Noriko Inoue
Valentina Orioli
Martina Massari

# PRESERVING THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORIC CITY OF KYOTO:

## Processes, Issues, and solution

CPCL SERIES

# PRESERVING THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORIC CITY OF KYOTO

## New Configurations Processes, Issues and Solution

Inoue Noriko
Hiratake Kozo
Kamo Midori
Shimotsuma Kumiko
Massari Martina
Orioli Valentina

CPCL SERIES

**PRESERVING THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORIC CITY OF KYOTO: Processes, Issues, and Solutions**

ISBN **9789083386171**

**Massari Martina**
**Orioli Valentina**
University of Bologna,
Architecture Department

# Preserving the Contemporary Historic City of Kyoto

This volume delves into the multifaceted aspects of urban governance, preservation, and innovation in the historic city of Kyoto. This collection of essays and research papers offers profound insights and thoughtful analyses into the preservation of urban public goods, historical administration, residential renovation, and community-building in one of Japan's most culturally rich cities.

The city of Kyoto stands as a compelling testament to the intricate interplay between ancient tradition and modernity, embodying a unique fusion wherein historical heritage harmoniously converges with the dynamics of contemporary urban life. Nestled within the heart of Japan, Kyoto represents a paradigmatic case study in the preservation of cultural legacy amidst the transformative forces of modernization. Kyoto's historical significance spans centuries, shaping its architectural landscape, socio-cultural ethos, and governance structures. Its designation as the former imperial capital for over a millennium underscores its profound historical and cultural importance.[1] This rich historical backdrop forms the

1 James L McClain, "Japanese Capitals in Historical Perspective: Place, Power and Memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo," 2004.

cornerstone upon which the city's modern identity and aspirations have been crafted.[2]

Central to Kyoto's allure is its remarkable ability to seamlessly integrate ancient heritage with the demands and innovations of contemporary urbanity. The preservation of its historic sites, such as the iconic temples, shrines, and traditional neighborhoods, serves as a testament to the city's commitment to cultural conservation.[3] Simultaneously, Kyoto's urban fabric pulsates with modernity, characterized by bustling commercial districts, technological advancements, and a vibrant cosmopolitan atmosphere. Nevertheless, this harmonious balance faces several ecosystem and environmental challenges as its urbanization encroaching on natural habitats and green spaces.[4]

This coalescence of tradition and modernity manifests itself vividly in various aspects of Kyoto's urban life, from governance structures to architectural designs: the city's administration, rooted in historical legacies, grapples with contemporary challenges, seeking innovative solutions that honor tradition while addressing the evolving needs of its population[5]. Moreover, the architectural landscape of Kyoto epitomizes this blend, exemplified by the ingenious renovation and adaptive reuse of traditional Machiya residences into contemporary living spaces.[6] These architectural endeavors stand as tangible expressions of the city's and communities' commitment to heritage preservation[7] transcending political orientations, uniting individuals committed to safeguarding cultural heritage, while embracing the practicalities of modern habitation.

The urban space of Kyoto also serves as an experimental ground for community-building and civic activism supported by traditional neighborhood associations, citizen groups debating the future of Kyoto's urban issues, but also by the collaborative municipal administration's approach[8], wherein shared spaces and

---

2 Carola Hein, "Japanese Cities in Global Context," Journal of Urban History 42, no. 3 (2016): 463–76; Christoph Brumann, "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto," American Ethnologist 36, no. 2 (2009): 276–99.

3 Richard J Samuels, "The Local Politics of Kyoto," 1988.

4 Tsunao Watanabe, Masaki Okuyama, and Katsue Fukamachi, "A Review of Japan's Environmental Policies for Satoyama and Satoumi Landscape Restoration," Global Environmental Research 16, no. 2 (2012): 125–35; Makiko Yashiro, Anantha Duraiappah, and Nicolas Kosoy, "A Nested Institutional Approach for Managing Bundle Ecosystem Services: Experience from Managing Satoyama Landscapes in Japan," Governing the Provision of Ecosystem Services, 2013, 191–205.

5 Carola Hein and Uzo Nishiyama, Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space: Three Essays (Routledge, 2017).

6 Christoph Brumann, "Houses in Motion: The Revitalisation of Kyoto's Architectural Heritage," in Making Japanese Heritage (Routledge, 2009), 163–84; Anders Blok, "Attachments to the Common-Place: Pragmatic Sociology and the Aesthetic Cosmopolitics of Eco-House Design in Kyoto, Japan," European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology 2, no. 2 (2015): 122–45.

7 Christoph Brumann, "Whose Kyoto?: Competing Models of Local Autonomy and the Townscape in the Old Imperial Capital," in Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan (Routledge, 2006), 139–63.

8 Eyal Ben-Ari, Changing Japanese Suburbia, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203038222.

cultural commons can contribute to fostering social cohesion.[9] Communities like Gion represent vibrant hubs where traditional practices intermingle with contemporary dynamics, encapsulating the essence of Kyoto's communal spirit. In this context, exploring the nuances of urban governance[10], preservation strategies, and community engagement in Kyoto[11] not only enriches our understanding of this historical city but also offers valuable insights into the broader discourse on sustainable urban development and heritage conservation worldwide.

This scholarly pursuit seeks to unravel the intricate tapestry of Kyoto's urban landscape, offering a comprehensive exploration that traverses historical narratives, architectural evolutions, governance structures, and community dynamics, all in pursuit of comprehending the delicate equilibrium between tradition and modernity in urban spaces. In the quest to maintain this delicate balance, the articles included in this volume address crucial aspects of urban governance and preservation, each shedding light on unique dimensions of Kyoto's urban landscape.

"Co-Management of Urban Public Goods: Issues of Urban Farmland Conservation in the Historic City of Kyoto" by Noriko Inoue navigates the complex landscape of urban farmland conservation. The author discusses the intricate challenges surrounding the conservation of urban farmland within Kyoto City, emphasizing its importance as an urban public good and the complexities inherent in its co-management, particularly within historical landscape preservation areas. This piece examines the challenges and opportunities in preserving Kyoto's farmlands amidst urbanization, shedding light on legal, demographic, economic, and societal complexities influencing land use, conservation efforts, and the broader urban environment. Kozo Hiratake's contribution, "History of Urban Administration in Kyoto," serves as a cornerstone in understanding the administrative evolution of Kyoto, showcasing its resilience in preserving cultural heritage while adapting to the demands of modernity. It emphasizes the importance of embracing change while safeguarding the city's distinct character, positioning the city as a model for the future of urban development and heritage preservation. The article depicts an extensive journey through time, highlighting how Kyoto's distinctive landscape, shaped by various cultural and societal elements, has persisted across centuries. Hiratake's historical exploration provides invaluable insights into the governance structures that shaped the city, offering a contextual backdrop to contemporary urban governance challenges. "Renovation of Residential Units in a Multi-Unit Housing Complex Utilizing the Wisdom of Machiya in Kyoto" by Midori Kamo stands as a testament to the ingenious fusion of tradition and modernity, delving into the fusion of traditional Japanese

9 Carola Hein and Philippe Pelletier, Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan (Taylor & Francis, 2006).

10 Brumann, "Whose Kyoto?: Competing Models of Local Autonomy and the Townscape in the Old Imperial Capital."

11 Xiang Zhou, "Development and Practices of Neighborhood Conservation-Based Community Building in Japan," Landscape Architecture Frontiers 5, no. 5 (2017): 10–26.

architectural principles, specifically the Machiya style from Kyoto, with contemporary renovation strategies within multi-unit housing complexes. Kamo's exploration of residential renovation incorporates the essence of Kyoto's Machiya architecture, showcasing innovative ways to preserve heritage while meeting contemporary housing needs. The volume continues with another significant contribution by Kozo Hiratake titled "Commons and Community-Building in Japanese Cities: The Example of Gion, Kyoto." Hiratake's insightful piece delves into the community dynamics in Gion, unraveling the intricate interplay between commons and community-building in the fabric of Kyoto's urban society. Finally, the contribution by Kumiko Shimotsuma "The Current Situation and Challenges of Cultural Properties Protection in Japan" provides a comprehensive overview of the evolution and current challenges facing cultural properties protection in Japan. It delves into the historical development of laws and ordinances dating back to the late 19th century, highlighting the transition from tangible cultural properties to encompassing intangible cultural elements as well.

These works that encapsulate the essence of Kyoto's urban governance and preservation and collectively underline the critical importance of harmonizing tradition and progress, balancing preservation with innovation, and fostering community engagement in shaping the urban narrative. The overall exploration emphasizes the complex and multifaceted nature of Japan's engagements with global ideas, spanning historical periods, urban transformations, architectural influences, and the translation of academic theories into local contexts. It invites further research into the nuanced exchanges between Kyoto and other urban agglomerates, fostering a deeper understanding of the evolution of Japanese urbanism, architecture, and planning practices within a global framework. We hope this volume sparks conversations, inspires further research, and fosters a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of Kyoto's urban heritage. It might serve as a guiding beacon for sustainable urban development, not only in Kyoto but also in cities worldwide seeking to preserve their cultural legacy amidst the challenges of modernization.

## References

Ben-Ari, Eyal. Changing Japanese Suburbia. 1st ed. London: Routledge, 2013. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203038222.

Blok, Anders. "Attachments to the Common-Place: Pragmatic Sociology and the Aesthetic Cosmopolitics of Eco-House Design in Kyoto, Japan." European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology 2, no. 2 (2015): 122–45.

Brumann, Christoph. "Houses in Motion: The Revitalisation of Kyoto's Architectural Heritage." In Making Japanese Heritage, 163–84. Routledge, 2009.

———. "Outside the Glass Case: The Social Life of Urban Heritage in Kyoto." American Ethnologist 36, no. 2 (2009): 276–99.

———. "Whose Kyoto?: Competing Models of Local Autonomy and the Townscape in the Old Imperial Capital." In Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan, 139–63. Routledge, 2006.

Hein, Carola. "Japanese Cities in Global Context." Journal of Urban History 42, no. 3 (2016): 463–76.

Hein, Carola, and Uzo Nishiyama. Reflections on Urban, Regional and National Space: Three Essays. Routledge, 2017.

Hein, Carola, and Philippe Pelletier. Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan. Taylor & Francis, 2006.

McClain, James L. "Japanese Capitals in Historical Perspective: Place, Power and Memory in Kyoto, Edo and Tokyo," 2004. Vol. 30, No. 1, Winter, 2004 The Journal of Japanese Studies Published by: The Society for Japanese Studies, https://www.jstor.org/stable/i25064446

Richard J. Samuels, The Local Politics of Kyoto by Teruo Gotoda;Japanese Prefectures and Policymaking by Steven R. Reed (pp. 261-266) Vol. 14, No. 1, Winter, 1988 The Journal of Japanese Studies Published by: The Society for Japanese Studies https://www.jstor.org/stable/i207537

Watanabe, Tsunao, Masaki Okuyama, and Katsue Fukamachi. "A Review of Japan's Environmental Policies for Satoyama and Satoumi Landscape Restoration." Global Environmental Research 16, no. 2 (2012): 125–35.

Yashiro, Makiko, Anantha Duraiappah, and Nicolas Kosoy. “A Nested Institutional Approach for Managing Bundle Ecosystem Services: Experience from Managing Satoyama Landscapes in Japan.” Governing the Provision of Ecosystem Services, 2013, 191–205.

Zhou, Xiang. “Development and Practices of Neighborhood Conservation-Based Community Building in Japan.” Landscape Architecture Frontiers 5, no. 5 (2017): 10–26.

**Kozo Hiratake**
Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan

hiratake@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp

# History of Urban Administration in Kyoto



**KEYWORDS**
Kyoto; Heian-kyo; urban history; landscape policy

**ABSTRACT**

The article explores Kyoto's evolution through the ages, from its origins as Heian-kyo to its current state, delving into the elements shaping its distinctive landscape. This historical journey uncovers how Kyoto's rich cultural legacy, entrenched in its fabric, has weathered the tides of time. From the city's ancient grid-like layout reminiscent of a "Go" board to the intricate balance between tradition and modernity, Kyoto's essence breathes through its accumulated history, seasonal shifts, industries, and vibrant traditions.

The city's layers reveal a narrative where cultural elements from various epochs coexist seamlessly, knitting a harmonious tapestry

of tradition and contemporary dynamism. The article ventures into pivotal eras: the Heian Period, the emergence of samurai dominance in the Middle Ages, the artistic blossoming during the Muromachi Period, and the subsequent shift into the Azuchi-Momoyama and Edo periods. It portrays how these historical phases influenced the city's structure, culture, and societal dynamics. The article offers a compelling panorama of how this city has evolved over millennia, standing as a testament to the resilience of culture and heritage amidst the winds of change.

## Introduction

This article, the first in a collection of essays on Kyoto, is aimed to provide an overview of the history of Kyoto, which developed through repeated changes, to provide an understanding of present-day Kyoto, a city that retains a vivid cultural legacy from the respective periods. This will shed light on the reason why different cultural elements from different eras coexist without contradiction in Kyoto's urban structure and residents' consciousness and lifestyles.



Kyoto City, in its brochure on Kyoto landscapes,[1] lists the following seven points as elements constituting the landscape of Kyoto. These definitely characterize Kyoto as a city:

- Accumulation of history: In Kyoto, we can feel its history as the central city of Japan since relocation of the capital in 794.
- Changes with the times: Kyoto's appearance changes depending on the season, weather, and time of day; Kyoto's four distinct seasons have been the source of Japanese people's sensitivity to the season and their aesthetic consciousness of nature.
- Industry: Of the total area of the city, about 4% is farmland, 74% is forest, and 17% is urban area. The land use is varied: suburban agriculture centering on traditional Kyoto vegetables, Kitayamasugi Japanese cedar forest areas that provided the building materials for the construction of Katsura Detached Palace and Kinkaku-ji Temple, as many

1 Kyoto City, Scenic Beauty Policy Division, The Landscape of Kyoto, rev. 2014, 4-6., and supplemented by other publications of Kyoto City.

as 74 traditional industries, and businesses related to the cuisine culture. These long-established businesses coexist with new high-tech companies in Kyoto's urban area, giving it diverse facets.

- Traditions and culture: Kyoto is the birthplace as well as the stage of literature and the performing arts. The city is also where the tea ceremony (chanoyu) and flower arrangement (ikebana) have been perfected, and countless tea ceremonies and flower arrangement exhibitions are held. Annual events staged in Kyoto include the Gion Festival and the Gozan Bonfire. The city is also home to numerous museums, art galleries, and other cultural, educational, and research institutions.

- Livelihood: Over the years, kyo-machiya townhouses have been refined through people's daily lives and have served as the basis of their livelihood culture. There are neighborhoods like the Nishiki Market that are filled with an atmosphere unique to Kyoto.

- Buildings: In addition to World Heritage sites, about 20% of Japan's national treasures and about 15% of Japan's Important Cultural Properties exist in Kyoto. These important assets vary in type: temples, shrines, shoin-zukuri architectural-style houses, sukiya tea-ceremony houses, kyo-machiya townhouses and modern architecture.

- Roads: Streets and avenues have been laid out in a grid since the Heian-kyo (Kyoto's ancient name) days and run along to become historical roads such as the Tokai-do, Sanin-do and Sanyo-do.



When excavation works are conducted in Kyoto, the remains of Jomon-era dwellings dating back to around 10,000 B.C. are sometimes uncovered. This means that the history of human life in Kyoto easily exceeds 10,000 years. Nonetheless, in this paper I look at Kyoto as a city, and will thus focus on Kyoto from the time when Heian-kyo became Japan's capital, while I will also touch on the landscape elements mentioned above.

## The Birth of Heian-kyo

In Japanese, Kyoto is written with two Chinese characters, "kyo" and "to". The Chinese character for "kyo", like the "kyo" in Tokyo, means "the land where the emperor resides" (called "Miyako" in Japanese). Tokyo, renamed from Edo in 1868, literally means "Miyako to the east of Kyoto." Beijing and Nanjing, two capital cities that share a kanji culture, also use the character "kyo" in their respective names. The Chinese character for "to" in Kyoto can also be pronounced "miyako," meaning "the place where the imperial palace is located (and thus the emperor lives)." This means that Kyoto, consisting of these two characters, is undoubtedly an authentic "Miyako."

Kyoto is a city modeled after Changan (Xian, Shaanxi Province) of the Tang (Chinese) dynasty. Just before Japanese Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to Kyoto, there was a period of political turmoil, and the city was named Heian-kyo (meaning peaceful city) in the hope of peace. Therefore, the period after the relocation of the capital to Kyoto is called the Heian Period in the Japanese historical periodization.



According to the imperial edict issued in 794, the reason for selecting this site as the new capital was that it was blessed with beautiful mountains and rivers, conveniently located for peasants to come from across the country, and was also ideal as a natural stronghold, with towering mountains enclosing the city like a collar and rivers flowing through it like a belt. In the three mountain areas surrounding Kyoto, Kamigamo Shrine, Shimogamo Shrine, Hokan-ji Temple (Yasaka-no-to tower of Yasaka), Fushimi Inari Taisha Shrine, Matsuo Taisha Shrine and Horin-ji Temple had already been located in their present locations since before the capital was relocated to Kyoto in the Heian Period, and the Kyoto scenery was mainly that of extensive rustic countryside spotted by these temples and shrines in between.

Kyoto City of the 21st century covers an area of approximately 828 $km^2$, measuring up to 49 km from north to south and 29 km from east to west.[2] When Heian-kyo became the capital in 794 was just around 23.4 $km^2$: 5.2 km from north to south and 4.5 km from

2 Kyoto City Official Website, Statistics Portal "Statistic Topic No. 64", https://www.e-stat.go.jp/en/regional-statistics/ssdsview/municipality

east to west. A Heian-kyo map we commonly see is the rectangular one shown in Figure. 1, with four straight sides, surrounded by Ichijo Oji in the north, Kujo Oji in the south, Higashi Kyogoku Oji in the east and Nishi Kyogoku Oji in the west. This area contained streets of various sizes at the regular intervals from east to west and from north to south, dividing the city into squares of approximately 120 meters on each side. Thus, the word "grid" can be used to describe the layout of Kyoto, which also resembles the squares of a "Go" board-game board. However, according to the map of early Heian-kyo (Figure. 1), which was prepared by Kunikazu Yamada based on the locations of various facilities indicated in written sources and the points where building remains were discovered through archaeological excavations, urbanization was not confirmed in the southwestern and southeastern parts of the city. The gray areas in Figure 1 are presumed to have been urbanized, while the darker gray areas indicate the presence of residences and other facilities as confirmed in written accounts and historical materials of the area. The early Heian-kyo period generally lasted to the end of the 9th century.[3]

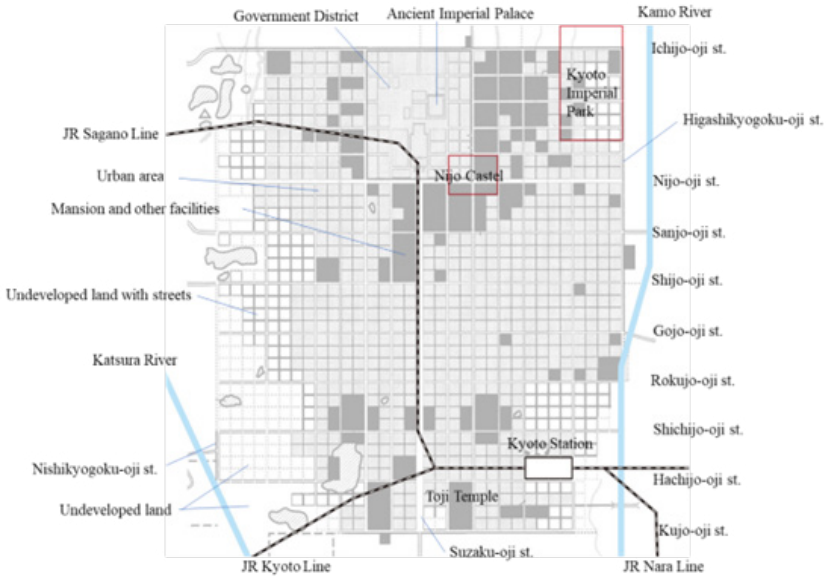



Fig. 1. Urban Planning of Heian-kyo and Estimated Restoration of Early Heian-kyo. Source: Additions by Hiratake to the Restoration Map of Early Heian-kyo by Yamada, Yamada,"The Restoration of Early Heian-kyo"122

3 Subsequent excavations have uncovered remains from early Heian-kyo in the southeastern part of the site, and it is expected that more precise reconstruction of the early Heian-kyo city layout will continue in the future.

