

# **THE MACHIZUKURI BOTTOM-UP APPROACH TO CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC COMMUNITIES: LESSONS FOR THAILAND**

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## **BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

With its authentic historic monuments, the Rattanakosin area plays an important role in the identity of the old town of Bangkok. The conservation of the Rattanakosin area started in 1982, the year of Bangkok's bicentenary anniversary. In that year itself, many studies related to Rattanakosin's history, arts, and architecture were done. Different government sectors proposed several conservation plans. The result was the Master plan for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin, which was made public by the Rattanakosin Committee. Since then, conservation activities along the lines of policy plans have been consistently implemented.

Then came a period of change in 1997-1998 when the first bottom-up-approach for conservation was started. Citizens' groups were formed to "wake up" their hometown (Askew 301-304), and they were supported by the local government that was formed following the decentralisation policy.

Today, the government authorities pay more attention to public participation. In the Strategic Plan for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin and the Old Towns (2004-2008), a public participation plan was added to the main plan. Furthermore, the Draft Plan of Public Participation for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin (2004-2006), was launched as a new tool for conservation.

However, public participation is an ongoing process, and the plans still need to be adjusted to generate long-term results. The sectors need to study effective bottom-up approaches to conservation in other Asian countries with similar situations, to apply in conservation efforts in Thailand. Hence, the focus of this project is to study *machizukuri*, the bottom-up approach to conservation in Japan, for an understanding of how to revitalise historic districts by allowing inhabitants to participate in conservation processes. Lastly, a bottom-up approach to conservation that is suitable for the Rattanakosin area is proposed.

## **MACHIZUKURI: THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Over one hundred years of architectural and urban conservation in Japan, concepts and practices of conservation have been transformed by economic and social changes. From the Nara period until the Meiji Restoration period in 1868, responsibility for the construction and repair of official buildings, including the most important Buddhist temples, were in the hands of government agencies. Since the early Meiji era, conservation has been part of people's duties under the laws adopted from Western countries.

### ***Stage I: Giving Citizens Responsibility for Cultural Conservation***

At the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868), the government and the people cultivated modern methods of development, and tended to ignore the need to protect cultural properties and traditions. From 1880, the Japanese government realised the importance of protecting its cultural heritage and granted funds for the maintenance of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines (*koshaji hozon kin*). By 1894, 539 temples and shrines had received subsidies for repairs and reconstruction.

In 1897, the government enacted the first law for the protection of cultural properties. The Law for the Preservation of Ancient Shrines and Temples (*koshaji hozon hou*) provided for legal protection and the granting of subsidies for preservation works. According to this law, the first historic buildings and art treasures in the possession of shrines and temples were protected as national treasures. Before the enforcement of this law, historic treasures were destroyed not only by the replacement of old structures with new constructions but also through the export of art treasures. Since then, the Law for the Preservation of Ancient Shrines and Temples has proved an effective tool in preventing the destruction of historic treasures (Henrichsen 12-13).

In 1929, the Law for the Preservation of National Treasures (*kokuhoo hozon hou*) was enacted; the protection was expanded to cover the treasures owned by local public bodies and individuals. Nevertheless, these early laws still protected only art objects and buildings as tangible cultural heritage.

Later, the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (*bunkazai hogohou*) of 1950 was legislated. This law also included the Law for the Preservation of Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty of 1919, and used the term “scenic zoning” to protect historic areas such as the designated historic site of the Meiji Shrine, Tokyo, and the scenic area of the historic core of Kyoto. Legal categories such as “intangible cultural properties” and “folk cultural properties” meant that, for the first time, the traditional performing arts and applied arts were protected.

Later, the establishment of the Agency for Cultural Affairs<sup>1</sup> supported the owners of cultural properties in being more responsible in protecting properties that allowed public access. It should be mentioned that at the end of the first stage—before the Second World War—the definition of cultural properties was expanded beyond religious buildings, and the responsibilities for preserving cultural properties began to change hands to the citizens of Japan.

### ***Stage II: The Role of Grass-roots Movements in Townscape Conservation***

From 1960-1970, economic expansion brought widespread loss of precious historic environments. This led to the formation of grass-roots movements for the protection of historic environments all over Japan. Public concerns were not only for the protection of high value buildings but also for whole historic areas; therefore, the issue of preserving groups of historic buildings was discussed for the first time in Japan.

