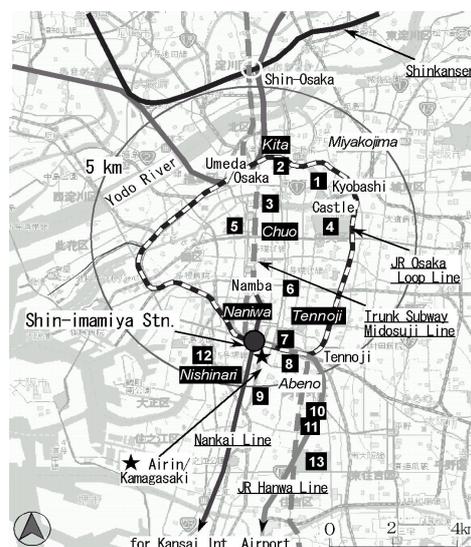


Figure 1 Location of Kamagasaki / Airin District

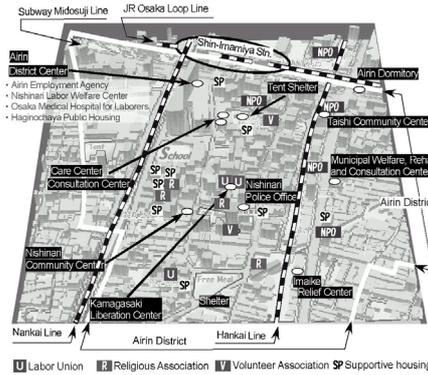


Figure 2 Inside Kamagasaki / Airin District

From a geographical perspective, the currently controversial issue of people sleeping rough can be seen in terms of a spilling over of the problem city-wide, when it used to be confined within the Airin District (Kamagasaki). This phenomenon has led to some tension in Osaka city, which has a slogan stating that it is an internationally attractive city for visitors and sightseers, and therefore there is simultaneously a light and a dark side to the city. This polarity can be most keenly observed in the public parks of Osaka which are overcrowded with the blue tents of homeless people. Although the number of tents in public parks in the city was 374 in July 1996, it has been rapidly increasing, 1,252 in August 1998 and 2,593 in August 2000 (Table 1). During the last four years in the 1990s, there was a remarkable sevenfold increase. Each park with given number listed in Table 1 is also shown in Figure 1 by its relative number. In the large, medium, and small public parks both in the city center and surrounding peripheral wards, it has become a common urban experience to see a sea of blue tents. However, in the late 1990s, because civic concern was not high, the mechanism behind, the structure of, or information about homelessness and poverty, which had produced these urban scenes, was not correctly grasped. What is life, what is work like, for the people sleeping rough in Osaka?

Table 1 Recent Change of Tents of People Sleeping Rough in the Parks

Park	Ward	July 1996	Nov. 1997	June 1998	Feb. 1999	Aug. 1999	Feb. 2000	Aug. 2000	Feb. 2001	Feb. 2002	Jan. 2003	
All Parks in Osaka City		374	704	1,223	2,031	2,152	2,424	2,593	2,118	1,995	1,680	
1	Kema/ Sakuranomiya	Kita/ Kiyakojima	12	57	84	145	82	111	145	132	166	251
2	Ogimachi	Kita	8	13	35	69	55	76	76	72	43	39
3	Nakanoshima	Kita	21	31	20	34	40	41	39	41	40	57
4	Osaka Castle	Chuo	37	84	233	391	448	538	586	635	681	382
5	Utsubo	Nishi		6	2	6	14	15	22			
6	Ikutama	Tennoji		55	67	79	83	91	93			
7	Tennoji	Tennoji	36	40	90	98	85	66	88	59	73	77
8	Asahimachi	Abeno		15	49	55	55	55	55			
9	Shotenyama	Abeno		5	14	30	65	65	65			
10	Momogaike	Abeno		1	4	18	31	42	33			
11	Nagaïke	Abeno		3	5	12	26	46	53			
12	Nishinari	Nishinari	78	180	206	257	260	260	220	215	178	129
13	Nagai	Higashi sumiyoshi	30	35	102	236	220	422	458	79	8	19

Source: Provided by the Osaka City Government

Note: Drastic decrease after Aug. 2000 is mainly due to the construction of transit shelter in Nagai Park in Dec. 2000, Nishinari Park in Dec. 2001 and Osaka Castle Park in Nov. 2002.

2. Geographical distribution of people sleeping rough

The result of the “general survey of the distribution of people sleeping rough” in the whole region of Osaka city, which was undertaken under the initiative of Osaka City University in August 1998, is illustrated in Figure 3. As shown in this figure, 8,660 rough sleepers were accounted for in the whole area of Osaka city. Of this number, 6,775, that is, more than three-fourths of those sleeping rough, were in five wards: Nishinari, Naniwa, Chuo, Tennoji, and Kita; plotted by the outlined letters as shown in Figure 2. The three main spatial features are pointed out as follows.

First, there is a fairly dense concentration of people sleeping rough in the city center and the adjacent area inside the JR Osaka Loop Line. Secondly, this concentration is particularly dense in the southern part of this inner ring, with a heavy concentration in Kamagasaki around the neighboring area of the JR Shin-imamiya station and the Midosuji Line subway station of Dobutsuenmae, as well as in the area a short distance to the north of the subway station of Ebisu-cho. Thirdly, there is a broad and sporadic distribution along the banks of the rivers and canals and in the public parks outside the JR Loop Line.