Emperor Saga, the third emperor after Heian-kyo had been established as the capital, favored the Chinese style, and in the early 9th century, many places within the capital were named after Changan and Luoyang (Luoyang, Henan Province, the ancient Chinese capital along with Changan), and some of those Chinese-inspired names still remain. Emperor Saga established a detached palace, Saga-in, in Sagano (Ukyo Ward). After his death, the palace was reopened as a temple, leading to the establishment of present-day Daikaku-ji Temple.

Probably from around the same period, Sakyo, the eastern side of the city's central main street, Suzaku Oji (roughly present-day Senbon-dori street), came to be called Rakuyo (Luoyang in Chinese), and the Ukyo western side Choan (Changan in Chinese). According to written records of the 10th century, "Ukyo is almost in ruins because of the scarcity of houses. People are leaving, while few are coming. Houses have been destroyed but never rebuilt."[4] Ukyo had many marshy areas and was not suitable for living, so it declined early in its history. On the contrary, Sakyo prospered with many houses, and came to be called Rakuyo, another name for Kyoto. It was around the year 1000 that the Heian Period governed by the emperor and aristocrats reached its peak. It was also a time when women were active to produce literary works: Tale of Genji, a novel using kana characters unique to Japan, was written during this period.



## Kyoto in the Middle Ages

Around the end of the 11th century, several ex-emperors had developed Shirakawa (Okazaki, Sakyo Ward) and Toba (Kamitoba, Minami Ward, and other areas), and expansion of the area around Heian-kyo started, so that it grew almost to the size of present-day Kyoto. It was during this period of urban development that the name "Kyoto" began to be used instead of "Heian-kyo". In the latter half of the 12th century, the samurai class rose to prominence, and for the first time in history, wars were fought within Heian-kyo. The samurai

4 Yoshisige No Yasutane, Chiteiki (982) from Murai, "Changes in the City" 483.

joined the government, seizing power with unprecedented speed. They established residences in Rokuhara, south of Shirakawa, and even further to the south. Sanjusangendo Temple was built for the then ex-emperor Goshirakawa, and this led to further development of the east bank of the Kamogawa River.

Thereafter, power struggles broke out among the samurai, and the whole country plunged into a period of upheaval. Amidst the upheavals, Kyoto was struck by massive fires two years in a row, as well as frequent disasters such as droughts, tornadoes and earthquakes that claimed many victims, not only in Kyoto, but also throughout the country. At the end of the 12th century, when the war finally ended, the samurai established the shogunate government in Kamakura (Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture), and thus the era following the Heian Period is called the Kamakura Period. This meant that Kyoto was no longer the sole center of state power.

Mirroring the social situation then, the Kamakura Period saw the emergence of new Buddhist sects that offered spiritual salvation to the newly emerged samurai and common people. However, due to conflicts with the existing Buddhist community, it took several more centuries for these novel sects to build their head temples, including the present-day Chion-in, Nanzen-ji, Tenryu-ji, and Nishi Hongan-ji temples. In the mid-13th century, Emperor Gosaga built Kameyama-dono, a detached palace (the current site of Tenryu-ji Temple in Ukyo Ward, Kyoto) and moved there. It is said that mountain cherry trees from Mt. Yoshino (Yoshino Town, Nara Prefecture) were transplanted in Arashiyama, the mountain facing the palace, which had long been famous for its autumn foliage. Since then, Arashiyama also became known as a cherry blossom viewing spot.

In the 14th century, the Kamakura Shogunate fell and a new samurai government was established in Kyoto. A short time later, it was called the Muromachi Shogunate after the place where the political headquarters was established, and this period is called the Muromachi Period. Kyoto continued to grow during this period. The Muromachi Shogunate itself was called “Muromachi-dono” and was located north of Heian-kyo (Kamigyo Ward), while the Kitayama-dono palace, now known as Kinkaku-ji Temple (Kita Ward), was

also built in the late 14th century. These were the headquarters of the shogunal administration established outside Heian-kyo. The Higashiyama-dono palace was built at the end of the 15th century as a villa for a Muromachi shogun, and is now known as Ginkaku-ji Temple (Sakyo Ward).

The Muromachi Period saw the birth or perfection of cultures that continue to this day. Around the end of the 14th century, Kan'ami and Zeami developed Noh into a prominent art form. Ginkaku-ji Temple is the oldest surviving example of the traditional shoin-zukuri architectural style, from which the Japanese residential style was developed. The sliding doors of the shoin-zukuri room were adorned with suiboku-ga paintings, and the tea ceremony was practiced in the room. Ikebana flower arrangements were an essential part of the interior decorations, and a karesansui dry landscape garden was developed with the same Zen spirit of suiboku-ga paintings.

On the other hand, during the Muromachi Period, Kyoto frequently became a battlefield, repeatedly experiencing destruction by fire and reconstruction. Kyoto was specifically devastated by the Onin and Bunmei wars (1467-1477). The century-long wartime period that followed, known as "the age of provincial wars," continued up to the national unification by Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. During that time the Kyoto urban area shrunk the most, and the city was divided into two areas, Kamigyo and Shimogyo, each of which was surrounded by defensive structures called a sougamae fortress (consisting of moats, walls and fences) and residents themselves defended their respective areas.

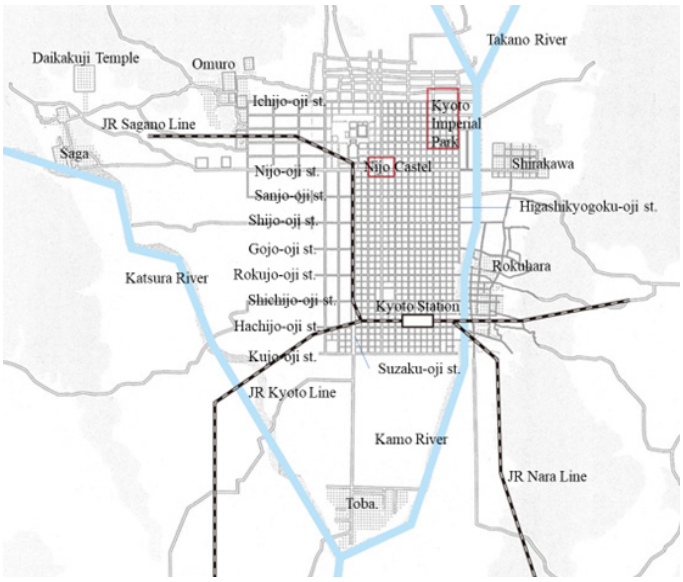



Fig. 2 Kyoto in the Middle Ages. Source: Additions by Hiratake to the Restoration Map of Kyoto in the Early Middle Ages by Yamada, Yamada, A Study on Kyoto's Urban History, 102

However, even during such an age, the Yamahoko float procession of the Gion Festival, which was held by the residents of Shimogyo but was suspended during the Onin and Bunmei wars, was revived in 1500 after an interval of 30 years. Although the current Yamahoko procession route is different from the original one, many rituals that were started at that time, such as the lottery ceremony and the lottery result confirmation event, have been passed on to the present time.

## Kyoto in the Early Modern Period

The door leading from medieval to early modern Kyoto was opened by Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. This period is called the Azuchi-Momoyama Period, after the land where the castles of these new national leaders were located. Oda Nobunaga entered Kyoto in 1568, and built Nijo Castle for the last Muromachi Shogun at a location between Kamigyo and Shimogyo the following year (both the location and the castle building were different from those seen today). The shaded area in Figure 3 shows Kyoto's urban district at that time. As the century-long warfare finally began to subside, people returned to Kyoto and built houses between Kamigyo and Shimogyo, an area that had been deserted during the wars, and Kyoto gradually regained its prosperity.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who succeeded Oda Nobunaga, began to

rebuild Kyoto in earnest, as a castle town based on his Jurakudai mansion (which no longer exists) located west of the Imperial Palace. Removing the fortress built by residents for self-defense, he constructed a 22.5-kilometer-long odoi earthwork encompassing the entire city of Kyoto. As shown in Fig. 3, the odoi extends from the Kamogawa River to the east, the Kamiya River to the west, Takagamine to the north and Kujo to the south, completely surrounding the area stretching from present-day Kyoto Station to the city center (where Kyoto Gyoen is located). The odoi was more than three meters high with a basement of 20 meters. In combination with rivers and moats surrounding the city, the odoi helped strengthen the city's defense functions. Although the urban area of Kyoto was delimited because of the odoi, there could not have been an urban area of this size elsewhere in Japan at this time. Actually, farmland and unused land also existed inside the area surrounded by odoi. Even today, we can see the remains of odoi in places such as Kitano Tenmangu Shrine and Takagamine.[5]



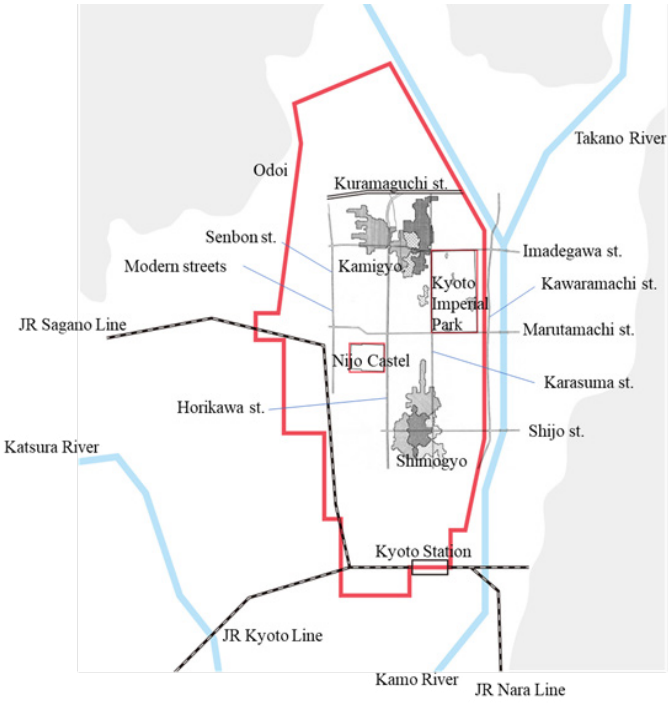



Fig. 3 Urban area of Kyoto from the Azuchi-Momoyama period to the Edo period. Source: Addition s by Hiratake to the Kyoto Municipal Museum of History's collection

With the end of the war and the arrival of a time of peace, a new

5 Kyoto City, Cultural Properties Preservation Section, Castles in Kyoto's Central and Surrounding Areas, 25-27.

culture burgeoned. The architectural magnificence and splendor of this period can be seen in the Karamon Gate and the Hiunkaku building at Nishi Hongan-ji Temple (Shimogyo Ward). The tea ceremony, which anyone can practice regardless of social status, was perfected by Sen no Rikyu. Somewhat later, joruri puppet shows and kabuki, which are both are performed to the accompaniment of shamisen, were also born out of the atmosphere of that time. The Portuguese missionary Joao Rodrigues, who visited Japan at that time and stayed in Japan for 30 years doing missionary work, portrayed Kyoto residents as follows:[6]

Kyoto citizens are very gentle, extremely polite and hospitable. They dress nicely and have a playful mind, constantly slacking off and indulging in amusement and comfort. For example, they would hold drinking parties in the fields, amuse themselves with the beauty of flowers and gardens, invite each other to feast. They also enjoy watching comedies, plays and interludes, as well as singing various Japanese-style songs.

It was Tokugawa Ieyasu who came in as Hideyoshi's successor and laid the foundation for a long period of peace. Ieyasu established the shogunate in Edo (present-day Tokyo), and thus this period is called the Edo Period. Japan's political center then shifted to Edo, although Kyoto still served as the national capital. During this period, the inner part of Kyoto was still generally separated from the rest of the city by the odoi, except for the northern side, where Kuramaguchi Street (see Fig. 3), much further south than Takagamine, served as the outer enclosure. It is said that there used to be 30 stone markers along the street with the words Kore-yori-rakuchu (Kyoto's central part from here) written on them[7].

During the Edo Period, land taxes were imposed based on the size of the frontage, which led to the formation of an urban area in Kyoto where townhouses with narrow frontage were built in rows on long, narrow lots. These houses, commonly referred to as "eel beds," were built right next to each other, and the space produced under the connected eaves of the houses was both private and



6 Rodrigues, The History of the Japanese Church vol. 1, 386.

7 The western and southern parts were built along the Odoi (earthwork), and the eastern part was apparently located on the east side of the Kamo River from Nakamura, Walking through the Edo Period in Kyoto, 58-61.

public space, allowing residents to come and go there freely. The gardens of the respective houses were also connected, creating a green belt where the wind could pass through. Such use of the land shows that people valued a connection with nature and lived in harmony with the seasons, devising ways to stay cool in the summer in this era before the existence of air conditioners. The greenbelt not only contributed to improving the amount of sunshine, lighting and biodiversity, it also served a fire controlling role in combination with collective earthen storehouses. The residents on both sides of a street comprised a neighborhood community association, which served as the basic unit of residents' self-governance and lifestyles that were nurtured then are still alive in today's Kyoto. In Yamahoko-cho, the town that managed yamahoko floats used in the Gion Festival, the neighborhood association was responsible for the yamahoko procession.[8]

During the Edo Period, social stability was maintained and various cultures were popular among the general public. In Kyoto, the tea ceremony and flower arrangement (both of which had their head schools in Kyoto), tanka, haiku and renga poems and other literary arts, Noh and kabuki performing arts, the flourishing kagai (a district that is also called hanamachi, where guests are entertained with food and traditional performances of the arts), and paintings by Maruyama Okyo and Ito Jakuchu were all popular. During this period, the traditional Japanese cooking style was also born, and led to today's Kyoto-style cuisine, a genre representing Japanese cuisine.



## Modern City Formation in Kyoto

With the birth of the Meiji Government in 1868, the capital moved from Kyoto to Tokyo the following year, and the population of Kyoto was reduced by two-thirds to about 200,000 people. The modern periods, such as Meiji, Taisho and Showa, are based on the reign of the respective emperors. In an effort to prompt revitalization of Kyoto in those days, the local government stressed the modernization of education and industry. The Lake Biwa Canal from Lake Biwa to Kyoto was built, and its water was used to build the world's second oldest hydroelectric power plant, which provided the electricity

8 Takada, "Preservation and Succession of Kyo-machiya" 120-122.

to run the earliest streetcars in Japan. Streetcars began to run through the city. Elementary schools opened earlier than elsewhere in Japan, and universities, including Kyoto University, were founded. Many modern facilities that were built then still remain and are in use today.

Not long after the capital had moved to Tokyo, the idea of landscape preservation, tourism and cultural asset protection was proposed, noting that the city attracted many visitors from Japan and abroad, not only because of its beautiful natural scenery, but also for the spectacular sight of temples and shrines located in scenic sites. Accordingly, a decision was made to leave the ruins of the residences of court nobles who had moved to Tokyo, as such without renovating them (today's "Kyoto Gyoen"). The following is a chronology of the main events leading to the formation of the present city:[9]

- In 1900, the first mayor of Kyoto, Jinzaburo Naiki, clarified his views on functional differentiation within the city and the necessity of preserving its scenic beauty and cultural heritage in his urban plan, stating that "the scenic beauty of the eastern side of the city must be preserved" and "we should never abandon our city's landmark preservation project."

- In 1920, the Urban Building Act (predecessor of the Building Standards Act) imposed building height restrictions of 19.7 meters (later 20 meters) in residential districts and 30.3 meters (later 31 meters) in commercial and industrial districts.

- In 1930, to preserve the natural beauty and historic charm of the area based on the City Planning Act, an expansive area of 3,400 hectares centering around the Kamogawa River and the Higashiyama and Kitayama areas, was designated as a scenic area.

- In 1956, an outdoor advertisement ordinance was enacted to regulate billboard advertisements.

- In 1964, the plan to build Kyoto Tower on the north side of Kyoto Station triggered a fierce controversy on landscapes in



9 Kyoto City, Scenic Beauty Policy Division, The Landscape of Kyoto, rev. 2014, 29 and thereafter, and supplemented by other publications of Kyoto City.

Kyoto.

- In the same year, Japan's rapid economic growth brought a wave of development to Kyoto; when Narabigaoka (see Fig. 4), a place of scenic beauty, was sold to build a hotel, an opposition campaign ensued.

- In 1966, in response to opposition to the development in Narabigaoka and other areas, the Act on Special Measures concerning Preservation of Traditional Scenic Beauty in Ancient Capitals (Ancient Capitals Preservation Law) was enacted, making Kyoto the first city to be designated a historic preservation zone under the law.

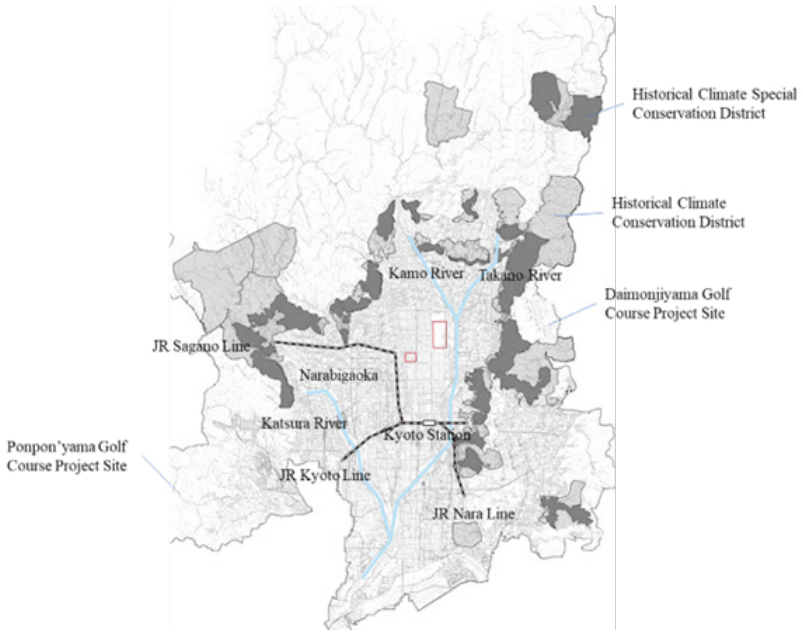





Fig. 4 Regulation Map for Conservation of the Historical Climate in Kyoto. Source: Additions by Hiratake to "Historical Climate Conservation District and Historical Climate Special Conservation District," Kyoto City Scenic Beauty Policy Division

- In 1967, the Saga-Arashiyama area, including Daikaku-ji Temple (see Fig. 2), was designated as Japan's first special preservation area of a historic landscape.

