



Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan

- Strategic Community Development Considering Environment for Citizen to be able to Live Full of their Life-

Hagi City, Japan: “Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan” (Population 54,363 people)

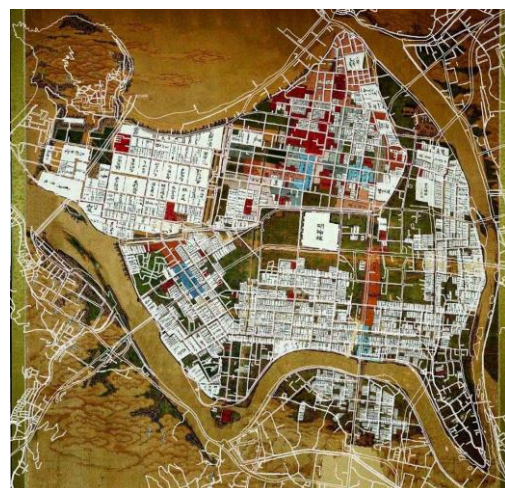
In the middle of nineteenth century, people in Hagi put an end to samurai society and accomplished “Meiji Restoration” to create a new era. As a result, Japan could become a successful modernization with the speed people all over the world were surprised. Although Hagi is known for a Mecca of the Meiji Restoration, it still remains the old scene for being able to utilize map samurai used one hundred fifty years ago. Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan is a strategic community development plan we regard our whole city as an unroofed museum. In this concept, we make the best use of our precious history, culture and nature heritages while preserving them and succeeding to the next generation.

1. Enhancement of the Natural and Built Landscapes

Meiji Restoration deprived many samurais of their status and jobs. They began planting Natsumikan or summer orange trees on their premises and shipped the fruit out to make a living. This business saved not only them but also the scenery of Hagi castle town, because they used their premises as fruit farms. In the beginning of twenty century, people who had a strong attachment and proud toward Hagi castle town opposed building a railroad system, because they were anxious about losing its traditional scenery. They preferred its unvarying scenery to their convenient life. In the latter half of twenty century, the influence of Japanese high growth of the economy disappeared many historical villages and old rows of houses in Japan. To stop this influence, Hagi city enacted “Historical Scenery Preservation Ordinance”, which was a novel event for preserving area by squares such as old rows of houses ahead of the times in Japan. Following these endeavors such as Hagi city, Japanese government amended law for the Protection of Cultural Properties and introduced a designation system for “Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings” in Japan. This movement has been protected many historical villages and old rows of houses in Japan from being changed by the influence of Japanese high growth of the economy.



Mud wall and Summer Orange



Hagi City Town in 1852 (White Line is Now).



2. Arts, Culture and Heritage

There are many unspecified old cultural assets owned by individuals in Hagi. Hagi city started “One Coin Trust Donation Campaign” calling for the one hundred yen toward visitors to preserve these precious cultural assets in 2004. For seven years until today, total donations have reached twenty eight million yen. Seven unspecified old cultural assets have already been repaired so far. Visitors from all over the world are supporting precious heritages in Hagi.

3. Environmental Best Practices

Every July, eighteen thousand voluntary citizens equivalent to almost thirty percent of the total population participate in the simultaneous cleaning for river and coast. It must be one of the greatest cleaning projects comprised of voluntary citizens in the world. They contribute to Hagi as the best beautiful city in Japan.

4. Community Participation and Empowerment

In Japan, there is a neighborhood association called “Chounaikai” . All Japanese citizens belong to this community in order to live together in peace while helping each other within their own rule. Although this community tends to lose its organization and unity power in proportion to urbanization, Hagi still maintains its function. The above-mentioned simultaneous cleaning of the river and coast is supported by three hundred eighty one Chounaikais. And also they study histories and cultural assets related to their area and guide visitors around the city actively. Their ordinal activities like this are the base of “Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan” .

5. Health Lifestyle

NPO Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan is the main private sector to promote “Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan” and operates Hagi museum as a central facility of this concept in cooperation with Hagi city. Hagi museum is the first municipal museum for opening all the year round in Japan and the number of visitors is prominent for a local Japanese city. Members of the NPO are acting full of life through twenty groups. For example, the sea group which collects cowries proves Hagi to be influenced by the greenhouse effect, or the old picture group investigates the changing faces of Hagi by comparing old photographs with new ones and so on. They spend a healthy life throughout their activities with joys to participate directly in community development.

6. Strategic Planning

We promote “Hagi Machijuu Hakubutsukan” in cooperation with private sectors and outside supporters to make the best use of tourism while maintaining the scenery our predecessors have succeeded to. We also promote a campaign with the aim of realizing UNESCO world cultural heritage registration now. We are sure that many visitors will appreciate our city “Hagi” without wondering even if they might see samurais running from white plaster wall behind.