The second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s saw the emergence of local citizens’ protests against the destruction of the scenic beauty of their surroundings and against the new construction in three areas, Kamakura, Kyoto and Nara. Even though the protests in Kyoto and Nara were unsuccessful, these initial townscape conservation movements brought about the passage of the Law for the Preservation of Historic Landscape in Ancient Capitals (*koto ni okeru rekishiteki fuudo no hozon ni kansuru tokubetsu sochihou*) in 1966. The law protected eight ancient capitals: Asuka, Ikaruga, Kamakura, Kashihara, Kyoto, Nara, Sakurai and Tenri .

Because of this law, in 1967 Kyoto became a good example of a city that embraced two significant areas designated as the Historic Landscape Preservation District and the Special Historic Landscape Preservation District, covering 60 square metres and 15 square metres respectively. The significance of the city ordinance is that it played an important role in protecting an urban area, which is “space”, rather than “art objects” or “buildings”, which were what laws were formerly enacted to protect (Nitschke 160-62).

In 1968, the City Planning Law was passed. This important law supported decentralisation of planning authority to local governments. Thanks to this law, master plans of urban areas can be designed at the municipal level with only a notification of decisions to the prefectural governor. In essence, this will encourage the passing of Historic Preservation *Machizukuri* Ordinances (*machinami jorei*) in a number of local areas.

In 1973, local governments which were interested in townscape conservation joined forces to found the Japanese Association of Towns with Historic Townscapes (*rekishiteki keikan toshi renraku kyogikai*). In 1974, local townscape conservation groups formed the Japanese Association for Townscape Conservation (*zenkozu machinami hozon renmei*), originally consisting of the Friends of *Tsumago* Society, the *Imai-cho* Preservation Society, and the *Arimatsu* Town-making Society.

Active local governments and citizens' groups played important roles in the amendment of the Cultural Properties Law of 1950 and in the introduction of a designation for particular areas called Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings (*dento teki kenzo butsu gun hozon chiku [Denkenchiku]*) in 1975. The implementation of *Denkenchiku* is a unique system of townscape conservation of Japan because it allows the protection of urban areas, not just of individual buildings. Even though this law comes under the purview of the national government, the system in implementing this law is decentralised and is carried out by municipalities. It is also supported by local townscape conservation groups in each area.

### ***Stage III: The Spread of Active and Democratic Townscape Conservation Groups and Machizukuri as Key Words in Urban Planning***

Because of the City Planning Law of 1968—which decentralised the power of urban planning to local governments—during the 1970s, numerous local governments supported the establishment of *machizukuri* groups. After the economic slump of the 1990s, numerous townscape conservation projects by local governments and citizens' groups (*machinami hozon kai*) emerged throughout Japan.

### **MACHIZUKURI: THE EXPANDING CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

*Machizukuri* is a combination of the noun *machi* and the verb *zukuri*. Several academics have stated that *machizukuri* is consistently related to Japanese urban planning; therefore, it is quite difficult to define its meaning in relation to other languages or to adapt its concepts to other social meanings in different contexts. Since the 1990s, the concept of *machizukuri* has been used widely in urban planning activities in Japan, from planning projects in rural areas to those in urban areas, from urban development projects to architectural conservation projects, and from large projects to small projects initiated by the people. The concepts and rhetoric of *machizukuri* have been transformed by changing contexts through time, as follows:

**1960s:** A number of citizens' groups opposed urban planning projects, known as *toshikeikaku* projects, which were initiated by the local governments. Consequently, local people worked towards preserving historic buildings and townscapes. When *machizukuri* first came into use, *machi* was written in Chinese characters (*kanji*) and carried the meaning of 'street'; *zukuri* was written in modified Japanese characters (*hiragana*) and carried the meaning of 'to build, to create'; hence 街つくり (*machizukuri*). The *hiragana* in this term helped to soften the image of the word. Nevertheless, the combined term still expressed the hard feelings of opposition to construction activities.

**1970s:** Experiences of urban planning with participatory processes in the previous period made citizens realise that they gained better results than urban planning projects that took place under

the governments' orders. The concepts and rhetoric of *machizukuri* then evolved to become more positive.

In this period, *machi* continued to be written in Chinese characters and carried the meaning of 'communities' or 'neighbourhoods'; there was no change to the written form and meaning of *zukuri*. The term 町づくり (*machizukuri*) represented urban planning that dealt not only with physical elements but also with communities. People's participation covered infrastructure development and disaster prevention. Moreover, activities derived from decisions made by inhabitants helped to preserve the ambience of buildings and townscapes.