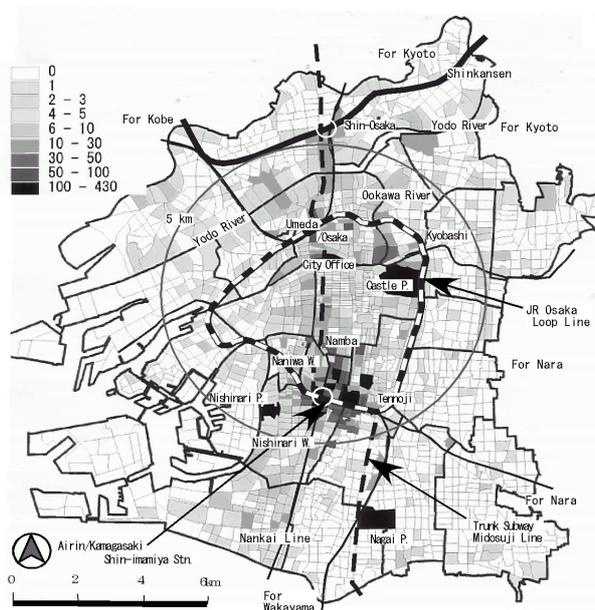


Figure 3 Distribution of Rough Sleepers in August 1998
(by Osaka City University 1998 Survey)

a. In the city center

If we imagine the actual scene in the inner area, especially around the city center, most homeless people just go to sleep rough on the street or walk around gathering trash such as aluminum cans and cardboard boxes. This scene is a characteristic feature of the night in the heart of the city center. The results shown in Table 2 that, in the city center, 79% of homeless people sleep rough by lying down on the street to sleep covered only by cardboard boxes (52%) or with no cover at all (15%). In the civic center, Chuo ward, a row of cardboard box houses appears at midnight on the main boulevard of Midosuji and occupies the entrances to office buildings, the sidewalk, the bushes, and parking lots.

However, moving southward to the Suo-cho crossing at the southern end of Midosuji boulevard, close to “Amerika-mura” (American Village), which is the hottest attraction spot for the younger

generation, the homeless are also found sleeping rough around this noisy quarter. In the main covered shopping arcade of Shinsaibashi, at several meter intervals, others sleep on the paved street without fear of rain or cold. Thus, an acute change occurs between the streets of the prospering civic center during the day and the streets lined with people sleeping rough during the night. Both ‘a light’ side and a ‘dark side’ share the same space in the city.

Table 2 Cross Table of Sleeping Type by Place Type and Location Type (1998)

Place Type \ Sleeping Type	Settled	Unsettled	Settled	Unsettled	Moving	Total
Southern Core Area Airin/ Kamagasaki / Tennoji Park / Tennoji Terminal / Shitennoji Temple	587	2,847	16.6%	80.7%	93	3,527
Heart of the City Region Including Umeda and Namba mainly in the Central wards	156	1,555	7.9%	78.7%	264	1,975
Six Large Public Parks	834	364	68.4%	29.9%	21	1,219
Location Type	Settled	Unsettled	Settled	Unsettled		Total
River Bed, River Bank	151	128	54.1%	45.9%	---	279
River Bank Park	170	84	66.9%	33.1%	---	254
Public Park, Temple	1,383	1,760	44.0%	56.0%	---	3,143
Under the Elevated Expressway, Railway	323	616	34.4%	65.6%	---	939
Street, Building Corner, Station, Underground Street etc.	226	3,251	6.5%	93.5%	---	3,477
Subtotal	2,253	5,839	27.8%	72.2%		8,092

Source: Osaka City University, August 1998 Survey

b. In the southern core area of Kamagasaki and the Ebisu-cho

The second main feature is the dense distribution of this core area along the southern part of the JR Loop Line. This distribution seems to be a result of the traditional geographical concentration in this area of those who are socially vulnerable and economically deprived. The historico-geographical genealogy is profoundly imprinted on the social mapping of Osaka. The existence of Kamagasaki used to be indispensable for shelter, where there was easy access to ‘welfare’ and labor resources such as no-deposit urban hostels, temporary jobs, Christian and volunteer groups’ support and consultation, and free meals for those sleeping rough. However, what is provided is not sufficient, nor is it efficient enough.

Kamagasaki is the largest ‘yoseba’ or urban hostels district for day laborers in Japan. It differs from Sanya, the largest yoseba in Tokyo, where the conventional function of providing residential area for local people is now being reduced and becoming disorganized. Kamagasaki continues to be a tolerant place for such disadvantaged and deprived people, even if, near Kamagasaki, a redevelopment project is in progress in Abeno and there is an amusement center called ‘Festival Gate’ close by. Although 3,445, about 40 per cent of the city’s total number, of people sleeping rough are concentrated in Nishinari and Naniwa wards, the distribution is not spread evenly through them. As shown in Table 2, a remarkable concentration can be seen in the blocks where the four wards of Nishinari, Naniwa, Tennoji, and Abeno meet, which we might call the Southern Core Area.

In the Airin District including Kamagasaki, 1,191 people sleep rough at night, which is 14% of the city total. If this area were extended to the Shin-sekai, Ebisu-cho, and the Nipponbashi streets in Naniwa ward just northward of the Airin District and eastward to Tennoji Park and the two terminal stations of Tennoji and Abenobashi, the number of people sleeping rough would be 3,527, 41% of the city total. This is the place where sleeping rough at night has been historically commonplace.

