CONCLUSION : A DISCURSIVE SPACE

This study was started with a question why the urban space of Delhi was not quickly westernized, unlike many other Asian Metropolitan cities. When I first visited Delhi, the spaces were very unfamiliar to me as much as that I felt like to fall into Lewis Carroll’s *Wonderland*. It was the place to start the current study.

The urban spaces of Delhi are colored with lots of religious items, with people’s diverse costumes and with unique structures like a side gate without door or curved walls. Low points out that adding walls, gates, and guards produces a landscape that encodes class relations and residential (race, class, ethnic, gender) segregation. (2001: 45) It would also mean that we can discover the codes, signs, stories of the spaces through decoding landscapes. In this study, I tried to discover the practices to produce the urban space through decoding the landscapes of Delhi. Especially, I focused on two characteristics in the landscapes of the space, or strong religious colors and non-partitioned spaces.

First, the space of Delhi is dyed religious colors. It is affected from both religious functions and everyday practices. Year after year, a lot of religious processions are taken out in the streets, people appropriate a lot of boulevards walking, eating, giving performances, carrying splendid religious items, and so on. For them, these processions give an arena to show off their artistic talents and to express their political opinions. An important characteristic of these processions is that a large part of them is performed individually. Seen from a distance, these functions have an united color. However, when we get closer to them, we can know that many individuals or small committees are separately participating in the rituals. Thus, people form a gathering rather than a bounded group. Even though they do not greeting or have a conversation each other, they walk towards a destination, get the same experiences, share memories, and so on. In other words, these religious festivals give a chance for individuals to get together and to do something. It is possible because these rituals have practiced traditionally for long time in spite of their individualistic characteristics.
These also provide people with a field to learn a philosophy of life. A lot of episodes in epics, myths, and historic events are represented in the streets or open-stages. The stories tell how Saramaa helped Lord Indra, how Bharata kept his loyalty to Rama, how the Battle of Kurukshetra ended, why Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred, and how much Muslims lament for the sufferings of prophet Hussain.

Their religions affect their everyday life, too. Usually, a few temples are located in a neighborhood and get a steady flow of devotees all day long. On the other hand, many vendors and artisans work on the sidewalks. Many of them have traditional jobs which have an association with jatis and they still refer to these jobs as “hamara kam (our work)”.

Next, the other characteristic is that it is not strictly partitioned as a section to have respectively one function. It is not unusual to see that people, vehicles, and animals are complicatedly mixed in the streets. Sometimes, we can see that big trees occupy the half of sidewalks. The spaces do not clearly classify its ‘users’ as vehicles, vegetation, animals, pedestrians, vendors, artisans, and so on.

In Delhi, the majority of population is Hindus and their religion, Hinduism, largely affects their everyday life and space. It supplies ordinary people with a practical philosophy or a philosophy of life. Especially, the concept of the One gives the resilience to the society and encourages people to think positively about the tension between these two opposing forces.(Ernest et all, 2009: 327) It does not allow that several Western dualisms easily pervade in the Indian Society. As for Sikhs and the Muslims, they emphasize sewa(community duty), congregation prayer, and so on. Sikhs very often serve free food in the streets. The areas around masjids are colored in white by Muslims, five times per day. These are also main elements to affect the landscapes of the urban space. Their emphasis of community life or brotherhood prohibits individualism of Western cultures from pervading in the society and their life from becoming atomization.

Thus, the streets are a space that is brimming with different people and with their diverse uses or practices. In such a space, people use numerous body idioms to distinguish each other and they mark their territories with many items. These are the
barriers embodied by practices and through time. Therefore, the ‘walls’ are a little vague and at the same time, has great depth.

The space of Delhi is discursive. It resembles people’s tactical practices, their undisciplined body, and the resilience of Hinduism, several self-governing bodies, and so on. In other words, it tells that the conceived-perceived-lived triad are not broken in the spaces. In other words, the conceived is not yet overtaken the perceived, and spatial practice is not yet alienated from representational space. Therefore, the spaces reflect the tactical characteristic of everyday practices and it causes the discursiveness of the space.

In the space, time flows ‘slowly’ as the triad are ‘walking’ putting their arms around each other’s shoulders. Sometimes, it is criticized as underdeveloped or pre-modern. But it is too much Western-centered. Rather, discursive spaces and ‘slow time’ is a powerful weapon. The discursive spaces make it difficult for the conceived to decode and then to overwhelm the perceived. In the city, the perceived can not be easily decoded. We can not get full understanding about it only through living in the spaces directly as the perceived is complicatedly entangled with the conceived and the lived. The slow time of the city protects ‘life’ from ‘competition’. Thus, the spaces of Delhi give hints about ‘differential space’, or the space to restore the unity of the conceived, the perceived, the lived.