

The 2005 C.A. Doxiadis Lecture

The program

The decision for the organization annually of a C.A. Doxiadis Lecture to honor the memory of the founder of Ekistics, was taken at the WSE meetings in Čelákovice, Czech Republic, in 2000. The series is meant to invite distinguished experts in any professional field which may be considered as directly or indirectly contributing to ekistics, to expose their ideas on any theme of their preference. Reference to C.A. Doxiadis or ekistics is not required, although any such reference is not excluded.

The program for this year's lecture scheduled to take place at 17.30 hrs on 19 September was as follows:

Opening address : Suzanne Keller, President, WSE
Introduction : Koichi Nagashima
Lecturer : Fumihiko Maki
Theme : "My urban design of fifty years"*



Fig. 1: Professor Suzanne Keller.

Opening address

I have come from Princeton, New Jersey, and as President of the World Society for Ekistics I am very happy to be here, delighted to be in Hikone. This is my first visit to Japan that I have read a lot about. I have seen films. I love the aesthetic and so I am delighted to see for myself what this wonderful interesting country is like.

Some of us have travelled a long way to come here – many hours – and some of us have not been able to come here despite their longing to do so. Life often has other plans. In particular, of course, we are missing one member who is the Secretary-General of this association and this is the very first meeting after 40 years of his labors that he has to miss and we miss him. Panayis Psomopoulos was unable to make it.

This evening we have a special event: the Doxiadis Lecture. This is an event that was introduced by the Society some four or five years ago and today will be given by the distinguished Professor Maki who will be introduced later by our colleague and ex-student of his, Koichi Nagashima.

I want to make a few preliminary remarks.

The theme of this year's annual conference or, let us say, the WSE meeting, is "Globalization and Local Identity."

Now this theme was very close to Doxiadis' heart. He would have loved to be here, to be present on this interesting occasion, and he would surely be proud that he would be honored so many years after his death with this special lecture in his name by such a distinguished speaker.

I had the pleasure and challenge of working first for and then with Constantinos Doxiadis as a young Fulbright scholar in Greece. I assure you that he was bigger than life with a dynamic energy and a charisma that was dazzling! But to me what is most impressive after many years of reflection on his work and on his life – and his obvious impact that was worldwide – is how much on target he was and how visionary he proved to be. I just selected a few comments that I think are indicative of both these traits, and I will try to quote him where

possible, for just a few minutes. They are a very very tiny sample of his thought.

And the first one in his words is that we must give back to the city its human dimension and there is hardly a big city in the world where you do not think of such a phenomenon; that we have lost the human dimension; that we have lost something very important; that we do not know how to regain it; that we had best break it up or break it down. He was also mindful of the two scales of modern life: the human scale and the mechanical scale, and so you see his work is very important for us after all. I was speaking to a gentleman before who said that we are far away from his work. But we are not so far away from his work. The two scales are essential. The two scales need to cooperate. There is a synthesis needed between the two and he urged from the very first moment for us to work towards a synthesis between the human scale at the local level, let us say, and the mechanical scale at the global level. Hence it was linkages that preoccupied Doxiadis from the smallest room to the huge what he called "Ecumenopolis," a Greek word that means "world city." Now linkages and the basic elements of ekistics which are five: nature, anthropos (human being), society, networks and shells – these linkages are, I think, at the heart of the New Orleans disaster of these past weeks that the whole world has been watching. The breakdown of the work of interconnections almost cost the city its life. I say "almost" because I am still hoping that some or all of that city may be restored. Of course we have the tsunami. We have many examples of some natural disasters and many man-made human disasters that we really ought to understand very much better than we do, also how to rescue the victims. Doxiadis was also mindful of the impact of foreign policies on the future. And I quote his words: "What we build now amidst entire generations for the future, how often we forget. For we are servants of a continual evolution which therefore imposes huge obligations upon us."

And finally, what we need is a vision of an entopia, not utopia

which means “no place,” not dystopia which means “a negative place,” but entopia, a good, a safe, and productive and desirable place that satisfies the dreamer and the scientist, the artist and the builder.

Is that not a worthy goal still?

Arigato.

And now we come to the C.A. Doxiadis Lecture of this year, and I am very pleased to ask Mr Nagashima to introduce the speaker.

Introduction

Thank you, Professor Suzanne Keller.