In this area, only 17% who sleep rough at night do so in tents and huts; in contrast 81% sleep rough on the street without any covering or at most with a cardboard box, which is the conventional style of sleeping rough around here. There is no subtlety in the selection of a sleeping place any longer, such as sleeping in a backyard or in a hidden place. When midnight comes, the rough sleepers lie down on the street without any consideration. At the small stops used by the tramcars, the platforms change to bed spaces for sleepers every night.

If we trace back to the Meiji Era, or even the Edo Era, this Southern Core Area has a geographical and social history of being a marginal area for itinerant laborers or "Nago-machi", and it has been understood that this space used to be welcoming to people sleeping rough. At the same time, there was no interest internationally in investing or conducting business here. This situation appears not to have changed and continues to make Kamagasaki a focus for the marginalized.

The distribution of 'vagrants' can be seen from the series of former Censuses. For example, the change in the percentage of vagrants in this Southern Core Area of Osaka which includes Nishinari, Naniwa, Tennoji, the former Minami, and Abeno ward, illustrates this area's growing share of the vagrant population, 36% in 1947, 51% in 1950, 64% in 1955, and 63% in 1960. From the Census of 1998, it was found that this number is now still at 63% of 8,660 people sleeping rough. This geographical pattern of distribution has not changed for over fifty years.

It is worth noting that from the 1920s onward, the great mayor Hajime Seki had already taken the initiative to introduce several pioneering urban social welfare projects, and according to his progressive ideas, many services such as an employment agency, public hostels, and public housing for those who had lost their homes through slum clearance, were introduced into this core area. Yet, these labor welfare policies strengthened and maintained the character of the area as one of poverty and a slum or skid row district. Moreover, after the post-war period, this place was consistently reserved as a space for vagrants. In this geographical context, the imaginative geography of this area has continued to remain negative or marginal in the minds of people living in Osaka city.

However, a new factor has emerged and changed the conventional pattern, that is, outside the Southern Core Area, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of people sleeping rough in the public parks or along the river beds in tents or huts.

c. The spread of tent living

Table 2 and Figure 3 clearly show that there is a large concentration of tent living in the six large public parks of Osaka city, where of the 1,219 residents, 68% live in tents or huts. This concentration is also seen in the public parks near the Southern Core Area, and especially in Naniwa ward where six small or medium-sized public parks are filled with the tents of 10 to 30 people. When we look northward, along the Ookawa River which runs alongside the civic center, along the Yodo River which cuts through the northern part of Osaka city, and along the city boundary line of the Kanzaki River, many people who sleep rough have made tents and huts on the river banks, as shown in Figure 3. Thus the former pattern

of concentration has now become an extended linear and scattered pattern.

Table 2 shows the type of place and type of sleeping arrangement. In the case of all public parks, temples and shrines, 48% of 3,193 sleeping rough reside in tents or huts. Along river beds, 54% of 279 sleepers do the same. People sleeping rough can also be found in the shaded space underneath the elevated Hanshin Express Way and here 34% of 939 residents live in tents or huts. The humble cardboard box houses account for 15% of the 'rough sleeper' accommodation in the whole of Osaka city.

The proportion of people living in tents and huts has grown by over one fourth in the last five years and without doubt this style of living is increasingly becoming the central concern among ordinary residents in Osaka city. In other words, the rapid growth of people sleeping rough in recent years has become visible and is seen as a problem by residents city wide rather than as being confined to the Southern Core Area.

While it is a new problem of geographical distribution, it is also a new style of living or life for those sleeping rough. What must be ascertained next is the relationship between Kamagasaki and people sleeping rough.

3. Relationship between Kamagasaki and tent and hut residents

Until recently, the 'geographical source of supply' of people sleeping rough used to be the Southern Core Area, and above all Kamagasaki. The predominant group of people sleeping rough were day laborers working in construction who had accustomed themselves to the life of Kamagasaki. Just a couple of years ago and even now, when these people fell into this life of sleeping rough, Kamagasaki was the only space where a safety network gave them a minimum chance for survival with, at least, a supply of 'welfare' resources.

However, in our interview survey of people sleeping rough, we heard the widely shared view that people feel a strong sense of a need to escape from Kamagasaki or Nishinari (Kamagasaki is in Nishinari ward and the ward name is frequently used as an equivalent to Kamagasaki). There is also the feeling, for example, that if a person happens to go to live in Kamagasaki, that person's life might nearly be over, or that a person should never think about going to Nishinari. On the other hand, residents in the city, who feel they have suffered from the occupancy of nearby public space by people sleeping rough, tend to say that those people should return to Nishinari, or that the owners of urban hostels for day laborers should welcome them into their vacant rooms that the day laborers cannot afford to stay in due to the economic recession. There seems to exist a deep-rooted force to push people who sleep rough back into Kamagasaki.

Who are the people who sleep rough? Are they the new urban underclass or ordinary salaried workers or small business entrepreneurs who have become unemployed or bankrupt, and who have not experienced Kamagasaki or day labor construction work? The provision of proper housing in Kamagasaki might be crucial when we consider how to improve the conditions of those who sleep rough. However, the feeling of the need to escape from Kamagasaki and, in contrast, the arguments for pushing people back into Kamagasaki should be carefully considered.

According to the results of our interview survey carried out in summer of 1999; which did not include the Southern Core Area; of 532 respondents who lived in tents or huts, 59% of them answered that their living/working experience was in Kamagasaki. Two interpretations of this result are possible.

Namely, we could stress the spread of the former Kamagasaki laborers throughout the city, or emphasize the remaining 41% as indicating the emergence of a new group of people sleeping rough, who have had no experience of Kamagasaki or of being a day laborer.