- In 1969, the "City Planning Concept - Kyoto in 20 years" was formulated, and a policy of "preservation of the city's northern part and development of its southern part" was established.

- In 1972, ahead of the rest of Japan, Kyoto enacted an urban

townscape ordinance, and introduced a system to designate (1) aesthetic zones to preserve historical resources in harmony with the surrounding urban landscape and (2) special historic preservation zones to preserve and remodel townscapes composed of traditional architectures without altering their basic appearance.

- In 1973, Kyoto City designated most of its urban area as a height-controlled district under the City Planning Act to independently regulate they height of buildings (to prevent the construction of skyscrapers in the city following the 1970 revision of the Building Standards Act, which abolished height regulations and introduced volume regulations instead).
- In 1975, the Cultural Assets Preservation Act was revised in response to a request by Kyoto and 13 other cities, to include in its preservation target a group of traditional buildings that are producing a historic atmosphere in harmony with their surroundings (traditional architectures preservation district).
- In the same year, the Gion-Shinbashi district (see photos in another article by Hiratake) and other areas were selected as a traditional architectures preservation district.
- In 1978, Kyoto City acquired Narabigaoka.
- Around 1985, commercial and business functions, including traditional industries, were concentrated in the central part of Kyoto, and retained a traditional culture and townscapes unique to Kyoto (“kyomachiya” townhouses, etc.). However, due to the sluggish local economy, high-rise condominiums were being erected, causing frequent disputes with residents living in the vicinity.
- In1987, Kyoto Prefecture presented approximately 20 candidate sites for the construction of a dam in the upper reaches of the Kamogawa River in preparation for a once-in-a-century flood.
- In 1988, Kyoto City introduced a comprehensive design system (that allowed for the relaxation of height restrictions with a higher floor-area ratio by securing open space for a given area, etc.).

- In 1989, Mt. Daimonjiyama Golf Course Development Plan (see Fig. 4) was cancelled due to residents' protests.
- In 1990, a plan was proposed to renovate Kyoto Hotel to a height of 60 meters using the comprehensive design system, causing another dispute on landscapes.
- In the same year, the Kamogawa River dam construction project was cancelled due to residents' objections.
- In the same year, an international design competition for the Kyoto Station renovation project was held without setting height restrictions, causing a cityscape dispute. A design proposal with the lowest building height was selected.
- In 1992, the Mt. Ponponyama golf course development plan (see Fig. 4) was cancelled due to the objections of residents.
- In 1995, the urban townscape ordinance was fully revised as the urban townscape improvement ordinance, expanding the number of authentic zones from two to five.
- In the same year, Kyoto City enacted its natural landscape preservation ordinance, designating a wide natural landscape preservation area and regulating the alteration of the current appearance of almost the entire Kyoto Basin area.
- In 1996, Kyoto City revealed a plan to build a pedestrian bridge, similar in design to the Pont des Arts over the Seine in Paris, France, roughly midway between the Sanjo and Shijo Ohashi bridges along the Kamogawa River.
- In 1998, Kyoto City prepared the "Guideline for the Development of a District with Workplaces and Homes in close Proximity" targeting the central urban area to advocate partnership-based urban development with collaboration of residents, businesses and the government.
- In the same year, a plan to build a "Pont des Arts" bridge over the Kamogawa River was cancelled due to residents' protests.
- In 1999, the south side of Gion-cho was designated as a historic landscape preservation district under the urban townscape improvement ordinance.

- In 2003, the south side of Gion-cho was designated as a traditional landscape preservation district under an ordinance on fire prevention for the preservation of traditional landscapes, enabling the area to maintain its traditional townhouses, including wooden structures.

## New Landscape Policy

After World War II, the urban formation of Kyoto was promoted through struggles between preservation and development. With the implementation of the New Landscape Policy in 2007; however, it may be safe to say that this debate has largely come to an end. The new policy is based on three concepts: The landscape of Kyoto, a historical city, should be enhanced with a view to its future 50 to 100 years from now, Buildings are private assets, but the landscape is public property, and It is the mission and responsibility of each of us living today to protect the Kyoto landscape and hand it down to future generations. The policy has the following five pillars:[10]

- Revise the building height regulations (i.e., maximum height limit for each area) from 5 levels (10, 15, 20, 31 and 45 meters) to 6 levels (10, 12, 15, 20, 25 and 31 meters), with a maximum height of 31 meters.

- Revise building design regulations and establish design standards that match regional characteristics in almost all parts of the urban area by designating more scenic areas, landscape areas and building remodeling areas.

- Preserve scenic views and borrowed landscapes by establishing a unique scenic view creation ordinance, the first of its kind in Japan, and designate 38 locations with excellent scenic views and borrowed landscapes.

- Strengthen outdoor advertisements measures, revise standards for exterior ads so that they blend in with the height and design standards of buildings, etc., regulate rooftop ads installations and the use of flashing and movable ads citywide, and increase awards and subsidies for excellent outdoor advertisements.



10 Kyoto City, Scenic Beauty Policy Division, The Landscape of Kyoto, rev. 2014, 41-42.

- Preserve and revitalize historical buildings such as kyo-machiya townhouses by utilizing the subsidy system to repair and remodel the exterior of traditional buildings and to promote the revitalization and expansion of historical townscapes centered on structures of landscape importance.

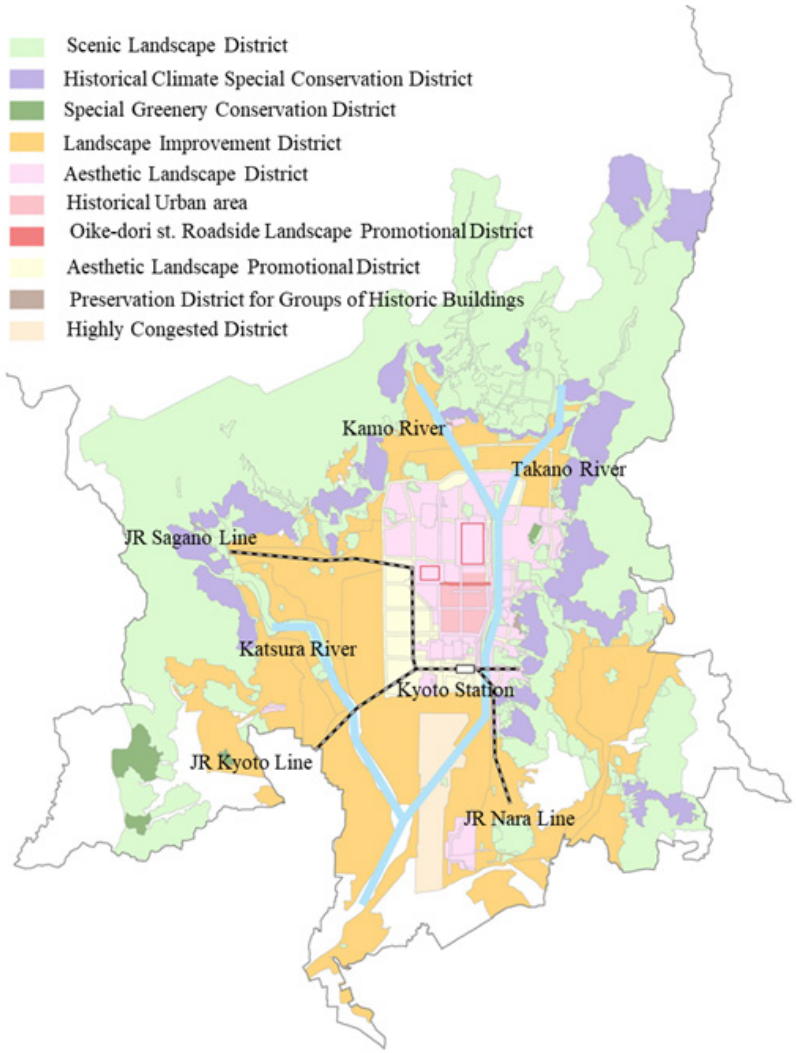



Fig. 5 Distinctive Zones in Kyoto. Source: Additions by Hiratake to "Landscape planning area (zoning map)," Kyoto City Scenic Beauty Policy Division

This policy was implemented in the following context. In 2002, the Kyoto Association of Corporate Executives issued an "urgent proposal for the promotion of Kyoto's urban renewal" based on the key concept of "to renew the city as a place where residents live with its history" and specified four measures to promote urban renewal, including "urban development that combines preservation, regeneration and creation" and "the renewal of

historic urban areas focusing on the settlement of successors." The business community also proposed a concept of balanced promotion of preservation and development projects. In 2004, the national government promulgated the Landscape Act, clarifying its positive position on landscape preservation. In response to these developments, Kyoto City established the "Council for the Creation of a Timelessly Splendorous Landscape of Kyoto" in 2005 to advance discussions, a move largely driven by concern over the proliferation of condominiums in the city center, to realize harmonious townscapes while promoting local revitalization.

Subsequently, in view of the progressing demolition of aging machiya townhouses, the city focused on their preservation and utilization. In 2012, an ordinance on the preservation and utilization of traditional wooden buildings was enacted to facilitate their safe and legal preservation and utilization while retaining their architectural value. Nonetheless, for seven years through 2016, the number of machiya townhouses continued to decrease by 2% a year, which prompted the city to enact an ordinance on the preservation and succession of machiya townhouses in 2017. Under this ordinance, the city promoted a comprehensive policy on the succession of machiya townhouses, by supporting their maintenance and renovation and facilitating a process of matching owners with those who wish to utilize these buildings.



## Conclusion

The above is an overview of the history of the Kyoto administration relevant to its development as a city. Today, Kyoto is in a complicated phase of transformation into a new city without losing its characteristics that have been formed from the Edo to the Showa periods and that make the city unique, not only for the Japanese people, but also for foreigners. As we enter an era of a declining population, the pressure to increase land space for residential use is decreasing, but the number of machiya townhouses of over 100 years old is increasing at an accelerating rate.

At this point, let us look back at what has shaped the landscape of Kyoto, as described in the introduction to this paper. We can see that Kyoto is made up of the heritage that has been handed down to the present day through the accumulation of history, and

the industries, traditional culture, and annual events that Kyoto has fostered based on its unique natural blessings (seasons, the weather, etc.), as well as the kyo-machiya townhouses and people's lifestyles there. The natural environment is now undergoing challenges by global climate changes. Even if buildings can be passed on to the next generation as heritage sites, the various cultures that unfold in Kyoto streets can be inherited only if the city remains a place where residents can live.

The past decade until 2023 has observed the accelerated conversion of land use in the city center towards the tourism industry, despite the concerted efforts of citizens and the government to preserve Kyoto. The impact, both positive and negative, of such conversion on Kyoto was not small. However, if we look further back in time, it is an undeniable fact that traditional industries have shown long-term decline since the 1970s. It has been said that Kyoto's townscape has changed over a century since the Taisho Era. In this sense, it can be said that Kyoto's uniqueness has diminished since the beginning of the modern age.

However, any town, the site of people's daily lives, naturally changes with the times as our lifestyles change. Since Kyoto is a city with a history of its own, it finds it far more difficult to accept changes. Even so, some of the recent lifestyle changes may also provide opportunities. Remote work, for example, may prompt the birth of the modern version of work and life in Kyoto, where the home has served both as workplace and residence. Kyoto must take the lead in voicing its concerns about global-scale problems, and Kyoto's development as a city, while maintaining its unique characteristics, should serve as a model for the future of the global community.



By doing so, Kyoto can meet the expectations of its citizens and visitors, who don't want to see too many changes in the city, although it is one of the major cities in Japan. No matter how enormous the challenges may be, we have no choice but to confront them with the collective wisdom of our people. As the history of Kyoto shows, it is because Kyoto has repeatedly tackled the challenges it faced from time to time that the city has become what it is today. By persevering to solve these challenges, Kyoto will definitely continue to maintain its character for the next 100 or 200 years.

## References

Hiratake, Kozo, Jichitai Bunka Seisaku: Machi Sosei no Genba kara (lit., Municipal Cultural Policy: From the Field of City Creation), Kyoto: Gakugei Shuppan, 2016.

Kinda, Akihiro ed., Heian-kyo – Kyoto: Toshizu to Toshikozo (lit., Heian-kyo – Kyoto: Urban Map and Urban Structure), Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2007.

Kyoto City ed., Kyoto no Rekishi 1-10 kan, (lit., History of Kyoto, vol 1-10), Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1968-76.

Kyoto City City Planning Bureau, City Landscape Department, Scenic Beauty Policy Division, Kyoto no Keikan 2014 Kaitei (lit., The Landscape of Kyoto, rev. 2014), 2014.

Kyoto City Culture and Citizens Affairs Bureau, Cultural Properties Preservation Section, Kyoto-shi Bunkazai Bukkusu 20: Kyo no Shiro – Rakuchu Rakugai no Jokaku (lit., Kyoto City Cultural Properties Books, vol. 20: Castles in Kyoto's Central and Surrounding Areas), 2006.

Kyoto-shi Bunkazai Bukkusu 28, Heian-kyo (lit., Kyoto City Cultural Properties Books, vol. 28: Heian- kyo), 2006.

Kumakura, Isao, Hosodaigaku Sosho 001, Chanoyu to Ikebana no Rekishi: Nipponjin no Seikatsubunka (lit., The Open University of Japan Textbook Series, vol. 1: History of Tea Ceremony and Flower Arrangement: Japanese Lifestyles), Tokyo: Sayusha, 2009.

Motoki, Yasuo et al. ed., Kyoto no Chuseishi 1-7 (lit., Medieval History of Kyoto, vol. 1-7), Tokyo Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2021-22.

Murai, Yasuhiko, "Shiiki no Henbo" (lit., Changes in the City), in Kyoto no Rekishi 1: Heian no Shinkyo, (lit., History of Kyoto 1: New Capital City of Heian), edited by Kyoto City, Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 1970.

Nakamura, Takeo, Kyoto no Edojidai wo Aruku (lit., Walking through the Edo Period in Kyoto), Kyoto: Bunrikaku, 2008.

Rodrigues, Joao, (translated by Ema, Tsutomu et al.), Nippon Kyokaishi jo (lit., The History of the Japanese Church vol. 1), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967.

Takada, Mitsuo "'Kotonaru Kachikan no Kyozon' ni Muketa kyo-machiya no Hozen  Keisho: Seikatsu Bunka no Keisho to Hatten wo Mezashita Machidukuri" (lit., Preservation and Succession of Kyo-machiya for 'Coexistence of Different Values': Town Planning for Succession and Development of Lifestyle Culture," in Kyoto kara Kangaeru Toshi Bunka Seisaku to Machidukuri: Dento to Kakushin no Kyozon, (lit., Urban Cultural Policy and Town Planning from Kyoto: Coexistence of Tradition and Innovation), edited by Yamada, Hiroyuki and Akasaki, Morihisa, Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 2019.

Takahashi, Yasuo, Kyoto Chusei Toshishi Kenkyu (lit., A Study on Kyoto's Medieval History), Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1983.

Yamada, Kunikazu, "'Zenki Heian-kyo' no Fukugen" (lit., The Restoration of Early Heian-kyo), in Toshi – Zenkindaitoshiron no Shatei (lit., The City: The Scope of Premodern Urbanism), edited by Niki, Hiroshi, Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 2002.

Kyoto Toshisi no Kenkyu (lit., A Study on Kyoto's Urban History), Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2009.



**Biography**

Kozo Hiratake is professor at the Faculty of Cultural Studies of Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan after working for Kyoto City as Director of Culture and Citizenship Bureau, Supervising Director of Culture and Arts Policy, Director of ROHM Theater Kyoto, and so on. He received his PhD in economics from Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. He specializes in urban studies, Kyoto studies, cultural policy and tourism policy

**Kozo Hiratake**
Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan

hiratake@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp

# Commons and Community-Building in Japanese Cities: The Example of Gion, Kyoto



**KEYWORDS**
commons; community; land ownership; land use; anticommons

**ABSTRACT**

In Japan, land use is loosely regulated and land owners are given an extremely high degree of freedom. This has led to an anticommons situation in many cities, where land is subdivided and communal use is not promoted. This paper, however, discusses a case study of community-building in which community ownership of the land and control of its use has resulted inlasting community-building.

The case study covers efforts in the Gion[1] area, which is a kagai (also known as hanamachi, entertainment quarter) in Higashiyama Ward, Kyoto City, and examines the historical progress of the efforts.

This paper also introduces a recent example of a shopping district where the community has taken control of land use and has moved from an anticommons situation to a commons one. This will hopefully lead to the development of commons in Japanese cities.

## Land Reform in Modern Japan

In Japan, the restoration of power from the Tokugawa shogunate to the imperial court (the Taisei Hokan) in 1867 marked the end of the Edo shogunate, which had lasted for more than 260 years. After the Meiji government was established in 1868, reforms were carried out at a rapid pace to dismantle the feudal system and rebirth Japan as a modern nation, and the land system was also modernized.



First, the majority of the shogunal demesne was returned to the government with the Taisei Hokan in 1867, followed by the return of domain lands to the government (the Hanseki Hokan) in 1869. In 1871, an order for the confiscation of lands was issued to all temples and shrines in Japan, forcing them to return all of their land holdings, except their precincts, for placement under the direct control of the prefectural governments.

In 1873, to solidify the financial foundation of the nation, a land-tax reform project was promoted and a system was

1 The area in front of Yasaka Shrine which is located at the east end of Shijo-dori, the mail street from east to west in Kyoto, is called Gion, after the shrine's former name: Gion Shrine. Kagai is an entertainment quarter where ochaya (teahouses), geiko (female entertainers), maiko (apprentice female entertainers), and okiya (or yakata: talent agencies where maiko and geiko live together and are trained as entertainers) are essential to entertaining customers. The Gion area discussed in this paper refers to Gion Kobu, which is a kagai. Regarding the following descriptions of Gion, see Hiratake, Kozo, Komonzu toshiteno Chiikikukan – Kyoyo no Sumaizukuri wo Mezashite (lit., Regional Space as a Commons: Toward Shared Residence Creation), (Tokyo: Komonzu, 2002), 102-108 and 118-124 and Hiratake, Kozo, "Kagai no Tanjo to Gokagai no Seiritsu" (lit., Birth of an Entertainment Quarter and Establishment of the Five Entertainment Quarters), in Kyo no Kagai - Hito, Waza, Machi (lit., Kagai in Kyoto:People, Work and Town), edited by Ota, Toru and Hiratake, Kozo, (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha,2009) 70-71

established to designate land ownership based on the value of each parcel of land and on the principle of one owner per parcel of land, and to issue land tickets to land owners to allow resale and land tax collection. Incidentally, under the previous (Edo period) system, the possession of land was allowed in principle, with an emphasis on use and profit, but the right to dispose of land by sale or other means was not allowed.

