

THE CITY OF CHILDREN

“Don't ever laugh at the child jumping along the road trying not to step on the cracks between the paving stones; he is probably inventing a rite.”

Superstudio, 1982⁴

Tokyo. Off the busiest connective carways and exhaust streams run dense and conjunctive footways and well-worn tracks. Streets without raised footpaths that necessitate the jostled, personal negotiation of people, bicycles, unicycles, walking sticks, wheelchairs, and the occasional powered vehicle. Cars are at a distinct disadvantage on Tokyo's narrow, winding internal corridors where potplants and pedestrians often trump automobiles, as limited space and personal preference bring gardens across driveways and side streets.

These safe and slow pathways are perfect for tiny feet and their larger commute-weary companions. Dense greens and colorful, scented collages reside at the height and scale of little eyes and noses. Irrepressible hands thrive on the mixture of gravel, sand, grass, rocks, sticks and fallen fruit that compose Tokyo carpets. In summer, developing ears drink in crickets, cicadas and neighborhood rustlings.

I envy my children, their everyday environment: its flowers and vegetable plots, insects and pets, informal structures, fruits, berries and edible greens. The human(e) scale and pungent personality of Tokyo's neighborhoods distill the exquisite refinement of sight, taste, smell and touch in a shifting stream of experience that comprises sensation, memory and anticipation.⁵

Children don't just own their environment; they invent it. Their instinct and curiosity turn the urban landscape into a vital resource to be exploited (often to the discomfort of the adult world) in pursuit of a fluid “repertoire of playthings”⁶ that values activity and things over spatial relations.⁷ It is from these “normal” aspects of everyday life—capabilities, relationships, and resources—that resilience grows.^{8,9}

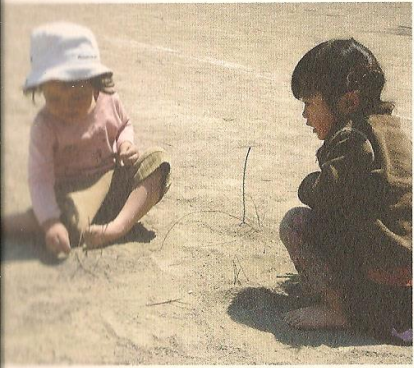
Children do not need the “extraordinary”, the “specialized” or the “kiddy-fied”. On the contrary, the directness and intimacy with which children interact with people and objects should be the envy of adults bruised by life. Consider: The child looks up and says “Bow-wow” every time it sees a dog. It jumps up and down in its stroller, waving its arms: “Bow-wow! Bow-wow!” We who are older and wiser may feel somewhat exhausted by the child's enthusiasm. “All right, all right, it's a bow-wow,” we say, unimpressed. “Please sit still.” We are not enthralled. We have seen a dog before.¹⁰ Children are oblivious to the harsh light of reason illuminating the adult world, a seemingly alien way of reasoning that rejects the relevance of places it does not create. Children carve out pockets of the hidden and familiar, furnishing their daily paths with acts and memories, dense, amplified detail, discontinuous islands of habitable space—all infused like orange sugar syrup with makeshift stories and strange happenings.¹¹



子供たちの都市

車が行き交う道路網、大量の人波であふれる歩道、いつもの道を少し離れてみる。安全で人の行き来もスローな道は、小さな足で探検するにはうってつけの場所だ。小石、砂、雑草、石、棒きれ、落ちた果実など、東京のじゅうたんをなすものたちに、子供たちは心赴くままに手をのばす。子供たちにとって、都市のランドスケープとは、遊び、暮らし、冒険するために活用されるべき、いきいきとしたリソースだ（大人の世界にとっては不快きのもとであることも多いものだが）。子供たちは身の回りの環境を自分のものにするだけでなく、新しい工夫を加えていく。そのようすを見て、学んでいこう。

Chris Berthelsen は、都市、組織、人間によってクリエイティブな気候を研究している。東京に居住し、仕事をしながら、子供たちが東京の街並みを使いこなすようすを観察し、また、タヌキの扮装をして東京の人々と関わりながら、研究を続けている。



FINE-GRAINED CONSTRUCTIONS

Tokyo parks are covered in gravel and dust. Grass is rare—it's too expensive and difficult to maintain. A space that is hot, dirty and uncomfortable for adults provides a flexible, fine-grained and almost limitless construction toy for little hands—in this case, for cooking birthday cakes.

サラサラなものづくり

東京の公園は砂とホコリで覆われている。芝生はあまり見かけない。芝生の設置は膨大な費用がかかり維持するのが難しい。大人にとって暑くて汚くて不快な場所は子供達の小さな手の中で柔軟性のある微粒子でできた自由自在なおもちゃとなる。この遊びではパースティケーキになっている。



FINE-GRAINED TREASURES

Gravel, rocks, sticks, mud—the "bits of unconsidered clutter"¹² that comprise our streets add a rich and dense tactile layer to the rut of "visual appreciation" that adults are stuck in.

小さな宝物

私達の町の路上にある砂利、石、枝、どろなどの"散らかり放題のかけら"は型にはまった大人の視感に贅沢で濃い触感の層を加える。



FINE-GRAINED TREASURES

Abundant and resilient plants (known to adults as weeds) are an important part of children's lives because they are always close and no one cares if you mess around with them.