Table 3 Experience of Kamagasaki and Construction Works (1999 OCU survey)

	Those who had lived in Kamagasaki, and had engaged in construction works	Those who had never lived in Kamagasaki, but had engaged in construction works	Those who had never lived in Kamagasaki, or ever engaged in construction works
Osaka City, 655 respondents	58.8%	24.1%	17.1%

It might be possible to regard this rate of nearly 60% as the diffusion or spilling over of ‘Kamagasaki’. However, even among those who had experienced working/living in Kamagasaki, 32% of them have already cut off their connection with Kamagasaki completely. This rate exceeds the share of 28%, who still visit Kamagasaki for job-hunting etc. Thus, this survey demonstrates that only one fourth of tent and huts dwellers have contact with Kamagasaki. On the contrary, 17% of them do not have experience of living in Kamagasaki or of being engaged in construction work. We might identify these people as a new group. It is also clearly shown in Figure 4 that the rate of these sleepers who have no experience in Kamagasaki increases in proportion to the distance from Kamagasaki.

More than 80% of the people sleeping rough collect waste articles, especially aluminum cans, for money. Of those who have had experience in Kamagasaki, 90% of them are doing certain kinds of work. Of those who have not, the percentage of those finding any kind of work is a third lower, a little bit over 60%. As for the jobs which people had before they started sleeping rough; those who had not experienced Kamagasaki had worked in a relatively varied number of industries and occupations, and also had had a little bit of stability and status. As for the former housing before becoming homeless, those who had experienced Kamagasaki had lived mostly in urban hostels or in laborers’ dormitories. In contrast, more than 50 per cent of those who have not experienced Kamagasaki had lived in rented apartments or houses, their parent’s home, or owned their own house.

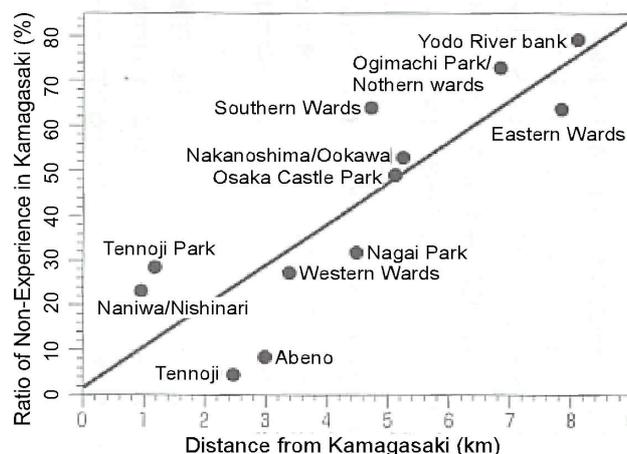


Figure 4 Relation with Kamagasaki by Distance and Working Experience (by Osaka City University 1999 Survey)

On the one side, the feeling of the need to escape from Kamagasaki and on the other side, the negative imaginative geography toward Kamagasaki is complicated by the appearance of this new group of people who are sleeping rough. There are two alternative ways of thinking: draw a line on the map to prevent the diffusion of people sleeping rough across the whole of Osaka city and thus once again confine these issues to Kamagasaki only; or accept this diffusion and consider new policies to address the issue. It is necessary for ordinary residents, city administrators, and the people sleeping rough themselves to think of this issue as a city-wide phenomenon.

4. Ordinary residents' opinions

So, how do ordinary residents view this marked increase in people sleeping rough? Our questionnaire survey of residents' opinions, which was a poll conducted at the end of 1998, asked 8,000 residents in Osaka city about their degree of recognition of the problem, their ideas about how to solve the problem, and their feelings about facing the presence of people sleeping rough in public spaces.

There was a considerable difference in the degree of concern and attitude towards this issue which was dependent upon the location of the respondents. The degree of concern about the problem of people sleeping rough is higher among white-collar workers with residential quarters in the city center and the southern districts. On the other hand, concern is relatively low among the residents living in the Southern Core Area, a finding already pointed out in the previous chapter. In the latter area, the continual existence of people sleeping rough has not, in some ways, met the expectation of this kind of research. Accordingly, these Southern Core Area residents recognize their problem as being part and parcel of their daily troubles such as scattered garbage, waste, and the selfish use of private properties, which are all a hindrance to business. But this type of response is at most 20%; conversely, from 60 to 70% of the responses find it a severe problem when the issue is related to civic beauty and annoyance at the abuse of public spaces. This latter type of response is most typically seen in the middle-class residential area of the southern district in Osaka city.

In the southern Core Area, since the physical distance between those sleeping rough and ordinary residents is close, both groups sustain, in a sense, a 'peaceful co-existence'. On the other hand, especially for the residents in the residential districts particularly in the south, it is a newly emerged problem and when faced with the 'illegal' use of public space by people sleeping rough, they express their opinion on this problem in the form of insecurity and fear about the possible manifestation of trouble.