Under these new measures, the former samurai class was denied lordly land ownership through the abolition of hereditary stipends, and modern land ownership was granted to the peasantry, which was important for the transition to a modern society. This has led to a modern Japanese society that lacks the large land holdings that resulted from feudal privilege, has relatively small disparities between classes, and enjoys high social mobility, and in this sense, to a society that is more likely to generate economic vitality. This land-tax reform is said to have been quite radical compared to those in other countries, in that it left land surveying to the initiative of farmers and granted modern land ownership to farmers.[2]



## Land Use Changes in Kyoto during the Meiji Period

The dawn of modern society had a greater impact on Kyoto than on any other city in Japan. Kyoto, which had been the capital for more than 1,000 years, lost its status as the capital with the relocation of the capital to Tokyo in 1869, and its population, which had been approximately 300,000, is said to have decreased by as much as 100,000.

The reforms of the Meiji Restoration also brought about major changes in land use in Kyoto. The former residences of courtiers who moved to Tokyo with the imperial family when the capital was relocated to Tokyo became Kyoto Gyoen, which can be seen today, and the former residences of Kyoto Shugoshoku

2 Sakane, Yoshihiro, Kindaiteki Tochishoyu no Gaikan to Tokushitsu (lit., Overview and Characteristics of Modern Land Ownership), in Shintaikei Nihonshi 3: Tochi Shoyushi (lit., New Frame of Japanese History 3: History of Land Ownership), ed. Watanabe, Takashi and Gomi, Fumihiko (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2002), 407.

(the military commissioner of Kyoto) of the Edo shogunate were converted to the Kyoto Prefectural Office. Many of the large land-use sites seen today, including Kyoto University, Doshisha University, and Okazaki Park, originated from land that had once belonged to various domains.

Of particular importance to this paper, however, is land from temples and shrines that was designated as being directly under the jurisdiction of Kyoto Prefecture based on the order for the confiscation of lands. There are many temples and shrines in Kyoto City, and it is said that the area owned by temples and shrines decreased to one sixth of its previous size due to this order. Shinkyogoku, Kyoto's representative busy shopping district, was developed from contiguous former temple sites. Maruyama Park was created from the sites of Chorakuji and other temples, and the site of Honnoji Temple was used for Kyoto City Hall. The land from temples and shrines played a major role in the modernization of Kyoto and the formation of the city.

Gion, too, was in the midst of these changes, and while it was forced to make major changes, it also established a foundation for operations that continue to this day. Kyoto Prefecture decided to dispose of approximately 5 ha of land confiscated from Kenninji Temple as basic property for women's vocational training in the area. A general description of the course of events follows here.



In May 1872, the land of Kenninji Temple, between Shijo Street and Kenninji Temple, is confiscated and transferred to Kyoto Prefecture. In November of the same year, Fujo Shokko Hikitate Kaisha (a women's employment agency) is established in the 15th district of Shimogyo. In December of the same year, Kyoto Prefecture sells approximately 5 ha of land confiscated from Kenninji Temple to the 15th district of Shimogyo. In March 1873, Fujo Shokko Hikitate Kaisha (later renamed Nyokoba, hereinafter referred to as "Nyokoba") begins operation in the 15th district of Shimogyo.

At Nyokoba, women were taught handicrafts such as sewing clothes, sericulture, making strings for koto and shamisen, and removing seeds from cotton, and they were also expected to do

the actual production and sales of their products. On the land that was transferred from the prefectural government, the streets of Hanamikoji and Hatsunekoji were opened, tea gardens, mulberry orchards, and flower gardens were built, and tea factories and sericulture farms were established.

Forty years later, a streetcar line was planned to be built on Shijo-dori Street, and when it was widened in 1912, ochaya[3] were prohibited from operating on Shijo-dori Street and Yamatooji Street, so ochaya moved along Hanamikoji Street, where these gardens were developed, which was the beginning of the Gion-cho-minamigawa (south side of Gion-cho. hereinafter referred to as "Gion South") that we see today. Nyokoba has become the school corporation Yasaka Nyokoba Gakuen (hereinafter referred to as "Gakuen") and still owns approximately 4.2 ha of land.

The area of Gakuen-owned land (hereinafter referred to as Hanamikoji Gion) is world-renowned as a town replete with traditional Japanese atmosphere and is highly regarded as a commercial district. This was made possible by the fact that Gakuen owns all the land in Hanamikoji Gion and still utilizes it for the education of geiko and maiko, in keeping with the purpose of the land purchase 150 years ago, and that the management of Gakuen has been carried out by the community centering on ochaya and geiko that belong to Gion Kobu.



3 Establishments that arrange geiko and maiko, rooms, and food services for banquets. They often double as okiya (yakata), where geiko and maiko live together with their seniors and learn the Kyoto dialect and the manners and customs of kagai. Geiko and maiko are successors to the traditional performing arts, such as Japanese dance and shamisen, and they entertain guests by performing their arts at banquets. Maiko are young, in their late teens, and are very popular for their sashes and ornamental hairpins, but they are only apprentices to geiko.


Figure1 The well laid out Gion South by Hiratake, K

.

## Community-Building and Land Ownership in Gion

During the bubble economy around 1990, land prices rose in Gion as elsewhere. As lessees began to raise the height of their buildings, Gakuen began activities to protect the townscape. First, Gakuen, in its letter of intent for the preservation of the townscape, requested cooperation from the lessees and other interested parties in preserving the historic Gion townscape and asked them to sign an agreement to this end.



The agreement stipulates that (1) Gakuen and the lessees shall mutually confirm the necessity of preserving the townscape of Gion, (2) Gakuen's approval shall be obtained for additions, renovations, repairs, and other work, and (3) in the transfer of leaseholds, the lessee shall inform the transferee of the necessity of townscape preservation and shall have it approved. Gakuen also stipulates that when constructing a new building, the lessee shall submit a letter of commitment to Gakuen in which the lessee shall pledge to (1) conduct business in harmony with the surrounding environment, (2) give consideration to the preservation of life in the neighborhood, and (3) consider building standards such as a maximum building height of 10 meters or less, up to three stories, and a Japanese-style exterior. Gakuen also established the Gion South Building Appearance and Design Standards, which sets standards for 27 items ranging from building height and roof slope to equipment, signage, pavement,

and trees, in order to provide guidance to lessees regarding building construction based on these standards. As a result, Gakuen and all the lessees signed the agreement and decided to proceed with community-building together.

Meanwhile, there have always been ordinary private houses in Hanamikoji Gion, which has also been a place of daily life, especially for those involved with Gakuen. The low cost of land has enabled the residents here to enjoy a stable lifestyle from generation to generation, and to pass on their homes to their children and grandchildren. As a result, a virtuous cycle has been fostered in the community: townscape preservation; high evaluation by residents; residents' willingness to continue living in the area and to maintain and renovate buildings;

1. Clearly defined boundaries – Individuals or households who have rights to withdraw resource units from the CPR must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the CPR itself.
2. Congruence between appropriation and provision rules and local conditions – Appropriation rules restricting time, place, technology, and/or quantity of resource units are related to local conditions and to provision rules requiring labor, material, and/or money.
3. Collective-choice arrangements – Most individuals affected by the operational rules can participate in modifying the operational rules.
4. Monitoring – Monitors, who actively audit CPR conditions and appropriator behavior, are accountable to the appropriators or are the appropriators.
5. Graduated sanctions – Appropriators who violate operational rules are likely to be assessed graduated sanctions (depending on the seriousness and context of the offence) by other appropriators, by officials accountable to these appropriators, or by both.
6. Conflict-resolution mechanisms – Appropriators and their officials have rapid access to low-cost local arenas to resolve conflicts among appropriators or appropriators and officials.
7. Minimal recognition of rights to organize – The rights of appropriators to devise their own institutions are not challenged by external governmental authorities.

For CPRs that are parts of larger systems:

8. Nested enterprises – Appropriation, provision, monitoring, enforcement, conflict resolution, and governance activities are organized in multiple layers of nested enterprises.

Table 1. Design principles illustrated by long-enduring CPR institutions. Source: Ostrom, Governing The Commons, 90.



further improvement of the townscape and revitalization of the community. Here, lessees who are not affiliated with Gakuen were also involved as parties through the signing of the agreement.

Gakuen's Hanamikoji Gion initiative has created a unique urban space for Kyoto, an area that attracts many visitors from around the world, not only by using the land owned by the public corporation, which is inextricably linked to the community, itself or its members, but also by leasing it under certain rules. Hanamikoji Gion is an urban space as a well-kept commons. In fact, in light of the work of Elinor Ostrom, the eight elements of design principles for the commons shown in Table 1 are satisfied.



Figure 2. Gion Shinbashi Important Preservation District for a Group of Traditional Buildings by Hiratake, K.

Gion Shinbashi is nearly 100 years older than Hanamikoji Gion and was once lined with many ochaya, including those loved by writers and artists such as Soseki Natsume and Isamu Yoshii, but today only one ochaya operates in the designated area. There are several possible reasons for this, but the ultimate reason is that although the architectural style that characterized ochaya remained due to regulations and protections, the land was individually owned and therefore could not continue to operate due to inheritance taxes, among other factors, and the community had no control over land use.

Returning to Hanamikoji Gion, in addition to Gakuen's efforts, the Gion South District Council was established in 1996, and in 2001, the NPO Gion South District Development Council began its activities, which Kyoto City supports through regulations and assistance. In 1999, the area was designated by ordinance as

the Gion-cho Minami Historic Landscape Preservation District, which legally realized the same regulations as Gakuen's Gion South Building Appearance and Design Standards. In 2002, building regulations were implemented that did not allow adult entertainment businesses or karaoke boxes, and in 2003, administrative measures to maintain traditional tradesman's houses that do not use aluminum sash windows or mortar walls were also realized through designation based on an ordinance. In 2022, the Gion South District Council was certified by ordinance as a regional landscape development council, and at the same time, the Gion South District Landscape Development Plan was certified. As a result, it is now necessary to consult with the council prior to modifying building exteriors or installing vending machines and to notify the council when one moves into or out of the area.

Figure 3. A tradesman's house refurbished in wood under Kyoto City's policy of maintaining traditional tradesman's houses by Hiratake, K.

As described above, in Hanamikoji Gion, an attractive town development project is being implemented through public, common and private cooperation, with Gakuen's efforts at the center, and through town development activities by NPOs that involve the surrounding community, with regulations and assistance provided by Kyoto City to back them up. This is exactly what Ostrom means by multilayered nesting.

## An Attempt to Move from Anticommons to Commons

The example of Hanamikoji Gion is a very exceptional case in modern Japan. In many Japanese cities, the land is subdivided in the same way as on most of the north side of Shijo-dori Street in Gion, and as Michael Heller argues, an overabundance of land owners causes gridlock. Heller calls this the tragedy of the anticommons and cites as an example the recovery projects from the Great Hanshin–Awaji Earthquake, pointing out the delays in projects on land divided into "thousands of parcels the size of a U.S. garage," each with several rights holders.[4]

The causes of this are as follows: In Japan, (1) there are no regulations on land subdivision and no obligation to use land, and property rights are strongly guaranteed; (2) reforms in the early Meiji period created a society in which anyone can become a land owner, i.e., a society that lacked the large land ownership that arose from feudal privilege; (3) the national obsession with land ownership and the myth that land is an asset whose value does not decline since the period of rapid economic growth after World War II have led to a longing for detached houses with gardens; and (4) the government has pursued a policy of national land development by cutting mountains and reclaiming lakes and oceans, rather than a policy of urban redevelopment, which makes it difficult to sort out rights holders.



However, the negative aspects of this trend became immediately apparent toward the end of the 20th century, when Japanese society began to see declining birthrates and demographic aging. Not only in towns and villages but also in cities, the number of vacant stores in front of train stations and in shopping areas in the city center has increased, and these areas are now known as "shuttered streets." The main reason for this is that Japan has loose regulations on land use from a global perspective, with owners having freedom of land use as well as freedom of non-use, so there is no way to protect the town by putting necessary stores in vacant storefronts in shopping areas

4 Heller, Michael The Gridlock Economy: How Too Much Ownership Wrecks Markets, Stops Innovation, and Costs Lives, (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 137.

nor by leasing vacant houses.

Attempts have also begun to overcome the tragedy of the anticommons. Shown here is the initiative of the Marugame-machi shopping district (hereinafter referred to as "Marugame-machi") in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture.[5] In a normal redevelopment project, the land owners' land is exchanged for the equivalent of a building floor ("the floor area of right"), and the remaining floor (the reserved floor area) is sold with the land, so after the project is completed, the building will be owned separately and the land will be shared among the new owners of the floor. In Marugame-machi, however, the landowners' entire land was leased for a fixed term, and the reserved area was sold with a fixed term lease, so that the landowners continued to own the land as before. The shopping district association[6] purchased the reserved commercial floor area in redeveloped buildings and leases the floor area of right from the rights holders. As a result, the land is owned individually, but the shopping district association is the centralized user in the first layer, separating land ownership from land use.

What is wonderful about this initiative is that it acknowledges the desire of the land owners to own their land as an asset, while at the same time allowing the individual stores that make up the shopping district to welcome shopkeepers who are willing to try new things. In other words, it is a way to break the gridlock by putting the lid of a fixed-term leasehold on subdivided owned land and making that lid (the floor area of the redevelopment building) a commons that is used centrally by the shopping district association.

What is being proposed for the future is modern common ownership—a modernized form of common ownership[7] that combines ownership law for today's urban land management,



5 Hiratake, Kozo, Komonzu toshiteno Chiikikukan – Kyoyo no Sumaizukuri wo Mezashite (lit., Regional Space as a Commons: Toward Shared Residence Creation), (Tokyo: Komonzu, 2002), 61-72.

6 It was explained to be actually a joint-stock company that is inextricably linked to the shopping district association.

7 Takamura, Gakuto, "Gendai Soyuron no Rekishiteki Iso to Sono Kon'nichiteki Igi" (lit., The Historical Phase of Modern Common Ownership Theory and Its Significance Today), in Gendai Soyuron Josetsu (lit., Introduction to Modern Common Ownership Theory), ed. Igarashi, Takayoshi, (Tokyo: Bookend, 2014), 71.

planning law that establishes the order of management and use, and business organization law that governs decisions on management and use methods. This is exactly how a resource system of the commons functions effectively in a city. In Japan, land that is supposed to be public in nature has become subdivided into a gridlocked state, preventing necessary use of the land. The idea of commons is a way to restore publicness and community permanence. Modern common ownership is really nothing more than the application of the traditional idea of the commons to reconstruct cities as public goods.

However, under the current legal system, which is on its way to that point, community ownership that meets Ostrom's conditions of boundary, locality, participation, and autonomy can be evaluated as a method that leads from the anticommons to the commons, with legal entities, including not only associations but also companies, as its subjects, and not only ownership rights but also exclusive rights to use the land for a fixed period, including land lease rights and fixed-term lease rights. Until major institutional changes are made, there is an urgent need to prevent urban and regional decline through such centralization of land use rights. If this does not happen now, after the COVID-19 pandemic has drastically reduced both the birth rate and the number of births, there will be many cities and regions that can envision no future but that of shrinking like a sponge.



## Acknowledgements

In closing, I would like to thank Ms. Inoue Noriko, Professor of the Department of Regional Development Studies, Faculty of Regional Development Studies, Otemon Gakuin University, for giving me the opportunity to write this paper and for her full support in its translation and publication. It all started when I was invited to be a presenter at the Japan Italy Cities Seminar held on January 24, 2023. I would like to express my sincere gratitude.

## References

Heller, Michael The Gridlock Economy: How Too Much Ownership Wrecks Markets, Stops Innovation, and Costs Lives, New York: Basic Books, 2008.

Hiratake, Kozo, Komonzu toshiteno Chiikikukan – Kyoyo no Sumaizukuri wo Mezashite (lit., Regional Space as a Commons: Toward Shared Residence Creation), Tokyo: Komonzu, 2002.

Komonzu to Eizokusuru Chiikishakai (lit., The Commons and Enduring Regional Society), Tokyo: Nihon Hyoronsha, 2006.

"Kagai no Tanjo to Gokagai no Seiritsu" (lit., Birth of an Entertainment Quarter and Establishment of the Five Entertainment Quarters), in Kyo no Kagai - Hito, Waza, Machi (lit., Kagai in Kyoto: People Work and Town), edited by Ota, Toru and Hiratake, Kozo. Tokyo: Nihon Hyronsha, 2009

Ostrom, Elinor, Governing the Commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Sakane, Yoshihiro, "Kindaiteki Tochishoyu no Gaikan to Tokushitsu" (lit., Overview and Characteristics of Modern Land Ownership), in Shintaikei Nihonshi 3: Tochi Shoyushi (lit., New Frame of Japanese History 3: History of Land Ownership), edited by Watanabe, Takashi and Gomi, Fumihiko. Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2002.

Takamura, Gakuto, "Gendai Soyuron no Rekishiteki Iso to Sono Kon'nichiteki Igi" (lit., The Historical Phase of Modern Common Ownership Theory and Its Significance Today), in Gendai Soyuron Josetsu (lit., Introduction to Modern Common Ownership Theory), edited by Igarashi, Takayoshi. Tokyo: Bookend, 2014.

## Biography

Kozo Hiratake is professor at the Faculty of Cultural Studies of Kyoto Sangyo University, Kyoto, Japan after working for Kyoto City as Director of Culture and Citizenship Bureau, Supervising Director of Culture and Arts Policy, Director of ROHM Theater Kyoto, and so on. He received his PhD in economics urban studies, Kyoto studies, from Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan. He specializes in urban studies, Kyoto studies, cultural policy and tourism policy.

**Noriko Inoue**
Otemon Gakuin University
(Osaka, Japan)
n-inoue@otemon.ac.jp

# Co-Management of Urban Public Goods: Issues of Urban Farmland Conservation in the Historic City of Kyoto



**KEYWORDS**
co-management, urban public goods, farmland conservation

**ABSTRACT**

This paper delves into the complexities surrounding urban farmland in Kyoto City, specifically within the context of co-managing urban public goods. Focused on the historical development and conservation of ancient cities like Kyoto, it examines the influence of two pivotal laws: the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law and the Act Concerning Agricultural Land in Urbanization Promotion Areas. These legal frameworks were initially established to protect the historical landscapes during periods of rapid economic growth, placing strict regulations on specific preservation areas and designating farmland for urban green spaces. Despite these measures, the conservation of urban farmland in historic cities has become

increasingly challenging. The paper aims to reframe urban farmland as a crucial urban public good and investigates the complexities involved in its co-management within the historical landscape preservation areas.