貴重な雑草

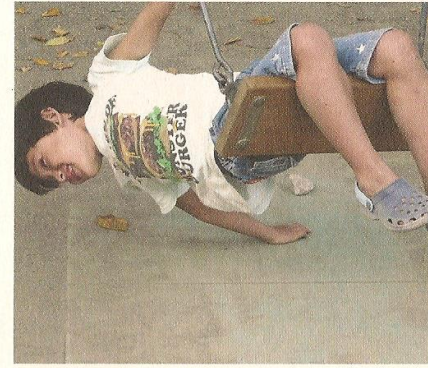
繁殖力が強く丈夫な植物(大人は雑草と呼ぶ)は子供達の生活の中で重要な一部となる。なぜなら雑草はいつも身近にあり、めっちゃくちゃにしまっても誰も気にしないからである。

PLAYGROUND HACKS

It's incredibly easy to hack your neighborhood playground for competitive sports. Here, a rock and a set of swings are the required elements for the intensely competitive "Ishi-tori ge-mu" (Grab the Rock Game).

公園のハッキング

近所の公園を競争的なスポーツの場に変えるのは信じられないほど簡単だ。この激しい"いしとりゲーム"の必須要素は石とブランコ2台のみ



FRUGAL THRILLS

A desolate park in the middle of a monolithic and depopulating apartment complex provides ample space for dangerous fun. A grassy car park slope combines with cardboard from a nearby supermarket to form a handmade rollercoaster. Junk paired with unobserved children often escalates to thrill seeking.

円スリル

手作りローラーコースターは草に覆われた駐車場の斜面と近くのスーパーから持ってきたダンボールを組み合わせればできる。ガラクタと大人の目を盗んだ子供が一つになると、しばしばスリルを求める行動はエスカレートする。



FRUGAL PEACE

For children, the possibilities for quiet time are easy to create—a cardboard box can provide a dark and cool spot for rest from heavy-duty play.

質素な場所

子供たちにとって静かな時間をつくる事は簡単だ。ダンボールは激しく疲れる遊びから休息を得るための暗くて涼しい場所を提供する。



COZY INFINITY

At child scale, curved paths and routes are wide and flat. They appear to go on forever, making them feel both cozy and less claustrophobic at the same time.

心地よい地平線

子供のスケールではカーブした小道や通路は広くて平らたくみえる。まるで地平線のように。心地よくそれと同時に狭苦しくない気持ちにさせる。

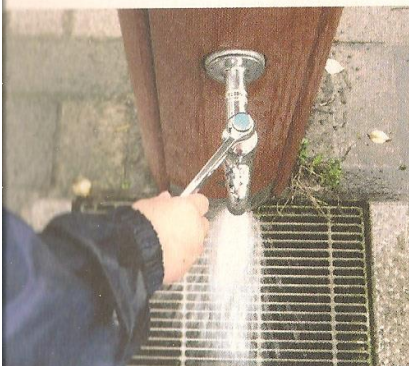


WASTE OF LEARNING?

Water fountains foster knowledge of refreshment, ballistics and raw, near out-of-control power. Permissive, indeterminate design of water is important.¹³

無駄遣い? それとも学び?

水飲み場はリフレッシュできる場所でもあれば弾道学の基本知識、コントロール不可能な力とのふれあいができる場所にもなる。許容的であいまいな水のデザインが重要。



STRANGE ENCOUNTERS (GENERATIONS)

Gentle negotiations while feeding ducks create a brief but relaxing and secure moment between an elderly gentleman and a young girl, meeting for the first time. Fleeting encounters across generations foster the sharing of energy, experience and trust.

不思議な出会い(世代間)

カモの餌やり中の穏やかなやりとりは、短くも心地よい老人と少女の初めでの出会いの瞬間を創造する。世代を超えたつかの間の出会いは活力・知識・信頼の具用を育てる。



STRANGE ENCOUNTERS (ANIMALS)

Neighborhood animals are mysterious, elusive, and sometimes friendly. Regular yet unschedulable and thus highly anticipated meetings take place.

不思議な出会い(動物達)

ご近所の動物達は不思議で神出鬼没してたまに人懐っこい。規則的ではあるものの、会う約束が出来ないので待ちな出会いになる。

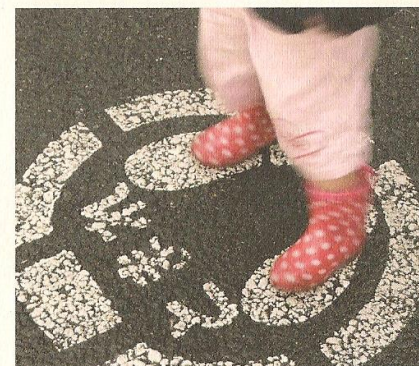


HUMBLE ROUTINES

Child-scale routines are marked by simple elements of the street: patterns, cut-outs, hints. It's good to have something to align yourself with. Tuan taught us that "place is in the pauses"—a sense of routine; moments of stability; transition points.

小さな決まり事

子供達の決まり事は路上の単純な要素によって形成される。一模様、ある物の形、町が教えてくれるヒント—自分自身を何かに合わせる事は気持ちいい。Tuanは「プレイスの本質はちょっとした静かな時間で作られる」と教えてくれた。決まり事感覚; 安定の瞬間; 過渡期。



These selections from an ongoing investigation of child use of the environment begin to illustrate the rich and vibrant usership of the streets that children enact. We can learn from children if we follow, appreciate, and stifle reflexive NO's. Stop and listen. Forget about time and your pressing tasks. Simply watch and listen; you will develop a reverence for their inexhaustible ingenuity.¹⁴

TOKYO TOTEM

A Guide to Tokyo

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主観的東京ガイド

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