Introducing such a distinguished and world renowned figure as Professor Maki makes my task very easy and allows me to be short as he does not need much introduction. Naturally, if I only had to hint at some aspects of his life experiences, performance and achievements, the time needed would be much longer. But I am happy not to have to go into this and just welcome Professor Maki as my teacher, as an architect/urban designer who first introduced Doxiadis to Japan in the early 1960s by giving a lecture in Tokyo regarding Doxiadis Associates, a very advanced progressive office at that time dealing with an unknown kind of approach, the so-called interdisciplinary approach. I was very impressed by Professor Maki's talk and I thought that one day I would like to go and

work for Doxiadis in Athens, and my wish came true one year in 1964-1965. I will not go any further now into this experience and into the impact it had on me for the rest of my life. It is therefore with great pleasure that I ask Fumihiko Maki to take the floor.



Fig. 3: Architect Koichi Nagashima.

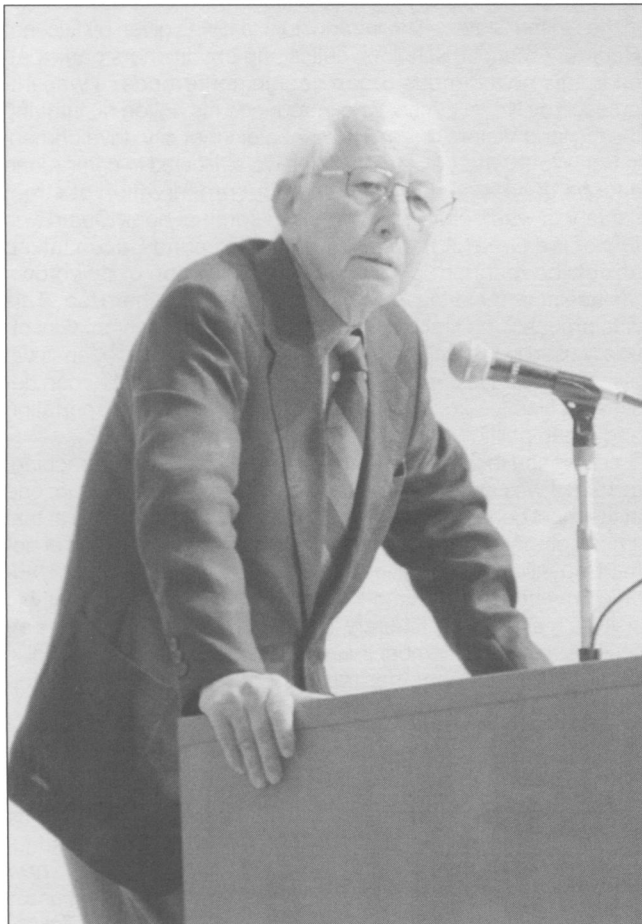


Fig. 2: Professor Fumihiko Maki.

The lecture

The lecture was delivered in the Hikone Prince Hotel and was followed by a lively discussion.

*An edited version of Fumihiko Maki's presentation is produced on the following page.

The WSE President, Suzanne Keller, offered the speaker the four books by C.A. Doxiadis which were presented in 1976, one year after his death, by the then President of WSE, Professor R. Buckminster Fuller, at the Assembly of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements – Habitat I in Vancouver.

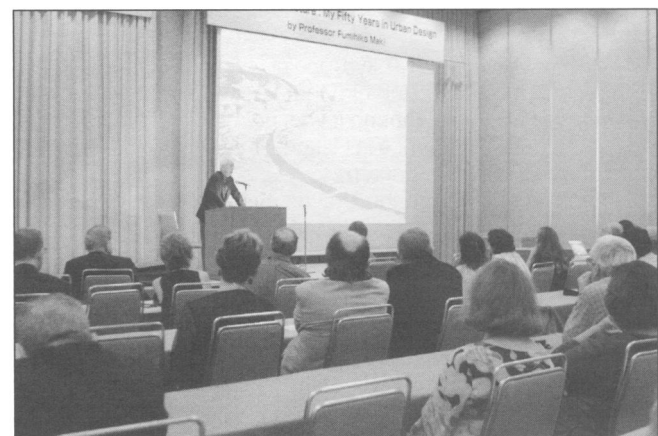


Fig. 4: General view of the auditorium.