## Introduction

This paper focuses on issues of urban farmland in Kyoto City from the perspective of the co-management of urban public goods. In Japan, urban farmland in historic cities that have experienced urban development, such as Kyoto, is thought to have been conserved mainly as a result of two laws. One law is the Act on Special Measures concerning the Preservation of the Historical Features of Ancient Cities (hereinafter: "the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law") (1966), which defines ancient cities and applies only to them. The Ancient Capitals Preservation Law was enacted to preserve historic landscapes amidst the rapid economic growth of the 1960s, when development also reached historic cities[1].

Its framework is based on the designation of historic landscape preservation areas, of which particularly important areas are placed under strict regulations as special preservation areas. In order for development activities to occur within these areas, a public agency must first purchase the land. Kyoto City applies this act to temple and shrine forests in the northern, western, and eastern parts of the city, which are not generally expected to be bought up (Figure 1). Under the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law, activities other than ordinary maintenance and certain special management actions conducted in special preservation areas are subject to the approval of the mayor (Table 1).



The other law is the Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization Promotion Area. The Sagano special historic landscape preservation area, one of Kyoto City's special historic landscape preservation areas, includes approximately 40 ha of farmland (hereinafter: "the Kitasaga district). At the time of its designation, a large area of farmland remained in the vicinity of the Kitasaga district, forming an integrated rural landscape. The

1 Inoue, Noriko."A System for the Conservation of Historic Cities in Japan: Kyoto and Kanazawa Between Local Autonomy and Metropolitan Reality," in Inoue,N.and Orioli,V. (eds.) Bologna and Kanazawa. Protection and Valorization of Two Historic Cities. (Bologna, Bononia University Press ,2020):29-45

Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization Promotion Area (1974) and subsequent amendments attempted to preserve these areas as urban green spaces after establishing "farmland use" as an urban planning zoning category. Some of the farmland areas near the Kitasaga district include those designated for "farmland use" in the city planning.

Despite the above layered legal measures, the conservation of urban farmland in historic cities is now becoming an extremely difficult issue. The purpose of this paper is to consider urban farmland as an urban public good and to study the issues of its co-management in the historic landscape preservation area[2].

## Preservation of the Kitasaga District under the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law

According to data from Kyoto City, designated historic landscape preservation areas in the city total approximately 8,513 ha, of which 2,861 ha are special preservation areas.



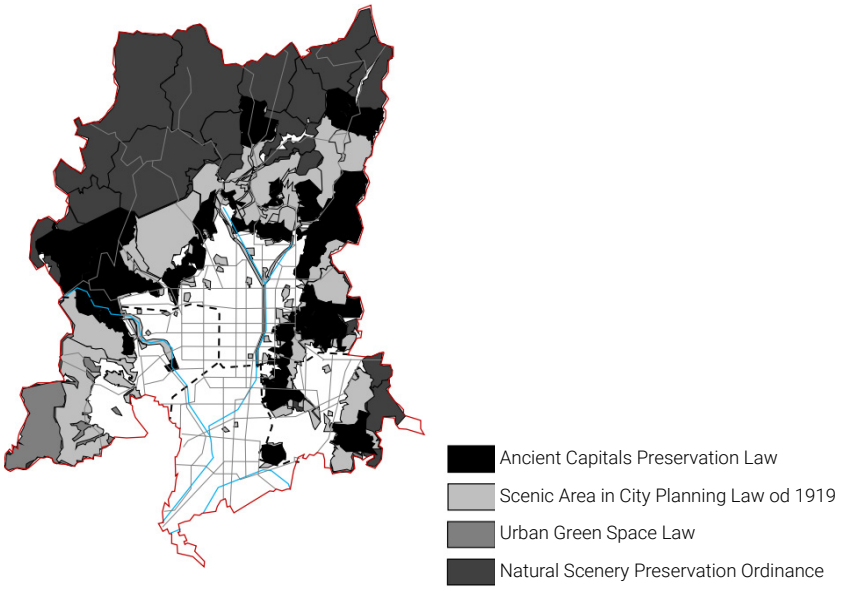



Figure 1: Scope of the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law
Source: Kyoto City, Kyoto no Keikan (lit. The Scenery of Kyoto) Inoue,N. (2020).p.32

2 See the Kyoto City urban planning portal site. https://keikan-gis.city.kyoto.lg.jp/kyotogis/

| Item | Historic landscape preservation area | Special historic landscape preservation area |
|---|---|---|
| Designating entity | Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport | Head of the prefecture or designated city |
| To whom to submit notifications/applications | Head of the prefecture or designated city | Head of the prefecture or designated city |
| Methods of limiting actions | Notification and recommendation | Permitting and ordering |
| New construction, reconstruction or extension of buildings or other structures | ○ | ○ |
| Development of residential land, cultivation of land, or other changes in the form or nature of land | ○ | ○ |
| Timber harvesting | ○ | ○ |
| Collection of earth and stones | ○ | ○ |
| Change of color of buildings or other structures | | ○ |
| Display or posting of outdoor advertising | | ○ |
| Filling or reclamation of water surfaces | ○ | ○ |
| Outdoor deposition of earth, rocks, waste, or recycled resources | ○ | ○ |
| Compensation for losses | | ○ |
| Purchase of land | | ○ |

[3] Table 1: Regulations under the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law. Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Current Status of Efforts for Ancient Cities Preservation and Changes in the Surrounding Environment, https://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001100660.pdf



Of that 8,513 ha, the Saga–Arashiyama historic landscape preservation area covers 1,396 ha, including the Sagano special preservation area, which covers 234 ha. The Sagano special preservation area is thought to extend over the northern area centered on Daikakuji Temple (Osawa Pond) to the west and Hirosawa Pond to the east in the aerial photos, with approximately 40 ha of farmland in the Kitasaga district[4]. Daikakuji Temple dates back to the 800s and was a medieval residence before being converted into a temple. Thus, the area around Daikakuji Temple can be regarded as a site of medieval remains.

Photo A (1960s), Photo B (1980s) and Photo C (present) are aerial photos (Geospatial Information Authority) that show the chang-

3 In Nara, Kanagawa, and Shiga prefectures, authority is transferred by ordinance from prefectures to designated ancient cities.

4 Urayama, Masuro. and Sato, Keiji. “Genjo Toketsutekina Tochiriyo Kisei ga Nogyo Keikan Hozen ni Oyobosu Eikyo nikansuru Chosa Kenkyu – Sagano Rekisitekifudo Tokubetsu Hozon Chiku no Baai” (lit., Study Concerning the Effect of Status-Quo Land Use Regulations on Agricultural Landscape Conservation: The Case of Sagano’s Special Historic Landscape Preservation Area), Journal of architecture, planning and environmental engineering: transactions of AIJ No. 403 (1989) :73-86

es in land use in the surrounding area chronologically, with the Kitasaga district as the core. The photos show that the Kitasaga district has been preserved for use as farmland in a special preservation area, as well as showing the significant changes and decrease in urban farmland in the surrounding area.

The 1960s and 1970s in Japan were a period of large-scale urbanization aimed at economic growth, when three major metropolitan areas were formed, with Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka at their cores.[5] As development activities also progressed in Kyoto City, parts of the urban areas, including the Saga-Arashiyama area, were targeted for preservation through the enactment of the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law. However, during the so-called "bubble economy" of the late 1980s and 1990s, speculative activities for the purpose of tourism became prominent in Kyoto City, and many wooden buildings, including traditional houses, were demolished and converted into condominiums and office buildings.[6] Urbanization continued in the Sagano special area, and a comparison of the two aerial photos (A and B) clearly shows the changes. Despite the Saga-Arashiyama area's status as a historic landscape preservation area, development there was not curbed thereafter, and urban expansion into the western part of Kyoto City proceeded. This situation has not only remained uncontrolled through recent urban policies that encourage compact cities, but has rather worsened as the number of tourists to the Saga-Arashiyama area has increased dramatically under the influence of mass tourism. This has led the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism to clearly raise concerns about the transformation of the historic landscape.[7]



In general, Kyoto City's designation of special preservation area is

5 Hein, Carola and Pelletier, Philippe. "Decentralization and the tension between global and local urban Japan," in Hein C. and Pelletier P. (eds.) Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan. (New York, Routledge, 2006) 1-24

6 Brumann, Christoph. "Whose Kyoto," in Hein, C. and Pelletier, P. (eds.) Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan. (New York, Routledge, 2006),139-163

7 See the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Koto Hozon nikakawaru Torikumi no Genjo ya Torimaku Kankyo no Henkanitsuite (lit., Current Status of Efforts for the Preservation of Ancient Cities and Changes in the Surrounding Environment (Material 5-1) https://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001100660.pdf

applied to temple and shrine forests where development is unlikely to occur, but within this trend, the Sagano special preservation area is unique in that it includes a large area of farmland in the Kitasaga district. However, the preservation of urban farmland is linked to the issue of the continuation of agriculture in the city; thus, it differs significantly in its approach from the preservation of temple and shrine forests.[8] In other words, land use regulations alone are insufficient, and the lack of a direct linkage between landscape preservation and rural policies for conducting agriculture within historic landscape preservation areas is recognized as an issue. From this perspective, an earlier detailed study of the Kitasaga district was conducted by Masuro Urayama and Keiji Sato (1989). Urayama and Sato (1989) conducted interviews and identified the generation of farmers who played a central role in the Kitasaga district in the 1980s as those in their 40s and 50s, and noted their high awareness of the need for landscape preservation. Meanwhile, a comparison between 1965 and 1980 of the current status maps by building use conducted for the Sagano special preservation area reveals 42 new buildings, despite the fact that the area is a preservation area. The results of this study are consistent with the land use transformation shown in the comparison of aerial photos A and B taken by the Geospatial Information Authority. It can be said that the Kitasaga district was effectively preserved through city purchases and other measures under the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law, but at the same time, land use in the surrounding area has changed significantly despite the status as a historic landscape preservation area, and it is assumed that urbanization had already had a strong impact on the historic rural landscape by the 1980s.



8 There are many challenges in protecting temple and shrine forests, and various protection activities are being practiced. See the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Koto Hozon nikakawaru Torikumi no Genjo ya Torimaku Kankyo no Henkanitsuite (lit., Current Status of Efforts for the Preservation of Ancient Cities and Changes in the Surrounding Environment (Reference 1) https://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001100667.pdf


Figure 2., Aerial photo of the Sagano area of Kyoto from the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (photo A)
(1961.MKK614-C4-6679)



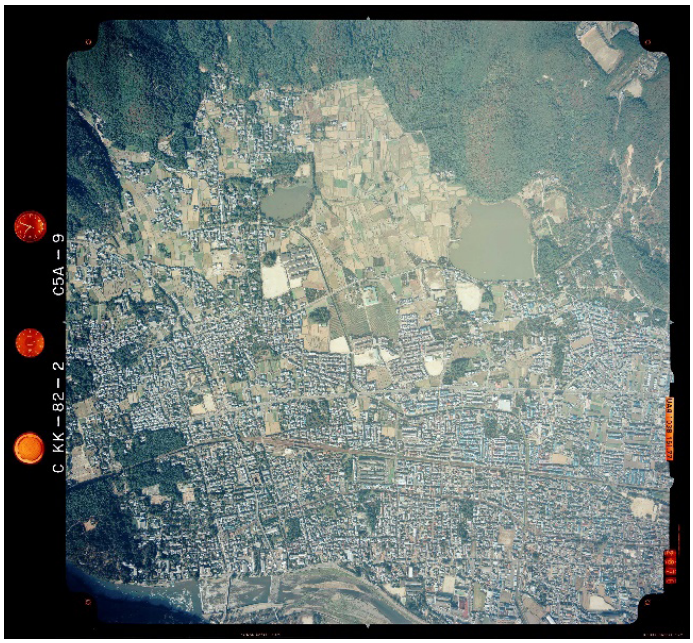



Figure 3. Aerial photo of the Sagano area of Kyoto from the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan, (photo B.)
(1982.CKK822-C5A-9)



Figure 4. Aerial photo of the Sagano area of Kyoto from the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (photo C)
(2020.CKK20202-C6-20)

## Issues of Urban Farmland Conservation

At a time when the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is promoting compact cities, why is there such significant urbanization in the Sagano special historic landscape preservation area under the Ancient Capitals Preservation Law? Behind the characteristic trends are several issues facing Kyoto City.

The first is the aging of the farming population. If farmers within the Kitasaga district were in their 40s and 50s in the 1980s, then these people can be assumed to be in their 80s today, 30 years later. When there are no farming successors, it becomes difficult to maintain urban farmland, and farmland conversion proceeds. This is a major issue not only for productive green land, but also for farmland in special preservation areas, as described later.

Second, there is a legal issue related to "farmland use" in the city planning. Based on the new City Planning Act (1968),[9] Kyoto City is divided into urbanization promotion areas and urbanization control areas.[10] Urban farmland is generally defined as farmland located in urbanization promotion areas, and urban agriculture is defined as agriculture conducted in and around urban areas.[11] Therefore, especially in metropolitan areas where further urban expansion is expected, many urban farmlands have been included in urbanization promotion areas, in anticipation of future urbanization. Meanwhile, the Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization Promotion Area was enacted in 1974, when Japan's rapid economic growth spurred urbanization. Therefore, the urban planning zoning category "farmland use" was intended to coordinate the formation of the urban environment with agriculture and forestry, and once designated, such land was exempted from the same level of taxation as that on residential land. However, the question of how to consider farmland conversion and taxation (fixed property tax and inheritance tax treatment) in the conflict between urban development and urban farmland conservation has always been a major issue,[12] and Yoichi Tashiro (1991) points out that few farmers initially availed themselves of the provisions of this act due to its strict regulatory measures, such as area requirements and the prohibition of conversion. He also points out that, through another law introduced in 1982, farmland was exempted from the same level of taxation as that on residential land and that there was little advantage for farmers to use the land as "farmland use".[13]



The Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization Promotion Area was revised in 1991. The important point of the amendment was that land to be used for farming was reclassified as "farmland to be conserved", which is a category that

9 Japan's first City Planning Act was enacted in 1919.

10 An urbanization promotion area is an area that has already been urbanized or an area that should be urbanized preferentially and systematically within approximately 10 years.

11 See Article 2 of the Basic Act for Urban Agriculture Promotion.

12 Tashiro, Youichi. "Toshi Nogyo no Tenkai" (lit., The Development of Urban Agriculture), Tashiro, Y. (ed.), Keikakuteki Toshi Nogyo heno Chosen (lit., The Challenge of Systematic Urban Agriculture), Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha 1991,12-13.

13 Ibid., 16

was defined as collective farmland of 500 $m^2$ or more that met the conditions for continued farming and would be farmed for 30 years or more, and "farmland to be converted into residential land" that was expected to be converted into residential land in the future, with the former being exempted from the same level of taxation as that on residential land. The "farmland to be conserved" classification served to maintain urban farmland and its landscapes for a certain period of time, but the 30-year farming continuity period ended in 2022, at which time many farmlands were converted to residential land at the discretion of individual farmers. The urban farmland that was thus developed includes farmland that is adjacent to strictly protected areas where the Cultural Assets Preservation Act applies and that is extremely important for maintaining the historical landscape.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, there has been a dramatic increase in urban tourism driven by the Kyoto brand. The Covid-19 pandemic has also further reshaped urban tourism. Overtourism has been an issue in Kyoto for many years,[14] but the introduction of online and other work styles has made extended-stay tourism in Kyoto possible, resulting in increases in the number of wealthy people who own a second home in Kyoto. Increased demand for second homes has driven up housing prices, including those of condominiums, and this has given rise to the trend of encouraging farmland conversion, especially near scenic areas. In addition, some residents, especially those of the younger generation, have been unable to afford houses in areas where they were raised and have relocated to neighboring prefectures.



In 2017, the Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization Promotion Area was amended to address the 2022 issue of "farmland use." The amendments allowed the area requirement for the "farmland use" designation to be lowered to 300 $m^2$ by ordinance, and a "new specific farmland use" was established to extend the 30-year period after the designation. The amendments have also made it possible to establish processing facilities for agricultural products, direct-sales stores, and farmer's restaurants in areas designated for "farmland use". The category of

14 See https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO53940140X21C19A2LKA000/ (Nihon Keizai Shimbun).

rural residential area has been introduced in city planning, and the concept of housing that takes advantage of urban agriculture and the perspective of urban–rural partnerships have been incorporated into urban policies as well. In the vicinity of the Kitasaga district, however, urban farmland was released for use as residential land in 2022, due to a demand for second homes and to the conversion of farmland for the purpose of other residential development. In the Saga–Arashiyama, where farmland conversion is proceeding rapidly, the historic rural landscape has generally been lost since the time when the area was designated as a special preservation area, as shown in aerial photo C.

## Efforts to Conserve Urban Farmland in the Kitasaga District

In the 1990s, there was a growing awareness of the importance of maintaining urban farmland by "establishing regulations that promoted ecological land use in peri-urban areas".[15] In 1999, the Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas was enacted, and the promotion of urban agriculture began in and around cities. Then, with the emergence of hollowing-out issues and the phenomenon of urban shrinkage due to declining birthrates, demographic aging and economic globalization, as well as the increase in vacant houses and land left unmanaged in many areas, the Basic Act for Urban Agriculture Promotion was enacted in 2015, and the importance of urban agriculture that is based on an evaluation of the multifaceted functions of agriculture—not only in providing agricultural products, but also in providing disaster prevention space and environmental boundaries—has come to be recognized.



Thus, the preservation of special preservation areas, including the Kitasaga district, has become important in terms of the importance of urban farmland in the urban environment. However, major issues have arisen in its preservation. The most significant issue, as already mentioned, is the problem of continuing farming due to demographic aging. A lack of successors to agriculture

15 Takeuchi, Kazuhiko. "Seitaigakuteki Tochiriyo Chitsujo no Hokai to Saihen" (lit., The Collapse and Restructuring of the Regime under which Ecological Land Use was to be Pursued, The Association of Rural Planning, Vol. 7, No. 4, (1989), 50

makes it difficult to maintain farmland, but in the case of the Kitasaga district, it also makes it impossible to maintain the historic rural landscapes. Accordingly, efforts are underway regarding the co-management of urban farmland.

According to an interview conducted onsite in January 2023, discussions among local farmers, several NPOs, and others are underway, with the most prominent consideration being the branding of rice produced in the Kitasaga district. As described in detail by Watanabe and colleagues,[16] as part of resource-circulating agriculture efforts, chips made from broken bamboo stalks gathered from bamboo groves that surround the farmland are used to improve the soil, and elephant dung from the Kyoto City Zoo is fermented and used in farming, reducing the use of agricultural chemicals as much as possible. According to those involved, these efforts have been developed in stages, with coordination within the community, and the chipping of the bamboo has been particularly effective in preserving bamboo forests.

## Future Issues



Efforts in the Kitasaga district have yet to gain significant recognition. Meanwhile, from the perspective of Kyoto City's responsibility as an international historic city, urban farmland in the Saga-Arashiyama historic landscape preservation area can be regarded as an urban public good in a historic city. There are two issues to be considered in terms of the possibility of joint management of such a good.