**1980s:** The national government started supporting citizens' projects by establishing the Urban Design Department, an authority to which people could propose ideas for urban planning. The national government used *machizukuri* to implement the Japanese-style welfare system among local communities, and relied on families, volunteers and traditional neighbourhood organisations in their planning. In this period, *machi* and *zukuri* came to be written entirely in *hiragana*, まちづくり (*machizukuri*). Its meaning encompassed construction, public activities and the daily lives of citizens.

**1990s to the present:** In three decades of decentralisation, the Japanese have collected experiences of participatory urban planning. Based on the lessons learned, they changed the term *toshikeikaku*, which translates as 'urban planning', to *machizukuri*, the new term that precisely fits the Japanese context. Over the course of the 1990s, a great variety of *machizukuri* activities have gradually expanded. As such, *machizukuri* can be written in characters that refer to foreign words (*romaji*). The concepts of *machizukuri* have spread to penetrate international perceptions of urban planning.

## **MACHIZUKURI AT WORK: CASE STUDIES OF ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN CONSERVATION IN KYOTO AND NARA**

From the 1960s until the present, Japanese urban conservation by way of the *machizukuri* method has been defined as "processes with the partnerships among local residents, investment sectors, and the government authorities" (Kyoto City, *City Planning*). Even though the government in Japan is centralised,<sup>4</sup> since the early 1960s, public participation in city governance in Japan has been supported. Urban planning laws enable citizens to participate in the decision making process.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, citizens willingly join in a variety of activities; for example, health, welfare, disaster prevention and city planning (Kyoto City, *Master Plan* 8-9).

In this context, wherever *machizukuri* is implemented, it is composed of "hardware activities" (construction works and urban planning works) and "software activities" (the regeneration of historic centres and the creation of networks of people involved in conservation (Nishimura).

The following section shows two case studies of *machizukuri* implementation: one in the historic centre of Kyoto, the other in the historic district of Nara (Nara-machi). The case studies show good practices of conservation in areas where inhabitants have continued to live. These two areas are not under the central government's system of Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings. Instead, they have been regenerated by way of *machizukuri*, with strong input from their inhabitants.

### ***The Historic Centre of Kyoto***

Kyoto is one of the most important historic cities in Japan with its valuable cultural heritage. Kyoto was established in the 8<sup>th</sup> century after the capital was moved there from Nagaoka-kyo, Japan's second capital. The emperor Kanmu modelled Kyoto after Chang-an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the people took over when soldiers wrested power from the Imperial Court. Led by merchants, the people formed self-governing bodies and grouped around shrines and temples to defend themselves against wars and natural disasters.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, after the ten-year Onin War, the merchants had to rebuild their city which had almost been destroyed when it served as a battleground. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during the reign of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Kyoto was transformed into a castle town and groups of people organised themselves into neighbourhood communities called *machi*.

After the death of Hideyoshi and the subsequent rise of the last shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the government moved to Edo, as Tokyo was once called. However, the emperor still stayed in the Kyoto Imperial Palace. The Kyoto merchants and craftsmen pursued their trades and became prosperous. The 300 years of the Edo Period (1603-1867) was a period of rich culture. However, the people of Kyoto had to reconstruct their city seven times because it kept getting razed by fire.

In the Meiji Restoration Period (1868-1912), hard times occurred when the emperor moved to Tokyo, and Kyoto rapidly declined. In attempting to revitalise Kyoto in a period of economic stagnation, Kyoto was 'reborn' by her townspeople as a commercial and industrial city.<sup>2</sup> In 1889 Kyoto was established as a self-governing body, Kyoto City. The planning tasks for the city were initiated by the first mayor and these included widening the main street and preserving the 'national' scenery. During the post war period, because Kyoto hardly suffered war damage unlike a large number of Japanese cities, in 1950 Kyoto legally declared herself the International Culture and Sightseeing City.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1960s, Kyoto City faced problems of population migration, industrial stagnation and transformation of its townscape. To solve those problems, the Kyoto City Master Plan was developed in 1985. This practice of drawing up a master plan has continued to the present, and the current master plan (2001-2010), which details planning along ten-year periods, is still maintained for development, with the strong involvement of Kyoto residents. It proves the power of the people of Kyoto, who have taken part as leaders in every change that has happened to the city.