5. Intention of escaping from the life of sleeping rough

So, how do people who sleep rough view their future? The survey of people sleeping rough conducted in the summer of 1999 also asked what their intentions were: whether they would: (1) work in a stable job when no longer sleeping rough; (2) go on social welfare; or (3) continue sleeping rough at night and work. The answers to these questions had a significant influence on the way municipal office staff worked, on policy and on the national consensus. The Homeless Act (Special Measures Act for the Support of the Independence of Homeless People) was enforced last summer in 2002. People's views about those sleeping rough still seem still to be severe and indifferent because of their imaginative image or belief that these people are idle and dirty. The situation might be even worse if the rate of (3) were to become higher. In such a case, Government should swiftly prepare to smoothly execute the

support actions and programs instituted by this Act. Therefore, it is important at this moment in time to protect the human rights of people sleeping rough through public awareness and to obtain a national consensus on this issue.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare announced, for the first time, in May 1999 a new policy entitled ‘Urgent counter-measures to address the homeless problem’. This announcement classified those sleeping rough into three types: (a) those who have the intention to work but fail to get a job and become homeless; (b) those who need medical treatment and welfare support etc; and (c) those who refuse to be part of society. Each type was assigned (a) the specific service of an independent support center; (b) a hospital or care facility; and (c) nothing identified, respectively. This classification was criticized by support organizations because it does not guarantee the right of people sleeping rough to choose and deprives them of the opportunity to act according to their own decisions. Support organizations argued that the homeless required more flexible and more finely tuned services and assistance. The classification system used by the Ministry of Health and Welfare is indirectly demonstrated by our survey in Table 4 which shows that nearly half of the people sleeping rough hope to work, 10% of them hope to be dependent on welfare services, and over 20% of them want to continue sleeping rough. In comparison, the rate of those who hope to work in the case of the 1999 survey by the Tokyo Metropolitan government is over 70% and is over 60% in the case of the 2001 survey by the Osaka prefecture government. At the same time, one third of them answered that they wanted to be left alone, desired nothing, or did not answer. The system for responding to these types of answers, where there is no request for authorized service for people sleeping rough, is not yet prepared.

Table 4 Intention of escaping from the life of sleeping rough

	Quit being homeless and intend to work	Quit being homeless and work temporarily with welfare aid	Quit being homeless and live dependently on welfare aid	Continue rough sleeper	Desire nothing	NA / others	Total
Osaka City, 643 respondents (1999 survey)	21.8%	25.8%	9.5%	21.2%	---	---	100.0%
Osaka Prefecture, 401 respondents (2001 survey)	36.2%	26.2%	3.2%	10.7%	10.2%	13.5%	100.0%
Tokyo 23 wards, 704 respondents (1999 survey)	54.7%	18.5%	8.1%	5.0%	---	13.8%	100.0%

Through the accumulation of frequent outreach interviews and consultations and, at the same time, the development of support for housing and employment, we should try to motivate the homeless to move toward an alternative life with patience, providing them with support. Conversely, it is undoubtedly an urgent task to take appropriate action for those who require care due to illness and age by using the existing welfare and pension system.

6. A new stage in the policy and actions for rough sleepers in Osaka

A policy to address homelessness in Japan was started, for the first time, after the above-mentioned announcement of the Ministry of Health and Welfare in 1999. Thereafter, the Osaka city government could not help acting swiftly to introduce a policy for tackling the issue of people sleeping rough. Here,

let me outline the brief history of the trials and accomplishments in Osaka city as a forerunner in addressing this issue in Japan.

There is a long history of free meal service and night-watching for rough sleepers in Kamagasaki by Christian associations and labor unions. As shown in Table 5, from around 1995, these groups set up voluntary outreach activities and began not only offering consultations to people sleeping rough but also helping them to escape life as rough sleepers. At that time, the Anti-Unemployment Laborers League, which was established in 1993, played a crucial role in gathering and representing various interests summed up under the two issues of anti-employment and anti-homeless, and protested strongly to the government. Their actions and strong requests were important in that they paved the way for the protection of people sleeping rough and in assisting them to escape their homeless situation and once again live an ordinary life. From the viewpoint of security, the minimum condition for this is a dwelling, and the first step was taken by the opening of the ground floor space of the Airin District Center in 1997 after tough negotiations by the Anti-Unemployment Laborers League with the prefectural government. The next achievement was the opening of a short-stay care center in 1998, and this was followed at the end of 1998 by the installation of a large tent, which could be used in an emergency. Moreover, employment for people over 55 years old was also offered in the public sector.

Movements, Events		Policies, etc.		Services	
Event	Movement	Policy	Shelter	Urban Hostels, Supportive Housing	Welfare Facility
Survey, Symposium	NPO, NGO	Employment	Self-Reliance Support Center		
1993					
1994					
1995	95.10 incident	95.10 association			
1996	96.2 demonstration against Nishinari 96.8 Forum 96.10 survey	96.6 project 96.10 association			
1997	97.10 Forum 97.12-98.3 Nishinari Park problems	97.4 association 97.6 request 97.9 association		liberation of space for rough sleepers	
1998	98.2 symposium 98.3 planning 98.11 Forum 98.11 request 98.12 lawsuit 98.12 election	98.4 association 98.12 appeal	98.5 city government 98.10 public employment 98.11 mayor's appeal	98.6 liberation of space for rough sleepers 98.8 tent shelter 98.11 tent shelter	
1999	99.2 symposium 99.3 struggle 99.4 lawsuit 99.11 job placement	99.3 struggle 99.11 job placement	99.2 Min. WHL meeting 99.3 Min. WHL meeting 99.7 City Gov. head quarter 99.8 out-reaching 99.11 public employment 99.11 public employment	99.2 liberation of space and 99.3 out-reaching case center	99.6 2000 comprehensive plan 99.8 food storage clean hotel
2000	00.7 attack 00.12 debate	00.1 meeting committee 00.11 anti-shelter construction movement	00.5 Min. WHL meeting 00.9 public employment 00.9 public employment	00.5 government shelter 00.11 1st-sufficiency support center 00.11 2nd-sufficiency support center 00.12 1st-sufficiency support center 00.12 2nd-sufficiency support center	00.5 free charge meeting room and office 00.6 supportive housing 00.8 supportive housing 00.11 supportive housing 00.12 supportive housing 00.12 construction system
2001	01.4-6 interview research		01.6 new law submission	01.12 tent shelter 01.12 tent shelter	01.6 supportive housing 01.12 supportive housing
2002		02.9 struggle	02.5 new law submission	02.12 tent shelter	02.01 supportive housing 02.12 supportive housing
2003	03.0 national survey		03.4 city government's section 03.4 new law submission		03.04 supportive housing