One is whether current efforts can achieve trans-local co-management beyond the regional framework. The branding of rice and other initiatives are being promoted by elderly farmers who have been managing the local environment and several NPOs. These local efforts actually have significant implications for global

16 Watanabe, Taro., Yamaguchi, Keita., and Taniguchi, Riku. Toyota Sutai no Kyodo ni Yoru Shigen Junkangata Nogyo no Spirits to Medieta no Yakuwari - Kyotoshi Kitasaga Rekishiteki Fudo Tokubetsu Hoson Chikunai no Keikan Hoson no Torikumi (lit., Establishment pf Resource-Circulating Agriculture through collaboration of various actors and the role od mediators: Initiatives concerning Landscape conservation in Historic Landscape Special Preservation Area od Kitasaga Kyoto City) , Report of City Planning Institute od Japan, No. 20, 2021.

environmental issues with respect to urban agriculture. However, outside parties are allowed to participate in co-management only when events are planned. Thus, participation is considered to have certain limitations. Naturally, local intentions need to be emphasized in the conservation of urban farmland, but one possibility is to consider the participation of people from outside the region who are involved in agriculture or resource-circulating agriculture and the formation of new teams, thereby enhancing the openness of the efforts here and the recognition of their importance, and creating an evolving co-management structure.

Another is the possibility of introducing a tax system for second-home ownership. There are already such cases in Europe. The destruction of urban farmland in a historic city for second homes must be prevented through city planning, but even in the absence of such destruction, the owner of a second home in a historic city is responsible for maintaining the urban public goods there. While the results of research by experts in this area must be awaited, such results will provide an important perspective for Kyoto City's approach.

When the co-management of urban public goods is linked to livelihoods rather than to urban spaces such as squares, there may be friction between traditional and new communities in terms of interest adjustment and local community customs. How will these be coordinated by the public sector to create a new and expansive co-management structure? To solve these problems, the historic city of Kyoto needs to review its city planning system and taxation system, as well as to reorganize its resident participation system, and needs to seek ways to solve problems with the participation of a wider range of people.



## References

Brumann, Christoph. "Whose Kyoto?: Competing Models of Local Autonomy and the Townscape in the Old Imperial Capital." In Hein, C. and Pelletier, P. Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan. Routledge, 2006. 139–163

Kashihara Masazumi and Nakayama Toru. "Seisan Ryokuchiho Kaisei to Toshi Nogyo no Saihen." (lit., The Revision of the Act Concerning Agricultural Land, etc. Reserved in the Urbanization

Promotion Area and the Reorganization of Urban Agriculture), Kansai Daigaku Keizai Ronshu (The Economic Review of Kansai University), Vol. 44, No. 3 (1994): 407-448.

Hein, Carola and Pelletier, Philippe. "Decentralization and the Tension between Global and Local Urban Japan," in Hein, C. and Pelletier, P. (eds.) Cities, Autonomy, and Decentralization in Japan., New York, Routledge, 2006: 1-24.

Inoue, Noriko. "A System for the Conservation of Historic Cities in Japan: Kyoto and Kanazawa between Local Autonomy and Metropolitan Reality," in Inoue, N. and Orioli, V. (eds.) Bologna and Kanazawa. Protection and Valorization of Two Historic Cities. Bologna, Bononia University Press, 2020: 29-45

Onishi, Toshio and Kobayashi Hiroshi, "Kaisei Seisan Ryokuchi Seido to Toshi Nogyo Tenkai no Shojoken" (lit., The Revised Productive Green Land System and Various Conditions for Turning Urban Agriculture around), The Association for Regional Agricultural and Forestry Economics, Noringyo Mondai Kenkyu (Journal of Rural Problems) 28, 1992: 1-5.

Takeuchi, Kazuhiko. "Seitaigakuteki Tochiriyo Chitsujo no Hokai to Saihen" (lit., The Collapse and Restructuring of the Regime under which Ecological Land Use was to be Pursued), The Association of Rural Planning, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1989: 49-55.



Tashiro, Youichi. "Toshi Nogyo no Tenkai" (lit., The Development of Urban Agriculture), Tashiro, Y. (ed.), Keikakuteki Toshi Nogyo heno Chosen (lit., The Challenge of Systematic Urban Agriculture), Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha 1991.

Urayama, Masuro. and Sato, Keiji. "Genjo Toketsutekina Tochiriyo Kisei ga Nogyo Keikan Hozen ni Oyobosu Eikyo nikansuru Chosa Kenkyu – Sagano Rekisitekifudo Tokubetsu Hozon Chiku no Baai" (lit., Study Concerning the Effect of Status-Quo Land Use Regulations on Agricultural Landscape Conservation: The Case of Sagano's Special Historic Landscape Preservation Area), Journal of architecture, planning and environmental engineering: transactions of AIJ No. 403 1989: 73-86

Watanabe, Taro., Yamaguchi, Keita., and Taniguchi, Riku. Toyota Sutai no Kyodo ni Yoru Shigen Junkangata Nogyo no Spirits to Medieta no Yakuwari - Kyotoshi Kitasaga Rekishiteki Fudo Tokubetsu Hoson Chikunai no Keikan Hoson no Torikumi (lit., Establishment pf Resource-Circulating Agriculture through collaboration of various actors and the role od mediators: Initiatives concerning Landscape conservation in Historic Landscape Special Preservation Area od Kitasaga Kyoto City) , Report of City Planning Institute od Japan, No. 20, 2021.

## Biography

Noriko Inoue (PhD) is professor at the Faculty of Regional Development Studies of Otemon Gakuin University in Osaka, after working for the Agency for Cultural Affairs as a Senior Cultural Properties Specialist. Her studies focus on the regional and urban policy especially on the conservation of the contemporary historic cities, in a perspective of the comparison between Japan and Italy. Among her latest scientific contributions are Inoue, N, (2018). "Moderna e globale: Osaka e le sue trasformazioni urbanistiche" in Marchi, M. (ed.) Città Asia, Bononìa University Press; Inoue, N.(2020). "A system for the conservation of historic cities in Japan: Kyoto and Kanazawa between local autonomy and metropolitan reality" in Inoue, N., Orioli. V. (eds.) Bologna and Kanazawa. Protection and valorization of two historic cities, Bononia University Press.

**Midori, Kamo**
Otemon Gakuin University,

(Osaka, Japan)

# Renovation of Residential Units in a Multi-Unit Housing Complex Utilizing the Wisdom of Machiya in Kyoto



**KEYWORDS**
Renovation; Muti-unit housing complex; Kyo-machiya

**ABSTRACT**

Machiya refers to traditional townhouses in Kyoto. It is possible to feel the seasons and to incorporate the pleasantness of the outside space into the house. We have planned a renovation project to reflect such characteristics in a unit of a muti-unit housing complex. In this paper, I would like to report on our attempt to reproduce the way of living of a Kyoto machiya, a traditional townhouse in Kyoto, which allows the wind to pass through the house and values the sense of the seasons, in a unit of a muti-unit housing complex. Its characteristics are as follows: a home where the wind passes through; earthen floor entrance that spans the width of the housing unit; a home that facilitates child-rearing and supports the growth

of children; nurturing ties; living surrounded by wood; a house for taking over; living healthily and conserving energy.

## Introduction

The term Machiya denotes the traditional townhouses situated in Kyoto. The city experiences harsh and hot summers. To counteract the oppressive heat and moisture, the Machiya architecture was designed as a living space that seamlessly integrated the outdoor environment with the interior. This was achieved through the incorporation of an earthen floor space known as Tori-niwa, which traversed the house, facilitating the free circulation of breezes within the dwelling.

Moreover, the lattice structure facing the street, positioned on the front side of the house, not only allowed inhabitants to perceive the presence of the street but also effectively obstructed external visibility. Each Machiya encompassed a garden linked to the guest room at the house's rear via a veranda-like engawa. Furthermore, these gardens interconnected with those of adjacent Machiya residences, ensuring a continuous flow of breezes from the house's frontal area to the rear garden.



The ambiance of the garden, the movement of breezes, and even the sounds of wind chimes collectively facilitated an immersive experience of the distinct emotional tones associated with the changing seasons. This seasonal essence was conveyed through various elements such as the rain in the rainy season, the vibrant crowds during festivals, a snowy covering in the garden, autumn leaves adrift in the hand-washing basin, cherry blossom petals carpeting the ground near trees, and the reflection of the moon on the glass door. Notably, the severity of winter's cold was notably pronounced.

Throughout the seasons and during the array of seasonal festivals and events, the Machiya in Kyoto endured, providing a backdrop to the everyday lives of its inhabitants.

Figure 01. Appearance of a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020

Figure 02. Interior of a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020



Transitioning from a machiya cold residence to residential units within a multi-unit housing complex, the notable contrast lay in their warmth. The incorporation of insulation materials within the walls adeptly retained the heat from conditioned air, fostering an airtight interior and abolishing potential drafts. However, sustaining

adequate airflow in urban condominiums, particularly in high-density areas, presented challenges. Proximity to neighboring buildings often limited effective window usage, either due to privacy concerns or sheer absence of windows conducive to efficient airflow. In some cases, even with open windows, a refreshing breeze remained elusive. The delineation between interior and exterior spaces was stark due to insulation, depriving inhabitants of a sense of the external environment or prevailing weather conditions indoors.

Multi-unit housing complexes have undoubtedly advanced modern housing, offering warmth even during winter. The three-dimensional housing construction optimized land usage through the overlapping of numerous dwellings on narrow sites. However, this advancement came at the expense of the intimate connection with the outdoor space—a characteristic integral to the traditional Machiya lifestyle.

The pursuit arises: Can we reintroduce this sense of connectedness within conventional housing complexes? This inquiry steered the planning of “Nakagyo Kaze no Ya.” This paper endeavors to document the essence of the Machiya, a traditional Kyoto residence, and subsequently, a project aimed at revitalizing residential units within a housing complex, preserving and perpetuating the revered residential culture.



## Machiya

As previously mentioned, machiya served as both the living and working places for people in Kyoto. They are believed to have originated in the mid-Heian period, which spanned the 9th to 12th centuries, and the prototype of the contemporary machiya is said to have emerged during the mid-Edo period, around the 17th to 19th centuries. Akio Shintani offers the description of machiya in his book: A summary of the description is as follows.

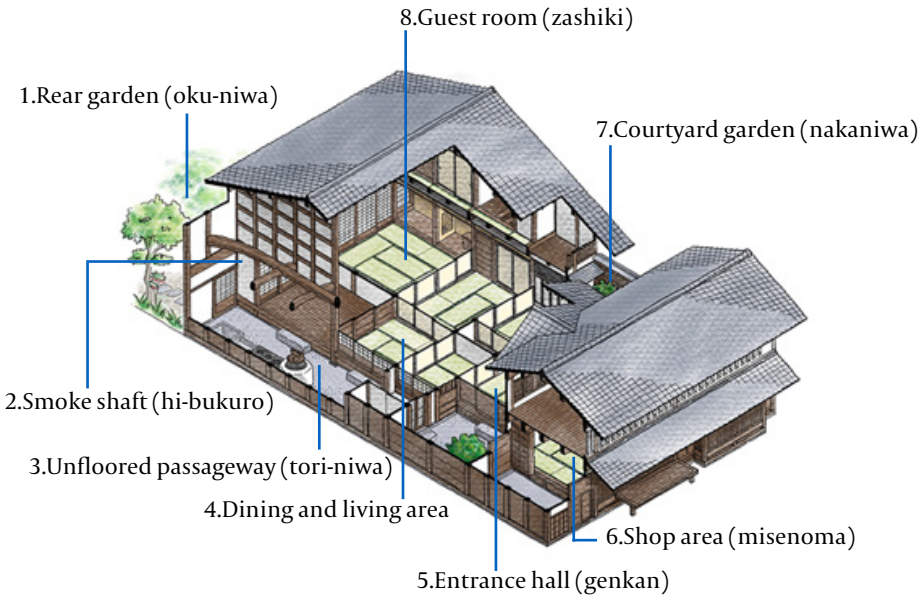
> Machiya is the Japanese name for town houses originally built by merchants and craftsmen in the feudal age in Kyoto. These old town houses are long and narrow and stand very close to each other and to the street. They have been called

"beds of eels."

The lineage of Machiya houses lacks definitive origins, yet resemblances to such structures are discernible in drawings dating back to the conclusion of the Heian period and the subsequent Kamakura era. During the Edo period in Kyoto, the inhabitants were predominantly merchants and artisans, necessitating residences that seamlessly doubled as shops or workshops. Deliberately constructing narrow frontages for these houses served two primary purposes: maximizing the number of street-facing houses for business endeavors and evading taxes imposed based on the width of the structures. Architecturally, the fundamental Machiya design encompassed an unadorned passageway traversing the house from the entrance to the rear, with rooms flanking this pathway. As these residences expanded over time, inhabitants encountered issues concerning adequate lighting and ventilation. Consequently, they devised the "tsubo-niwa," small internal garden spaces within the house. Originally established as townhouses for merchants and artisans, these structures gradually evolved into dwellings exclusively for residential purposes in modern times. Some houses opted for heightened barriers between their premises and the streets. A remarkable aspect of the connection between these townhouses and the city of Kyoto lies in the"communication"spaces at the forefront of these houses. Rooms facing the streets, utilized as shops, were designed to be readily visible from the exterior when the lattice works were removed. These shops doubled as galleries, offering views of the grand processions during events like the Gion Festival, among Japan's most significant summer celebrations. Presently, a few of these shops remain accessible to the public during the Gion Festival, functioning as exhibition spaces where cherished heirlooms like precious screens are exhibited. Thus, these frontal rooms hold dual roles: one as a private domain and the other as a public space for galleries or exhibitions. Kyoto, by accentuating such enigmatic spaces, has fashioned a city replete with unique and intriguing locales. However, the contemporary trend witnesses a gradual erosion or

replacement of Machiya structures. Reflecting on the significance of Machiya becomes imperative as they harbor invaluable insights for shaping enriched urban spaces in the future.[1]

Figure 03. Characteristics of Machiya (Kyoto Townhouse) Layout. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020






The fundamental layout of a machiya is based on the principle of continuity with adjacent buildings and gardens. It links the shop area, which serves as the workplace, the living and dining area, and the guest room using an unfloored Tori-niwa that extends from the front entrance to the rear garden. While this is the generally adopted layout, some variations exist depending on the size of the townhouse. The illustration below shows a relatively large Kyo-machiya built in the Omoteya-zukuri style, where the roofs of the front shop area and the main house at the back are separated from each other.

- 1.Rear garden (oku-niwa) In machiya, which have a narrow frontage, the rear garden serves as a valuable space. It not only provides a connection with nature, natural light, and ventilation,

1 Shintani, Akio. "Machiya: The Town Houses of the Townspeople." In Kyo-Machiya. Mitsumura Suiko Shoin Co., Ltd., 1998.

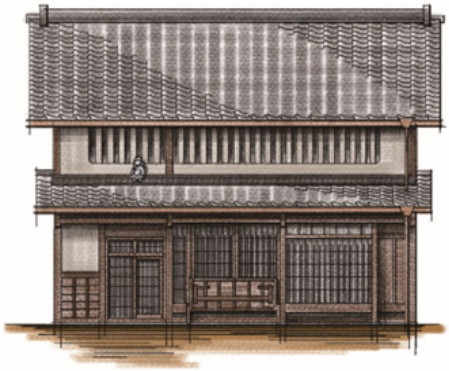
but also plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of a fire during an emergency.

- 2.Smoke shaft (hi-bukuro) The space above the kitchen, known as hashiri-niwa, features a high ceiling to allow smoke and heat from cooking to escape. Beautiful wooden frames such as beams are highlighted, and skylights or high windows are incorporated for natural lighting.
- 3.Unfloored passageway (tori-niwa) “Tori-niwa” refers to a narrow earthen-floored passageway that extends from the front to the rear of kyo-machiya. A door in the middle divides the passageway into two parts: the front is called mise-niwa (shop garden) and the rear hashiri-niwa (hallway garden, used as a kitchen).
- 4.Dining and living area This living space is called “daidoko” in Japanese.
- 5.Entrance hall (genkan) Situated at the rear end of the shop area is an entrance hall, which is designed to welcome esteemed guests, bestowing a sense of formality to the space.
- 6.Shop area (misenoma) Many machiya integrate living and working spaces, with the shop area facing the street being used as the workspace for commerce and crafts.
- 7.Courtyard garden (nakaniwa) This small garden located between the front shop area and the main house always provides a touch of nature and aids with ventilation and natural lighting.
- 8.Guest room (zashiki) The guest room, which faces the rear garden, is designed for hosting important guests. It features a tokonoma alcove that is adorned seasonally to create a welcoming atmosphere for the guests.

Figure 04. Tori-niwa in a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020

The alignment of Machiya in Kyoto amalgamates into a picturesque townscape, characterized by their wooden facades, tiled roofs, mushiko (intricately fine lattice) windows, lattice doors, and eaves that interface with the street. These elements collectively bestow a sense of harmony and grace upon the unified landscape.





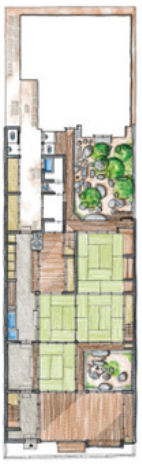


Figure 05. Illustration of the exterior of a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020

Figure 06. Floor plan of a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020

Upon opening its sliding doors and windows, a Machiya undergoes a metamorphosis, transitioning into an expansive, well-ventilated expanse. The presence of the earthen floor, termed "Tori-niwa," extending from the house's front to its rear, enables the passage of breezes, fostering an interconnected airflow throughout. Positioned at the house's rear, the guest room affords a view of the garden, establishing an internal space that seamlessly integrates with the external surroundings.

Japan's abundant four seasons influenced the lifestyle within Machiya dwellings, prompting the utilization of seasonal fittings and mats tailored for both summer and winter. Inhabitants cultivated a way of life fostering a close affinity with the changing seasons and the natural world.

The guest room, offering a panoramic view of the garden, serves as the most formal space within the house. Adorned with a tokonoma alcove embellished with hanging scrolls and ornaments, this area not only accommodates guests but also serves as the venue for hosting seasonal events and ceremonies.



Figure 07. Rear garden of a machiya. The Basics of Kyo-Machiya, City of Kyoto, 2020

In this way, machiya have accompanied Kyoto residents throughout the city's long history as the stage for their daily lives, not only as a place to live, but also as a place to work, to entertain,

and to enjoy the performing arts and culture.

## The Renovation of Residential Units in a Multi-Unit Housing Complex Utilizing the Wisdom of Machiya in Kyoto

As mentioned in the previous sections, Kyoto has a residential culture that has evolved through machiya. This section presents our renovation plan for a residential unit to inherit that culture while also addressing the challenges of a shrinking and aging population in contemporary Japan.

The renovation plan involved one of 135 units in a housing complex in Kyoto. Located on the third floor of this ten-story building, the unit covers an area of 76.86 m2 and is home to a mother and her two teenage children. The entrance is on the north side of the unit, while there is a balcony on the south side. Upon entering, one finds a small space just large enough to take off one's shoes, flanked by a room on both sides. Central to the unit are areas with plumbing like the toilet and bathroom, beyond which lies the kitchen and living room space towards the back of the unit.



