

Landscape as a Living Memory of War: The Relationship Between War-Damaged Trees and the Air Defense Green Space

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There are trees in Japan that survived and carry the memory of the Second World War, which ended 73 years ago. They are called “war-damaged trees: *sensai-jyu*,” which withstood the war and still put out leaves to this day, despite trunk inclination and having sustained damage, such as scorched carbonized marks and hollows on the trunks and branches caused by conflagration and U.S. Air Force air raids. Not only were a lot of things that could convey the memory of the war, lost in the everyday space of Japanese cities with intense scrap-and-build but, also, due to the aging of the generation which directly experienced the war, it is becoming difficult for them to give an account of the war’s events. Thus, the historical value of the war-damaged trees, which can serve to convey the traces of war to the next generations, may be growing. Therefore, research on war-damaged trees has been conducted in Tokyo, which was damaged in the Great Tokyo Air Raid, and other cities that suffered war damage. In the process of research, the existence of an air defense green space containing war-damaged trees was confirmed. Since the Air Defense Law of 1937, the air defense green space has been positioned as “a necessary facility for evacuation and military purposes,” and was created in 1939. Therefore, field and literature research was conducted, and the present situation was investigated in the war-affected cities of Tokyo and Nagoya to elucidate the relationship between war-damaged trees and the air defense green space. War-damaged trees have been perceived as “scattered memories of war,” and the air defense green space may be positioned as a “heritage and memory of war spread across the entire region.” Although the bigger part of the air defense green space has been subject to urbanization, the number of cities where the remaining area is treated preciously is not small by any means. Thus, when such trees and the air defense green space are involved as an element of the city landscape, I would like to propose considering not only the present aesthetic features and influence on the ecosystem but, also, whether the trees and air defense green space carry the memories of the land in future landscape evaluation. Thus, rather than a merely external evaluation, it may lead to the establishment of a method of conservation and use based on careful forethought for the trees and air defense green space with residents taking the initiative.

To stop the memories from fading away, it is necessary to seek the realization of a society where memories, nature, and people coexist in harmony by regarding war-damaged trees and the air defense green space, which carry the memory of war, serve for urban greening and create the current urban landscape, as “a living memory of war.”

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15K14909, The Konosuke Matsushita Memorial Foundation Research Grant, and LIXIL JS Foundation.

キーワード：戦災樹、防空緑地、戦争遺産

Keywords: war-damaged tree, the air Defense green space, war heritage