Table 5 Another History of the Airin Management System Viewed from the Rough Sleepers' Problem
In 1999, the NPO Kamagasaki Supporting Organization, which offers various support activities

for day laborers and people sleeping rough, was founded. The membership of this NPO consists mainly of people from the Anti-Unemployment Laborers League, including Christian, volunteer activists and those of the Buraku Liberation League. As shown in Table 5, from 1996 to 1998, various meetings, symposiums and workshops were held and much research was conducted by the aforementioned associations, and they have taken advantage of the opportunity to co-operate together to overcome the heterogeneity of different interests in order to tackle the homeless issue.

Owing to its broad network and experience negotiating with city government staff, the NPO Kamagasaki became a very influential organization not only in challenging the city government but also in raising awareness and in protesting the city government by street demonstration in which people would squat in blue tents in front of the city office and after public buildings under the guidance of the Anti-Unemployment Laborers League. Concurrently, under strong pressure from Kamagasaki, the city government itself started an outreach service, and managers of urban hostels for day laborers also began to consider supporting people sleeping rough.

In 2000, a large-scale municipal emergency shelter containing 600 beds for overnight stays (valid for three years) was constructed in the Airin District handled by the NPO Kamagasaki. Moreover, several supportive housings for ex-rough sleepers, which provide welfare care and support services, also started operating after being remodeled from the former urban hostels for day laborers.

Three self-sufficiency support centers (SSSC) for people sleeping rough were also established in autumn of the same year (valid for three years), and a short-term accommodation transit shelter was constructed for the hundreds of people sleeping rough in Nagai Park within the park area itself (valid for three years), one of the venues where World Cup soccer games were held in 2002. During its construction process, different objections were raised by the neighboring residents and by support organizations and, finally, both sides were forced to compromise with the city government. Now, the type of shelter constructed at Nagai has multiplied to three (Nagai shelter was closed at the end of March 2003). The effect of these transit shelter is clearly seen in Table 1.

A nationwide survey of homeless people was carried out in February 2003 for the first time. In Osaka city, 6,603 were identified, which is a decrease of 2,000 compared with the 1998 survey. About 4,000 former homeless people are estimated to have been able to take the opportunity to use various support services and escape from their hard lives under the open sky at night, and about 2,000 more rough sleepers successfully started to live in private rental apartment houses through the efforts of outreach social workers and NPO and volunteer activists, in spite of a 2,000 increase in people who had newly become homeless.

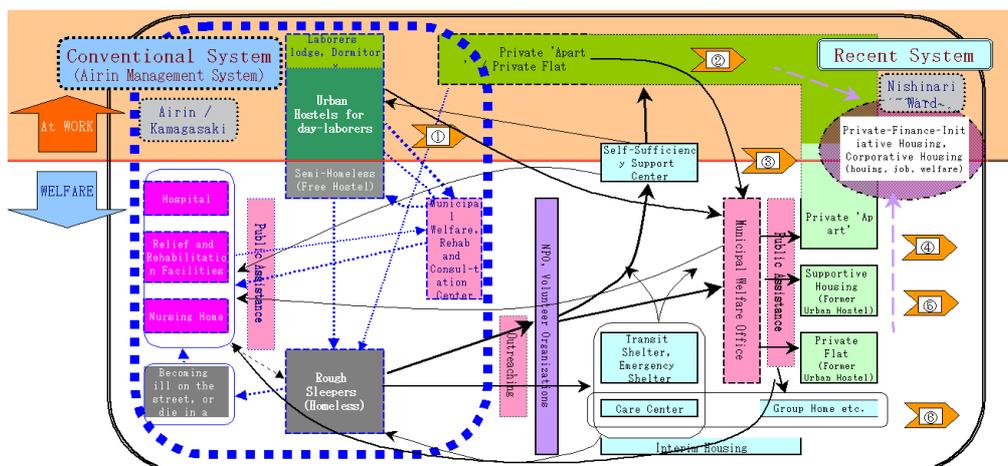


Figure 5 Recent System of Self-Sufficiency Support (SSSC) for homeless people especially in the Airin District and Our Tasks and Agenda

Figure 5 illustrates the recent system of policy change for day laborers and the emergent new system for rough sleepers in Osaka especially focused on the Kamagasaki/Airin district. Most actions and events concerning rough sleepers were originally confined within Kamagasaki. Their unique and specific housing stock was urban hostels, which counted two hundred at its peak, and allowed day laborers to live on a daily pay below 2,000 JP¥. During the economic boom, if day laborers were injured or became ill, they normally went to the Municipal Welfare Rehab and Consultation Center (MWRCC), and as a result of their consultation, went to a hospital or rehabilitation facility. This is the so-called Airin Management System, which had been operating exclusively within the Airin district. After leaving the hospital etc., they could return to the laborer world in Kamagasaki. But, in the middle of the 1990s, severe economic recession cut the recovery route from hospital to labor world and just threw them out to homelessness. This was the collapse of the Airin Management System, and many rough sleepers spilled over from the Airin district and spread throughout the city.