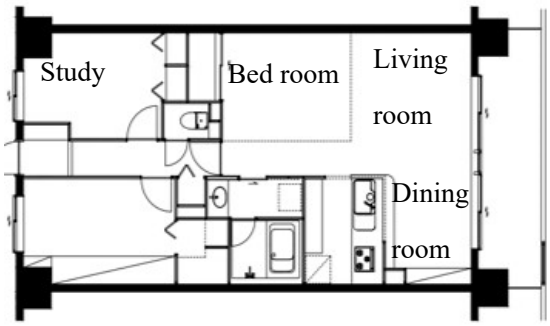



Figure 08. Floor plan before renovation.

## Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya: the residential unit after renovation

The renovation was designed jointly by architect Fumiko Misawa and me. I took charge of the housing plan. The renovation was completed in 2018.

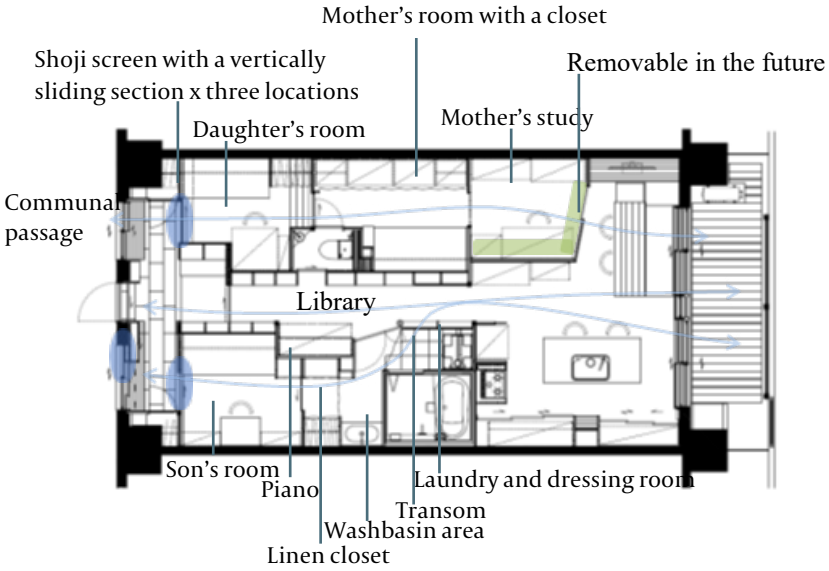



Figure 09. Floor plan of Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya.

- A home where the wind passes through

Establishing efficient airflow within collective housing units often presents a significant challenge. Concerns about privacy, particularly from shared passages or communal spaces, can dissuade residents from opening windows. To counter this, a specific design strategy was implemented within the housing units.

To enhance airflow, the rooms on the eastern side were intentionally planned to be contiguous. Opening the sliding doors between these rooms facilitates a seamless passage for the wind, ensuring uninhibited flow. On the western side, strategic modifications were made by leaving upper wall sections open, enabling the wind to travel from the son's room through the plumbing areas. Additionally, shoji paper screens with vertically sliding sections were integrated into the design, positioned inside the entrance door and between the earthen floor entrance and the private rooms. These screens, when left open, enable the wind to permeate the space while preserving the residents' privacy.

These deliberate adjustments have resulted in the creation of three distinct pathways for the wind, fostering the inflow of fresh external air and allowing inhabitants to experience the nuances of the changing seasons within their living space.

Figure 10. Interior of Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya. Photo taken by Taku Hata

- Earthen floor entrance that spans the width of housing unit

In the reimagined unit, the entrance door unveils a sprawling doma earthen floor entrance that spans the entire width of the unit. This expansive space serves a dual role: it acts as a welcoming reception area for visitors, facilitating brief conversations, while also functioning as a pivotal checkpoint for controlling visitor access. From this juncture, guests have the option to traverse the corridor leading to the inner sanctum of the home or gain direct entry into individual rooms on either side.

This design not only accommodates the fluidity of social interactions but also caters to diverse needs within the household. For rooms designated as workspaces, direct entry allows business partners to engage in meetings. Conversely, for rooms occupied by elderly family members necessitating care, this layout facilitates direct entry for caregivers and medical personnel, ensuring the privacy and security of other family members.

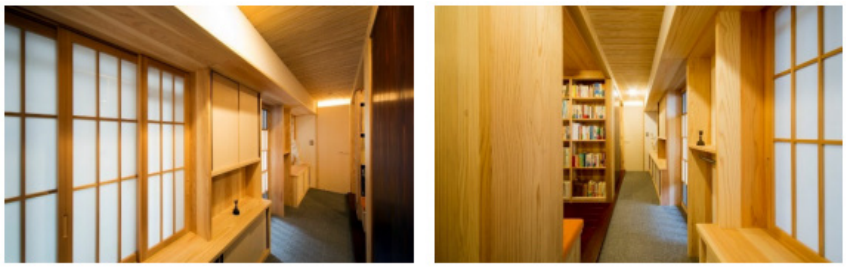


Figure 11. Doma unfloored entrance of Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya. Photo taken by Taku Hata

- A home that facilitate child-rearing and support the growth of children

Rooms accessible directly from the earthen floor entrance have been specifically allocated as the children's quarters. Through this deliberate arrangement, we aim to instill a sense of responsibility in the children by granting them autonomy in managing their personal spaces. Additionally, a designated security zone within the rooms on the east side, equipped with a separate key from the entrance door, allows for secure storage of valuables and confidential items, ensuring privacy within the family domain. This setup not only fosters a safe environment for in-home childcare services but also facilitates seamless home care for elderly family members, even in the absence of other family members.



- Nurturing ties

To create an inclusive and guest-friendly environment, an island kitchen has been fashioned, ideal for collaborative cooking experiences, complemented by a spacious dining area featuring bench-style sofas. Furthermore, by situating a table and chairs on the balcony, an integrated indoor-outdoor space is curated, encouraging and enhancing interactions among residents and guests.

Figure 12. Interior of Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya. Photo taken by Taku Hata

- Living sourronded by wood

The interior of the residential unit is generously adorned with solid natural wood, exuding a distinct woody fragrance that permeates the space. Incorporating shoji screens within the windows augments a traditional Japanese ambiance reminiscent of an independent house, despite being part of a housing complex.



- A house for taking over

We have deliberately reserved considerable space for furniture and heirlooms passed down through generations, intending to preserve and hand them over to the succeeding generation. Flexibility in design was a focal point; the wall enclosing the southern room on the east side was purposefully structured for future removal. This adaptive feature enables the expansion of the living space to accommodate evolving lifestyle changes, especially once the children become independent.

- Living healthity and conserving energy

Prioritizing a health-conscious thermal environment while minimizing energy consumption, we meticulously enhanced thermal insulation. The north and south walls, exposed to external conditions, were fortified using two layers of 25-mm insulation boards, totaling 50 mm in thickness. Upgrades were also made to the windows: south-facing windows were installed with double-glazed panels within the existing window frames, housing shoji

screens within these frames. Meanwhile, the north-facing windows were equipped with shoji screens situated within the existing frames. The resultant heat transfer coefficient, or UA value, notably decreased to 0.51 W/m2 K post-renovation, down from 0.88 W/m2 K before. Closure of all three shoji screens positioned between the earthen floor entrance and the inner entryways effectively transforms the earthen floor entrance into a thermal buffer zone. Consequently, winter temperature measurements revealed that areas beyond the earthen floor entrance consistently maintained temperatures above 20°C, irrespective of heating use.

## Conclusion

Kyoto boasts a rich residential culture of machiya. Nakagyo Kaze-no-ya represents an attempt to create a residential unit that responds to Japan's shrinking and aging population. At the same time, it is the attempt to reproduce the way of living of a Kyoto machiya, which allows the wind to pass through the house and values the sense of the seasons, in an apartment complex. Our endeavor can be considered successful if the children living in this residential unit come to appreciate this unique residential culture that celebrates a sense of the seasons.



## References

Kyoto center for Community Collaboration, "Machiya Revival in Kyoto", Mitsumura Suiko Shoin Co., Ltd., 2009

Kyoto Shimbun, "Kyo no Machiya-ko" (The idea of Machiya in Kyoto), Koyto Shimbun, 1995

City of Kyoto, "The basics of kyo-Machiya", City of Kyoto, 2020

Nakamura Masao, "Kyo no Machiya" (Machiya in Kyoto), Kawara Shoten, 1994

Shintani Akio, "Kyo-Machiya", Mitsumura Suiko Shoin Co., Ltd., 1998.

Takahashi Yasuo, "Kyo-Machiya - A Thousand Year History", Gakugei Publishing, 2001

Tatsumi Kazuo and others, “Machiya Type housing complex”, Gakugei Publishing, 1999

Yamamoto Ryosuke, “DNA of Kyo-Machiya”, Gakugei Publishing, 2006



**Biography**

Professor, Faculty of Regional Development Studies, Otemon Gakuin University. Doctor of Engineering. First Class Architect. Part-time lecturer at Okayama Prefectural University and Osaka University of Commerce. Specializing in housing and residential environment planning, she has conducted research on housing for an aging society with a declining birthrate, housing that inherits Japanese residential culture, and other topics. She has been involved in the Osaka Gas NEXT21 experimental housing complex since its completion.

**Kumiko Shimotsuma**
Kokugakuin University, Japan
kumiko.shimotsuma@kokugakuin.ac.jp

# The Current Situation and Challenges of Cultural Properties Protection in Japan



**KEYWORDS**
cultural properties protection, legal instrument, conservation and utilization plan, community development, tourism promotion

**ABSTRACT**

This paper introduces the recent development and challenges of cultural properties protection policies in Japan. In Chapter 1, it discusses the evolution of the definition of cultural properties in the 1950 Cultural Properties Protection Law from initial three categories to the current six categories, along with the socio-economic context. Chapter 2 explains about the development of more flexible and more community-oriented protection systems alongside the rigorous and specific designation system and the increased need of a conservation and utilization plan, highlighting the deepening relationship between cultural properties protection and community development. Chapter 3 introduces the development of legal

systems in the urban development sector aimed at conserving historic landscapes and environments. In addition, it also pointed out the risk of system complexity without accompanying human resource development. Chapter 4 notes the rise of awareness and support for cultural heritage protection in the tourism sector, while also highlighting the dangers of tourism policies solely focused on economic goals. In Chapter 5, it argues that operating administrative policies with narrow singular objectives, whether for development or conservation, can detrimentally affect community development, emphasizing the need to support activities of local players with embracing the community development principles evolved since the 1960s in Japan.

## (1) Development of Categories of Cultural Properties

## the 1950 Law for the Cultural Properties Protection



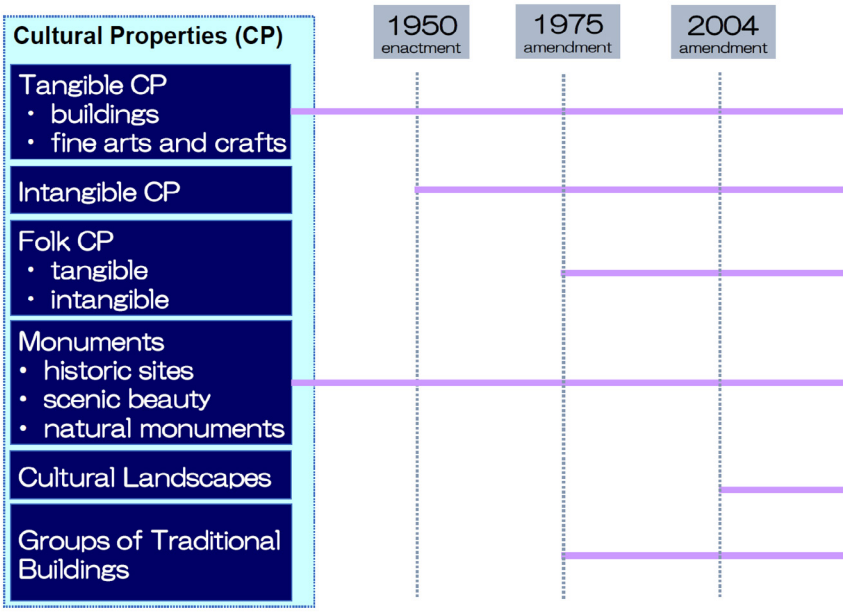



Fig.1 Development of Categories of Cultural Properties under the 1950 Cultural Properties Protection Law

In Japan, the Cultural Properties Protection Law that enacted in 1950 (hereinafter, called the "1950 Law") is a basic legal framework to contribute to the cultural advancement of the nation and the progress or world culture by ensuring the protection of cultural properties and the promotion of their utilization. Within the 1950 Law, cultural properties are currently defined into six categories and

measures for their protection are specified. The following outlines the evolution of the categories.

## Tangible cultural properties

Cultural properties protection in Japan dates back to the late 19th century when the Japanese modernization began. It started with "tangible cultural properties" that consist of building structures and objects like fine arts and crafts, historic books and documents or archaeological artifacts, in the rapid social change of the Meiji Restoration to increase wealth and military power of the country, which was modeled from the Western world.

The earliest ordinance was developed as the "Edict for the Preservation of Antiquities and Old Items" in 1871 in order to protect all sorts of culturally and scientifically important objects against dissipation, loss, damage or destruction. Then, in 1897, the "Law for the Preservation of Ancient Shrines and Temples" was enacted to prevent demolition and abolishment of historic religious buildings and objects due to the anti-Buddhism movement. This Law was developed into the "National Treasures Protection Law" in 1929 in order to extend targets of protection particularly to castles or residences built in the early modern period.



## Monuments

When large-scale land and urban development was promoted by the government to introduce new modern facilities that included railroad systems, road networks and factory areas, the "Law for Preserving Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty and Natural Monuments" was developed in 1919. The three targets of protection depicted in the title of the 1919 Law, which tightly relate with land, are correctively called "monuments" in the present 1950 Law.

Places of scenic beauty includes both artificial (e.g., gardens) and natural (e.g., gorges, seashores). Natural monuments consist of geological and mineral formations, fauna and flora.

## Intangible cultural properties

After World War II, the present 1950 Law" was developed as a basic act on cultural properties protection, with replacing the previous 1919 Law and the 1929 Law, and with adding "intangible

cultural properties" to the categories of cultural properties.

Intangible cultural properties are defined as intangible cultural products or outcomes such as drama, music, craft skills.

## Folk cultural properties and groups of traditional buildings

Rapid national land and urban development during the two-decade-long high economy growth from the mid 1950's to the mid 1970's brought about strong needs of protecting vernacular houses and many other historic buildings in daily use together with their related natural and historic settings.

A large part of the population shifted from the primary industry to the secondary then the tertiary industry. The industrial structure change resulted in serious underpopulation in rural areas and urban congestion. Moreover, various forms of tangible and intangible traditional culture started to be in danger of extinction because of the changes in lifestyles and values.

In these circumstances, in 1975, a major amendment was made to the 1950 Law, and new categories of "groups of traditional buildings" and "folk cultural properties" were introduced in the definition of cultural properties.



## Cultural landscapes

A recent serious conservation issue in Japan is the population decrease coupled with aging of the population and a declining birthrate. Particularly in rural communities, traditional land use with regard to agriculture, forestry and fisheries is being lost. This condition is impacting various living environmental factors that include national land preservation, water source cultivation, ecosystem integrity and inheritance of traditional techniques and culture. To conserve landscapes that show how people have coexisted with nature in a place, the category of "cultural landscapes" was added in 2004.

Comparing with the Cultural Landscapes in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage, the cultural landscapes in Japan have the narrower definition that is limited to a "continuing landscape" within the "organically evolved landscape."

## Consequence

With the development of the cultural property definition in the 1950 Law, it can be seen that the following three major social risk factors have been compiled over the course of time:

(a) Large-scale construction work based mainly on land and urban development,

(b) A number of small-scale alterations demanded by residents based mainly on the diversification of values and lifestyles,

(c) Erosion of communities mainly due to the population decrease.

## (2) Development of Protection Systems

### Three Protection Systems

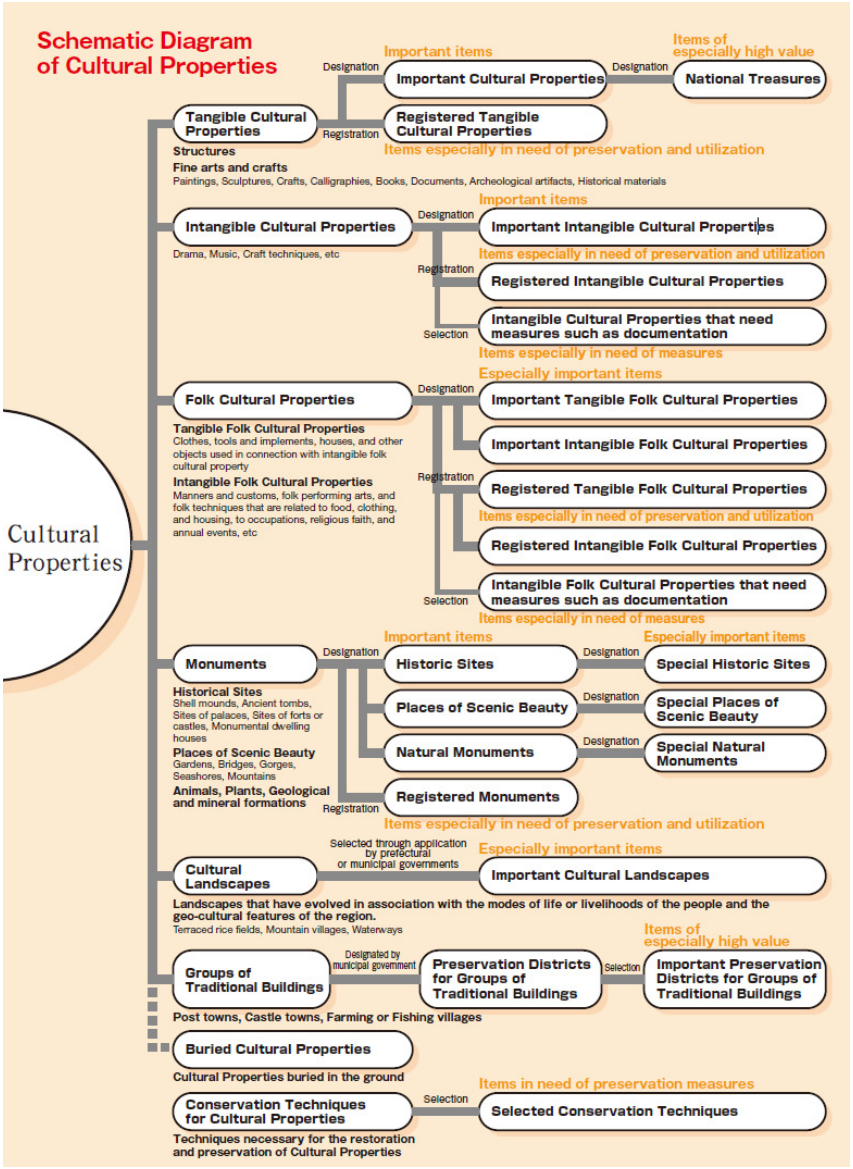



Fig.2 Schematic Diagram of Cultural Properties (excerpted from the brochure entitled “Cultural Properties for Future Generation, outline of cultural administration in Japan” published by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs)

Within the 6 categories of the cultural property, “tangible cultural properties,” “intangible cultural properties,” “monuments” and “folk cultural properties” have two protection systems that are the rigorous “designation system” and the moderate “registration system.” On the other hand, “groups of traditional buildings” and “cultural landscapes” are protected by the “selection system.”

