Cultural Properties Protection in Japan
– Law, Policy, Strategy and System –
From the aspect of Built Heritage

Kumiko SHIMOTSUMA
(Dr. of Engineering)
Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties
Agency for Cultural Affairs
Cultural Properties

Tangible cultural properties
- Buildings and other structures
- Works of fine arts and crafts

Intangible cultural properties

Folk cultural properties

Monuments and sites

Cultural Landscapes

Groups of traditional buildings

Credibility

Types of Cultural Property

1950 Establishment

1975 amendment

2004 amendment

1897-

1871-

1919-
Credibility

No. of ICP buildings (classified by period)

1988.06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>Asuka, Nara</th>
<th>Heian</th>
<th>Kama-kura</th>
<th>Muromachi</th>
<th>Momoyama</th>
<th>Edo</th>
<th>Meiji</th>
<th>Taisho</th>
<th>Showa</th>
<th>TOTAL No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>2217</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>4732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Credibility

No. of ICP buildings
(classified by types)

1988.06

Western-style buildings
Vernacular houses
Castles
Residences

2018.06

Shrines
Temples
Residences

Including all periods from ancient to contemporary

Pre-modern or Earlier + (82%)
Modern & Contemporary (18%)

Western-style buildings
Vernacular houses
Castles
Residences
Religious buildings
School facilities
Cultural facilities
Government facilities
Commercial buildings
Industrial, transportation, or civil engineering facilities
### 1994
Designation Criteria on National Treasure and Important Cultural Property buildings was amended to broaden protection target;

**<before amendment>**
Buildings and other structural works

**<after amendment>**
Buildings, **civil structures**, and other structural works

### 1996
A designation strategy was developed to clarify that modern built heritage should be in an area of immediate priority for protection.

### 1996
Cultural Property Protection Law was amended and a system called “Registered Tangible Cultural Property (RCP)” was introduced, in order to facilitate “conservation in use” of heritage buildings (more than 50 years old) in various types and with various features which can not be covered by the ICP designation system.

→ **the number of RCP buildings as of 1 June 2018 is 11,772.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major cases</th>
<th>ICP</th>
<th>RCP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of ownership</td>
<td>notification</td>
<td>notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss or damage</td>
<td>notification</td>
<td>notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair</td>
<td>pre-notification</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alteration of current conditions permission</td>
<td>permission</td>
<td>pre-notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts that may affect the preservation of heritage buildings</td>
<td>permission</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate repair and maintenance by owners</td>
<td>order or recommendation</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of environment that shall be required for appropriate preservation of heritage buildings</td>
<td>restraint, prohibition, or order</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facilities or Equipment for Disaster Prevention
Environment conservation
Diagnosis
Restoration
Anti-seismic reinforcement
Development of conservation and management plan
Facilities or Equipment for Utilization
Facilities or Equipment for Interpretation
Minor repair and beautification

◎ : for conservation purposes, ○ : for utilization purposes

*1: financial assistance covers only costs for design and supervision to ensure qualities of project
*2: financial assistance provides only to local gov. and other organizations specified by ACA Commissioner.
Strong initiative by the national government by means of rigorous regulations and financial assistance programs has allowed heritage conservation communities to remain small for a long time.

Targets of protection have been extended to modern heritage buildings.

The RCP system was established in 1996.

Declining birthrate and an aging population have accelerated particularly in rural areas.

- Diversification of heritage buildings;
- Increase of heritage buildings owned by individuals, companies or public organizations;
- Increased needs for “conservation in use”

- Needs of a number of experts who can provide technical support;
- Needs of financial support systems for RCP buildings;

- Successor problems of vernacular buildings;
- Less local support for heritage protection;

“Shortages of human resources” as a root cause of every heritage problems.
Capacity Building

**Conservation techniques**

- Hands-on exhibition on conservation techniques (2005～)

**Conservation materials**

- E.g. cypress barks, timbers, bamboos, Japanese lacquer

"Forests for Heritage" Program for ensuring stable supply of specific conservation materials (2006～) which includes:

- Classification of forests or fields for producing specific materials;
- Financial assistance for maintaining the classified forests or fields;
- On-site training;
- Awareness-raising activities;
Conservation in use

• Research study for developing a strategy to foster cooperation with NPOs (2004～05);
• Program for creating good practices of heritage use by NPOs (2006～10);
• Program for creating good practices of heritage management and maintenance by NPOs (2011～15);
• Program for encouraging and support NPOs to solve problems in heritage use (2016 ~)

Conservation architects

• 60-hour training courses organized in cooperation between the Architects and Building Engineers Associations and local governments, to increase “Heritage Managers” (2002 ~)
Communities Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings (Den-ken)

Den-ken system was established in 1975.

As of 1 June 2018, 117 districts in 97 cities are selected as Important Preservation Districts
System of Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings

- (1) Preparation Study
- (2) Development of Regulation
- (3) Establishment of Advisory Council
- (4) Determination of Preservation District
- (5) Development of Preservation Plan

Municipalities
Municipal Board of Education

application to the Minister of MEXT

Consultation with the Council for Cultural Affairs

- (6) Classification as Important Preservation District
- (7) Support municipalities’ activities (e.g. subsidy, tax advantage)

National Government (MEXT, ACA)

Financial assistance

Technical Advice
Alteration of current conditions should be permitted by Mayors and Municipal Board of Education.

Location

Scale, Form

Design, Color

+ Structure
Restoration of traditional buildings
Façade enhancement of non-traditional buildings with historic design code
Disaster Mitigation

Group alarm system
Room plan and interior decorating are exempt from regulation.
Three elements in Den-ken system

**Human resources:**
There are always some residents who are motivated to face social issues of the place.

**Physical development:**
Development goals, strategies, and methods can be formulated based on historic and cultural features of the place.

**System:**
There is a consensus-building system among residents of the place.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td><strong>Historical City Planning Act</strong> was developed by MLIT, ACA and MAFF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>ACA encouraged municipalities to develop “<strong>Schematic Plan for History and Culture</strong>”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>ACA started the “<strong>Japan Heritage</strong>” program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Cultural Property Protection Law was amended;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) to introduce a qualification system of “<strong>Regional Master Plan for Cultural Property Conservation and Utilization</strong>,” and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) to introduce a qualification system of conservation and utilization plan of designated properties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>