As was already mentioned, during the latter 1990s, outreach activity was strengthened by the initiative of NPO and volunteer organizations, and the ex-homeless flow was, for the first time, supported by the newly established facility of SSSC, transit shelter, emergency shelter and care center as illustrated in Figure 5. The advent of this kind of interim housing and outreach activity fostered a strong flow from rough sleepers to the tenants in private ‘apart’ with or without public assistance and supported housing. In this recent system, six agendas and tasks form an arrow in Figure 5, and later it later becomes pointed. In this situation, two key facilities of transit shelter and SSSC is verified how it worked.

Table 6, 7 demonstrates the effect of three transit shelters, which have contained 469 rough sleepers. Another transit shelter exists only in Shirakawa Park in Nagoya. These shelters are widely criticized by those who say that a transit shelter in the park should be open to the more needy people who sleep rough on the street not for those living in tents in parks, and that a shelter does not achieve good results considering the low rate of people who go no to find jobs and get to work. In the case of Nishinari Park and Osaka Castle Park, tough negotiation between city staff and rough sleepers failed to persuade rough sleepers to enter the shelter, so nearly half of the tent residents still continue to live there. This result blurs the original objective of these transit shelters. At this time, it seems to be, at least, an interim facility, which helps the people to enter the relief center and receive public assistance but does not empower and develop them as a healthy workforce.

Table 8 shows the present conditions of three self-sufficiency support centers (SSSC). SSSC are the most focal facilities which assist rough sleepers in training and searching for jobs, and much is requested for their smooth operation. At the end of March 2003, 1,497 rough sleepers in total had entered three SSSC. Over 40% who entered the SSSC found jobs and work, but it is regret to say that nearly a half of those failed to find jobs and leave SSSC. The ‘success’ rate of ‘finding a job and getting to work’, 40.6%, is always criticized as being lower than expected. The rate of continuing a job after getting to work is still lower. Actually, one fourth of the total number of people leaving the SSSC continue to work living alone in rental apartment houses. Under the conditions of economic recession, it is actually very hard to sustain a good rate despite the staff’s devotion to looking after the ex-rough sleepers.

Table 6 Present Conditions of Transit Shelters (31st March 2003)

Reason	Total Number of People Leaving Shelter	Enter Self-sufficiency Support Center	Find Job and Get to Work	Return Home	Go to Hospital	Go to Relief Center	Leave Shelter at his own Judgment	Live Independently with Welfare Support
Number	273	41	24	8	32	110	46	12
%	100.0%	15.0%	8.8%	2.9%	11.7%	40.3%	16.8%	4.4%

Source: Provided by Osaka city government. Total number of people entering the shelter was 469 up to 31st March 2003.

Table 7 Effect of Transit Shelters (31st March 2003)

Transit Shelter	Opening	Present Number/ Capacity	Number of Tents before Opening	Number of Removed Tents	Present Number of Remaining Tents	Present Number of Rough Sleepers
Nagai Park	Dec. 2000 (Closed)	0/250	458	452	21	12
Nishinari Park	Dec. 2001	61/200	251	122	129	92
Osaka Castle Park	Nov. 2002	135/300	655	345	310	240

Source: Provided by Osaka city government.

Table 8 Present Conditions of Self-Sufficiency Support Centers (SSSC) (31st March 2003)

SSSC	Capacity	Present Number of People in SSSC	Total Number of People Entering SSSC	Total Number of People Leaving SSSC	Find Job and Get to Work	Go to Hospital	Go to Relief Center	Leave shelter at his own Judgment / Others
Ooyodo	100	84	445	361	155	13	26	167
Nishinari	80	68	543	475	184	18	40	233
Yodogawa	100	66	509	443	180	7	32	235
Total	280	218	1,497	1,279	519	38	87	635
				100.0%	40.6%	3.0%	6.8%	49.6%

Source: Provided by the Osaka city government.

7. Tasks and Agenda

Tracing back this series of events, which appeared in the Airin District, many actions and organizations have been started during the previous five years and are growing. Table 9 clearly shows the nearly forty year chronology of the Kamagasaki/Airin policy. Around the time of the first Kamagasaki Riot in 1961, specific local policy for Kamagasaki had started, and in 1962, the former use of MWRCC as the community care center of Kamagasaki entitled Airin Hall was founded. Afterward, concurrent with the occurrence of riots, especially in 1966, the Airin Management System was established with corporate control and management by the city government, prefecture government, and police bureau. This system was finished with the completion of the Airin District Center in 1970 and MWRCC in 1971.