In any case, it is the Minister of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology (hereinafter, "Minister of MEXT") who is authorized to make designation, registration or selection, and also to cancel them. Meanwhile, it is the Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs (hereinafter, "Commissioner of ACA") who is authorized to give property owners permission, instructions, recommendations or orders. The Council for Cultural Affairs plays a role as an advisory body to the Minister of MEXT and the Commissioner of ACA.

## Designation System and Registration System

### Designation System

Basic idea and method of designation varies by category. With regard to "tangible cultural properties" and "monuments," the process of narrowing down candidate properties is rigorous, and there are two ranks of designation. Taking "tangible cultural properties" as an example, among the "Important Cultural Properties" of national significance, those are highly regarded from the viewpoint of world culture are designated as "National Treasures." For the designated properties, strict regulations are imposed on change of the current conditions, but a generous financial support is provided for property owners to conduct various conservation works that include repair, restoration, disaster prevention and maintenance of facilities for visitors.



For "intangible cultural properties," when performing arts or fine arts and crafts of national significance are designated as "Important Intangible Cultural Properties," certification is also given to individuals or groups that are able to embody the performing arts at high level or that are a master of the technical arts. The certified individuals are commonly called "Living National Treasures." The government provides special grants (annual amount of 2 million yen) to Living National Treasures. In case of the certified groups or relevant local authorities, the government subsidizes for the costs of public exhibitions and successor training projects.

Among the "folk cultural properties" of high values, tangible objects and structures such as costumes, tools, stages and houses are designated as "Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties." On the other hand, intangibles which people have created in their daily lives and passed down for generations, such as manners,

customs, folk performing arts, occupations, religious faiths, festivals, and folk techniques related to clothing, food and housing, are designated as “Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties.” The government provides financial support for local authorities or relevant conservation societies to repair the Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties or develop facilities for their conservation, exhibition and use. Additionally, financial assistance is extended for the training of inheritors of Important Folk Cultural Properties and for the repair or replacement of related equipment.

## Registration System

The registration system plays an important role to protect a number of cultural properties of various types and with various characteristics that the designation systems cannot cover. The Minister of MEXT registers a property that is in particular need of conservation and utilization measures on the National Cultural Property Register in consultation with the relevant local government and with the consent of the property owner. This system helps the property owner and those who want to conserve the property by widely informing the importance of the property and by providing technical and financial support and tax incentives.



The registration system was originally created in 1996 to cover immovable “tangible cultural properties.” At the time, there was a strong need to extend protection targets to all sorts of structures to serve as testimony of the modernization of Japan, including structures related to industry, transportation and public works, government office buildings, school facilities and residences.

This system was extended to other tangible categories of cultural properties in 2004 and to all intangible heritage in 2011. At present, the Registered Intangible Cultural Properties include calligraphy, traditional sake brewing, Japanese confectionary, local cuisine of Kyoto, and the Registered Intangible Folk Cultural Properties include two local food product techniques.

## A supplement system for intangible folk cultural properties

In the case of intangible folk cultural properties, the government selects items that require specific documentation, aside from those

already designated or registered. When necessary, the government creates records or provides grants for local authorities or relevant conservation societies to create records.

### Consequnence

Through the creation and development of the registration system, and amid increases in cultural properties that are used as facilities or that have still evolved as living culture, it would be possible to say that ACA has faced a need to shift from a monitoring agency for quality control to a policy-oriented agency, so that more people become involved in the protection of cultural properties. Too much dependence on control measures is not only ineffective but may also arrest the healthy growth of mechanisms and systems that have sustained the living heritage up to today.

## Selection System

### Basic concept of the Selection System

The selection system is applied to "groups of traditional buildings" and "cultural landscapes." Both of these include communities and their living environment. Therefore, this system highlights autonomous actions by local governments and local residents.



The selection system was created with the introduction of "groups of traditional buildings" in 1975. In this case, municipalities have the responsibility to perform the following actions, taking residents' opinions into account:

- Conducting a scientific study to clarify the characteristics of traditional buildings and their surroundings, to develop a list of important traditional buildings and related environmental features, and to develop a strategy to conserve them to set a preservation district,
- Enacting a municipal regulation to conserve preservation districts, and to establish an advisory council based on the regulation,
- Developing a conservation and utilization plan for a Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings (hereinafter called "Preservation District"), and designating the Preservation District (i) based on the City Planning

Act when it is in a City Planning Area, or (ii) based on the abovementioned regulation when it is outside a City Planning Area,

The Minister of MEXT selects the Preservation Districts of national significance and with appropriate conservation measures as the Important Preservation Districts, according to the application submitted by municipalities. The selection procedure does not involve any extra regulations but gives ACA the justification to provide financial support to the municipalities. In addition, if selected as an Important Preservation District, both the national and municipal governments can offer tax incentives to residents in the Preservation District.

## Selection as Important Cultural Landscapes

The selection system also applies to "cultural landscapes" established in 2004. While the 1950 Law allows both prefectural and municipal governments to submit an application for selection as an Important Cultural Landscapes, there has never been a case of a prefectural government acting as an applicant. When a local government submits an application to the Minister of MEXT, it is required to meet the following conditions:



- The local government should have a conservation and utilization plan for the cultural landscapes.
- The area of the Cultural Landscapes defined in the conservation and utilization plan should be included in (i) the Landscape Planning Area defined in the Landscape Plan that the local government develops based on the Landscape Act or (ii) the Landscape District defined in the Landscape Act and implemented in accordance with the City Planning Act, to be conserved under the appropriate landscape controls.
- The attributes of the Cultural Landscape must also be sufficiently conserved by the relevant regulations based on competent laws.

## Consequence

The selection system has a different approach from the designation system. It respects the autonomy and initiative of

the relevant local government by clarifying the role of the related municipality as authorization authorities for the Preservation Districts and the role of the related local governments as coordinators to induce suitable changes for the Cultural Landscapes among the concerned laws, regulations, plans and projects.

Whatever the case, the residents' sense of local ownership is essential.

## Conservation and Utilization Plan

### 2018 amendment of the 1950 Law

In 2018, a major revision was made to the 1950 Law to increase various players involved in cultural property protection and to ensure local participation and involvement. There are two key points to the revision:

(a) Introduction of a system whereby the owners of designated or registered cultural properties can request the Commissioner of ACA to authorize a "Conservation and Utilization Plan" of the concerned property,



(b) Introduction of a system whereby a municipality can request the Commissioner of ACA to authorize a "Municipal Plan for Conservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties." Prefecture governments are also empowered to develop a "Prefectural General Principle for Conservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties."

Before the 2018 amendment, ACA has encouraged property owners of immovable "tangible cultural properties" and "monuments" to voluntarily develop a conservation and management plan. The needs of conservation and management plans rose in the 1990s, accompanying the increasing needs (i) to extend protection targets to a number of cultural properties in modern times and of various types, and (ii) to promote public involvement and participation in sustainable use with appropriate conservation.

In Japan, conservation has long been recognized as a specialized field with highly professional knowledge, techniques and skills. It has also long been conducted in a particular network that consists of the concerned authorities, qualified conservation experts and

property owners. Adding to these, strict official control of changing property conditions has sowed a negative impression that “even a property owner cannot drive one nail into his/her own cultural property.” This is a misunderstanding. But it suggests the situation that appropriate treatment of cultural properties has long been so unclear that not everyone can positively participate in conservation. These circumstances still existed in the 1990s.

With an increasing number of the designated and registered cultural properties, it becomes more important to ensure reasonable use and maintenance to retain a good condition of those. This kind of “conservation in use” enables us to create a society where people can enjoy participating in conservation.

Moreover, through the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995 and other serious disasters after it, it has also recognized that the promotion of “conservation in use” is indispensable for getting more people involved in disaster prevention, mitigation and recovery of cultural properties and their surroundings.

The 2018 amendment of the 1950 Law was made to diffuse the conservation and utilization plan to designated or registered cultural properties in all four categories.



## Municipal Plan for Conservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties

In Japan, cultural properties are classified in six categories and also subdivided into various types. While this situation works positively to develop the basic principles, methods or measures for protection, it has caused difficulties to achieve comprehensive management under the influence of sectionalism.

The challenge of “conservation in use” also involves the need for comprehensive management. Reviewing some relevant reports developed by the Council for Cultural Affairs, it is recognized that the word for “comprehensive management” includes the following issues:

- Comprehensive management of associated cultural properties among different categories (e.g. historic document, furniture, building, garden and site)

- Comprehensive management of cultural properties and their surroundings
- Comprehensive management of various cultural properties involving a historic or cultural concept of the region

Since 2007, ACA encouraged and supported municipalities mainly (i) to develop overall heritage lists that include all types of cultural properties in their territories despite the presence or absence of an official designation, registration or selection, and (ii) to develop visions and strategies to appreciate the historic and cultural integrity and relations, within the framework of the "History and Culture Basic Plan."

To strengthen such measures, a new system to authorize municipalities to develop a "Municipal Plan for Conservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties" was introduced to the 1950 Law in 2018. Prefectural governments are also authorized to develop a general principle in each prefecture.

## Historic-Cultural Thematic Groups of Cultural Properties



Japan ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1992. As of the 1st of July, 2023, there are 20 World Cultural Heritage sites and 5 World Natural Heritage sites in Japan.

It is observed that the idea of "serial nomination" of the World Heritage has an effect over Japan on developing the perception and identification of a thematic group of cultural properties. In Japan, updates of the World Heritage Tentative List were conducted in 2006 and 2007 based on proposals by local governments instead of the prior way to make in accordance with the proposals by an expert panel. At the time, many unique unprecedented thematic concepts were generated and shown.

The idea of historic-cultural thematic groups of cultural properties have also strongly been required in the national policy of local revitalization and inbound tourism promotion. In accordance with this movement, the conventional style of property interpretation had to face criticism as it was too detailed for either domestic or foreign tourists to understand the academically region, and consequently Japan.

In 2015, ACA launched a project entitled “Japan Heritage.” It is aimed to identify attractive thematic packages of cultural properties as “Japan Heritage” and to support related local governments to appeal their charms both at home and overseas.

The design of the Japan Heritage project was started with an aim at helping local governments promote conservation of possible World Heritage candidate sites based on a long-term perspective. However, during the preparation, a more prioritized objective was added to spread Japan’s diverse attractions to the world, showing a concrete short-term goal to select 100 Japan Heritage sites by the time of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As a result, 104 sites were identified.

### Consequence

Both individually and comprehensively, there has been a growing need of “conservation and utilization plan” for the recent three decades in Japan. The need comes from the issues of conventional protection ways and new socio-economic demands.

From the past experiences, it is observed that we are gradually learning that cultural property protection work requires both scientific approach and human approach. While paying full attention to an academic perspective, it is also essential to have a wide and deep understanding of the cultural and social backgrounds that have shaped the local sense for the cultural properties.



## (3) National Land Development Policy for Historic Environments

As mentioned above, the selection system of the Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings was introduced in 1975. Since around the same time, many local governments have developed their voluntary ordinances for landscape control to recover, maintain, enhance and create the characteristics of living environment. That number reached about 500 by the early 21st century.

In 2003, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (hereinafter, called “MLIT”) developed the “Policy on the Creation of a Beautiful Country.” It reviewed the previous national land development, describing “landscapes that are chaotic, no

longer unique or the same as elsewhere can be seen all over the country because of a lack of scenic beauty due to too much focus on the economy, efficiency and functionality," and presented 15 concrete policies to create a beautiful country.

Following these policies, MLIT developed the Landscape Act in 2004 to authorize local governments to develop their Landscape Plans and other necessary measures for the formation of better landscapes.

In 2007, the "Law for Maintaining and Enhancing Historic Environments in Communities" was enacted through cooperation by MLIT, ACA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (hereinafter called "MAFF"). This law is commonly called as the "law for history-based community design." This is not a law to control landscape alteration, but rather to give municipalities financial support in accordance with their Municipal Plan for Maintaining and Enhancing Historic Landscapes authorized by MLIT, ACA, and MAFF.

In this Law, the "historic environment" is defined as an environment that meets the following three conditions:



- The existence of important historic buildings (that should be nationally designated or selected cultural properties).
- The existence of associated community areas surrounding the important historic buildings.
- The existence of associated community activities reflecting the history and culture of the place.

In the Municipal Plan for Maintaining and Enhancing the Historic Landscape, the municipalities are required mainly (i) to explain the historical and cultural integrity of the entire municipal area, (ii) to describe the basic concepts of the historic environment, (iii) to decide important historic environmental areas, (iv) to develop needed measures and projects for maintaining and enhancing the historic environment, including the identification of buildings and facilities that need particular attention to carry out the objectives of the plan.

In addition to the above-mentioned systems by ACA or

MLIT, there are cultural property protection ordinances or civic heritage programs at the prefectural and municipal levels. In recent years, there has been an increase in regions actively engaging with initiatives such as World Heritage, World Intangible Heritage, Memory of the World, UNESCO Geoparks, or World Agricultural Heritage.

The systems supporting the inheritance of cultural heritage and historic environments are becoming more enriched. On the other hand, the increasing number and complexity of these systems have sometimes led to a lack of understanding among residents, resulting in a reliance on government intervention.

Additionally, there are cases where the implementation of these systems has become somewhat bureaucratic, leading to insufficient research, consultation with residents and coordination among relevant national and local government authorities.

To fully leverage these systems, efforts are needed to develop capacity and expertise within each community, authority and research institution.



## (4) Cultural Properties Protection and Tourism Promotion

In Japan, the birthrate declined to below 2.0 in 1975. In 1997, the young population (age 0-14 years) fell below the older population (age 65 years and older). Consequently, in 2008, the country's population started to decrease. Since the 1990s, economic stagnation has been prolonged.

Under these circumstances, reinvigoration of local economies has been an important national policy for the last couple of decades. As an important effort to increase employment and to recover populations in local communities across the country, the government is implementing positive measures for inbound tourism.

In 2008, the Japan Tourism Agency was established within the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (hereinafter, called "MLIT") to launch full-fledged efforts to sustain long-term growth of inbound tourism.

In 2010, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced a new strategy of "Cool Japan," aimed at actively publicizing the strengths of Japan and the attractions of its regions, including its culture and cultural heritage, to the world.

In 2016, the Japanese Prime Minister's Office announced the "Tourism Vision to Support the Future of Japan." Based on this vision, the "Task Force on promoting Tourism Community Development with the Use of Historic Resources" was established on the initiative with the chief Cabinet secretary. Since then, various financial, technical, and legal support systems and measured have been developed to use historic resources (e.g. houses, castle buildings, temple buildings) widely located across Japan.

At present, the contribution of cultural properties to local revitalization and tourism development becomes a part of the national development policies. The launch of the Japan Heritage project in 2015 and the amendments of the 1950 Law in 2018 and 2020 mentioned above were conducted in strong relation with this tendency.

In March 2023, a new "Basic Plan for Promoting a Tourism-Oriented Nation" was approved by the Cabinet. It aims at sustainable tourism destination development, inbound tourism recovery and domestic exchange expansion based on the three key concepts, namely "sustainable tourism", "expanding consumption" and "boosting regional tourism."



The current tourism promotion policy is a part of economic development with setting numerical targets for the number of foreign tourists and their expenditures. For this condition, there are some criticisms that it has led to issues such as widening disparities between urban areas and rural areas and the loss of local cultural feature and distinctiveness. It is considered important to build a local consensus on how we want to hand over a set of the cultural properties with their historic and cultural settings to the future generations rather than to strive excessively to meet tourists' demands. The conservation and utilization plans should be a good tool for the effort.

# (5) Conclusion

## Some Issues and Challenges

As mentioned above, institutional measures to protect cultural properties have been substantially enriched and developed during recent decades, based on the rising interest in the importance of society in history and culture and based on the needs of local economic revitalization and tourism development.

However, it can be said that a sense of appreciation for the environmental integrity and its meaning for communities has not been well identified or developed. Therefore, in the field of cultural property protection, there is still a tendency to avoid every change to the existing condition. A number of people is too reluctant to propose or accept required suitable changes for living cultural properties. In this context, conservation and utilization plans for cultural properties sometimes cannot show user-friendly measures but just involve burdens.

## A possible pioneering approach



When pondering how to consider the relation between environmental integrity and the respective meaning of each cultural property involved in it, and how to implement comprehensive management of cultural properties of a place, some pioneering cases of Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings (see photos) may serve as useful case studies. Regardless of whether the area is rural or urban, they demonstrate the following common attributes:

- The community has its own rules, not only for conserving traditional buildings and associated landscapes, but also for conserving a good living environment.
- The community has an autonomous management organization to implement rules and discuss consensus-building on important matters.
- The community has a system of having discussions with those who conduct construction works.
- The municipal government conducts the relevant

conservation measures in close consultation with the community.

## Conclusion

In many cases, conservation activities are started with high expectations to revitalize the economic situation with tourism. The protection of cultural properties and economic development have often been perceived as a binary opposition. However, they share a common ground. The danger lies in viewing regions only from a singular perspective. Both requires a multifaceted approach that considers the various elements shaping the historic environment.

In recent years in Japan, terms like “community heritage” or “local heritage” have been frequently used. Behind this usage is a recognition of contemporary challenges that can not be accurately expressed by terms like “natural heritage” or “cultural heritage,” emphasizing the importance of seeking social harmony.

In the aforementioned 2018 amendment to the 1950 Law, a system was also introduced where municipal boards of education designate organizations to support their activities in conservation and utilization of cultural properties. The similar mechanism are situated in the 2004 Landscape Act and the 2007 Law for History-based Community Design. There are various stages between conservation and destruction. Among them, community involvement, including both individuals and organizations, is crucial when seeking better methods of conservation. It would be important to open various paths for participation by more local residents and organizations so that the earnestness with which they engage with their living environment could be actively acknowledged as a part of the heritage authenticity.

## Biography

Dr. Kumiko SHIMOTSUMA is an expert in built heritage conservation, particularly conservation of historic heritage settlements and cultural landscapes. From April 1994 to March 2022, she worked for the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) as Senior Program Specialist. In her 28-year career at ACA, she was mainly involved in examination for registration, restoration, risk preparedness and promotion of conservation-in-use in the field of Important Cultural Property buildings, Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings and Important Cultural Landscapes. She was also seconded to UNESCO World Heritage Centre (1995), UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok (1996) and ICCROM (2002-03) to contribute to protection of cultural heritage in Asia. In April 2022, she was appointed to a professor in the Faculty of Tourism and Community Development at Kokugakuin University.