1953		
1954		
1955	☐ Nishinari Neighborhood House	
1956		
1957		
1958		
1959		
1960		First
1961	☐ hostel, lodgings, labor exchange, school, nursery	★
1962	☐	★★
1963		★★
1964		
1965	☐	
1966	☐ Airin Management System	★★★★★★
1967		★
1968	☐ labor exchange, medical, welfare, housing	
1969	☐ Airin District Center	
1970	☐	
1971	☐ Municipal Welfare, Rehab and Consultation Center	★★★
1972	☐ in addition shelter, health center, bank	★★★★
1973		
1974		
1975		
1976		
1977		
1978		
1979		
1980		
1981		
1982		
1983		
1984		
1985		
1986		
1987		
1988		
1989		
1990	☐ Santoku Care Center	★
1991		★
1992		
1993		
1994		
1995	☐ New Stage began. Please see Table 5	
1996		
1997		
1998		
1999		
2000		
2001		
2002		
2003		

Table 9 History of the Airin Management System (in Kamagasaki)

After this series of developments, there was no new enforcement of policy in Kamagasaki for a quarter century, and the antagonistic status quo relation between day laborers, labor sharks, owners of urban hostels, mafia (Yakuza), police, the labor union movement, the New Leftist movement, and ordinary residents. The dense distribution of these kinds of actors is clearly seen in Figure 2. But a drastic change occurred in the middle of the 1990s especially in terms of the style of movement. The changes in the style of actions and organizations also resulted in a massive conversion in the nature of the conventional labor movement and a religious body's charitable work. The former fighters of the labor unions and activists of the new left wing are now fully engaged in the running of the NPO Kamagasaki which coordinates the management of shelters, contracts public employment programs and welfare support, thus establishing a close relationship with Osaka city government, a relationship which had formerly been hostile.

Besides NPO Kamagasaki, Kamagasaki Community Regeneration Forum (KCRF), established in 1999, is also very influential and unique in Japan. This forum zealously pursues activities with the following slogans: “from rough sleeper countermeasures to community development”; “self-reliance rooted in the community”; “community development enabling Kamagasaki to be livable for anybody”. Various people join as members of the executive committee of the KCRF and participate as free individuals. By holding forums and workshops in the Kamagasaki area, they seek to fulfill a vision of community development to revive residents’ living standards. We facilitate the realization of that vision. KCRF is thus opening up and reconciling the tripartite structure of the Airin area: the traditional labor movement, the commercially oriented urban hostels business and the bureaucracy of the local government.

Although some NPOs and volunteer organizations welcomed the opportunity to finally take part in the planning of urban regeneration, urban regeneration itself has only just started. The following six issues which are signified in Figure 4 regarding the issue of people sleeping rough, especially in this Airin District, could be envisaged as being dealt with within a span of five to ten years from now.

(1) Middle term scenario of the Kamagasaki/Airin district;

In the present state in which younger-aged laborers who feel attracted to Yoseba=Kamagasaki has been decreasing, it might be assessed that reproduction of the Airin District itself also becomes difficult. In other words, the ageing of day laborers and the reduction in the influx of single, male day-work construction laborers might occur. This has long underpinned the nature of the Airin District. and may result in the community itself, which centers on the day laborers, ceasing to exist. It is necessary to immediately explore the middle-term prospect for the future design of this area and whether or not it can survive as the place where male singleton daily construction workers are majority residents.

(2) Ex-rough sleepers who now live independently with unstable employment in rental ‘apart’ (apartment) in the inner city area;

Even in successful cases where ex-rough sleepers have found a job and become independent, since they only have the minimum income, the risk of their becoming rough sleepers again is high. It is necessary to ‘insure’ the accommodation of aged singletons through systems of rent subsidy and an incentive system of employment to employers. Moreover, as they get older, it is also necessary to familiarize them with the social resources available nearby and promote their use.

(3) Self-Sufficiency Support Center (SSSC);

In addition to a reform regarding the room space of SSSC itself, and the problem of the six month enrolment term, it is necessary to: improve the screening system for homeless people entering this center; improve follow-up procedures for single people living in ‘apart’ after getting work and becoming independent; and send clear messages about the location and use of local welfare resources of an area etc. Moreover, a large expansion of public jobs provided by the central government will be needed.

(4) Aged singletons who live independently with public assistance;

The cases of home-bound public assistance are now rapidly increasing, but their care and follow up are

inadequate. Providing support for their accommodation is important to help them accomplish their goals in life. Moreover, it is necessary for them to be aware of the social resources available in the neighboring area, to form a habitation base, and to construct various relationships in the local community. A welfare-oriented community should be born as a space where the poor and needy are gently accepted, where they can have a definite aim in life, have fun, and experience healthy old age according to the community welfare plan. In any case, the rate of public assistance in Nishinari ward has become much higher, up to 12.8% compared with the city average of 3.0% (April 2002, national average is below 1.0%). In the Airin district, its rate has climbed up to nearly 20%.

(5) Supportive housing;

In supported housing, although most tenants hope to settle there permanently, even living in a small one room space of 5m², the quality of the housing should be raised and care service maintained. This should help create an atmosphere in which local residents are encouraged to take part in community activity and make use of the special features available for welfare recipients. The flats, which were formerly urban hostels and are not provided with services like supported housing should be improved with better standard services.

(6) Disabled aged singleton life;

For those who are suffering from alcoholism, mental disorders, or dementia, there is an urgent need for the construction of an accommodation base not in the hospital but in the community like a group home. It should also serve as the base for life guidance and job instruction for those who cannot live independently in rental 'apart'. It would be desirable to develop a broader network and more focussed channelling of existing citizens' participation toward the urban-rejuvenation movement by linking it to the community welfare plan.

When considering the future of the Kamagasaki/Airin District, it will be a basic underlying principle to establish the medium-term prospect of urban regeneration. Urban regeneration of the inner city area has just started in areas such as Kamagasaki and Sanya in Tokyo where the issue of people sleeping rough is a central problem. There is a truly new style of urban regeneration in Japan, which involves extensive NPO and volunteer group activities. The keys to success for this urban regeneration surely lie in the ability of the NPO and volunteers, in enterprise accumulation, in the initiative of the administration, and in adequate funding.

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