Therefore, the conservation movement in Kyoto has been strong among the people since the 1960s. The activists fought for preserving an old train station and against the construction of the new one. This movement eventually led to the enactment of the Ancient Capital Law in 1966, controlling not only districts for preservation, but also all areas of the city. In 1967, Kyoto designated a 60-square metre urban centre as a Historic Landscape Preservation District. Today, the regeneration of the living urban centre is the main objective of the conservation and development policy of Kyoto. Beneficial conservation through partnership is presented below.

### **The Conservation Process**

Due to decentralisation and the reduction of the budgets for conservation and development at the municipal level, Kyoto has attempted to adapt its administration to conform to this conservation policy (Kyoto City, *City Planning* 34). At the planning level, citizens are allowed to participate in developing the policy plans of Kyoto; for example, local ordinances and district plans. In the plan-making process, citizens' groups and academics help to ascertain that the plans are clear, impartial and suitable for all groups of people. In addition, conservation plans, which are

contained in the master plan, ensure that conservation activities are consistent with the direction of the development of the city.

At the implementation level, Kyoto established a new section called the Town Making Promotion Section. This section coordinates government sectors carrying out conservation and urban planning works, including the Synthesis Policy Making Section, the City Planning Section, and the Townscape Controlling Section.<sup>6</sup> Not only does the Town Making Promotion Section collaborate with local government sectors, it also set up a new authority—the Kyoto Centre for Community Collaboration (*Machizukuri* Centre)—to implement policy plans by linking with local people. It is a place that provides common spaces for citizens’ groups to participate, and for the collection of information on urban and architectural projects.

**Conservation Activities**

*A. Hardware Activities: preserving historic architectures and townscapes*

The passage of these legislations have helped in preserving the historic architecture and townscape in Kyoto:

1. A new building code for Central Kyoto

The new building code for Central Kyoto was enacted by Kyoto with the participation of citizens. The process of passing the law took one and a half years. Before outlining the ordinance, several seminars were held among the local government, people and citizens’ groups. Afterwards, draft plans were approved through public hearings. Details of the law include the following:

- Regulating the height and form of buildings in Central Kyoto: the maximum height allowed for buildings in Central Kyoto are either 20 meters within a 20-metre setback or 30 metres from a 20-metre setback. The form of new buildings has to blend with the form of the traditional townhouse (*kyo-machiya*), and to allow good ventilation in public spaces.
- Preserving traditional townscapes and landscapes: the new building code helps to keep the shape of townscapes by maintaining continuous facades and roofs. Having uniformly covered walkways makes people feel comfortable when they walk around the shopping areas.

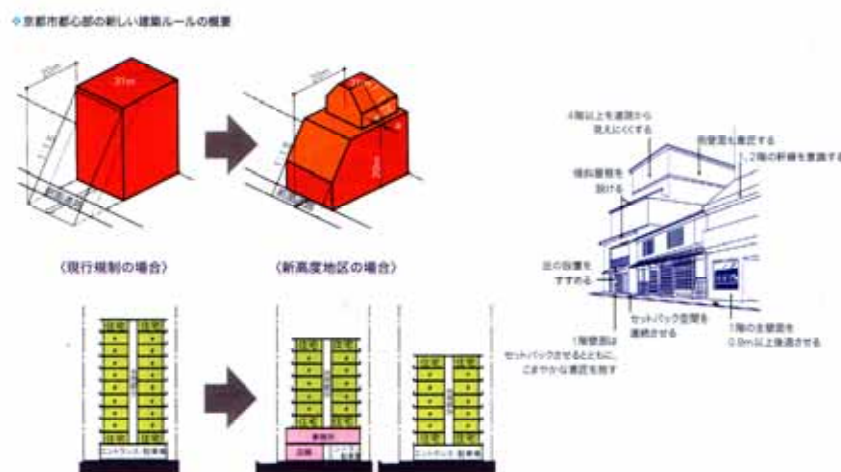


Figure 1: The new building code of Central Kyoto

- Revitalising the historic centre: in the past, Central Kyoto used to be a vibrant commercial district with well-known traditional shops and restaurants. Today, rows of shophouses are interrupted by housing units and car parks. To overcome this, the new law proposes this incentive: developers can construct higher buildings if the ground floor and second floor are used for commercial purposes.

## 2. A revised fire prevention law for the Gionshimbashi District

In Central Kyoto, Gionshimbashi was the first district to have an amended fire prevention law. According to this revised law, inhabitants in the district are allowed to use traditional non-fire prevention materials to replace damaged building parts. Therefore, the townscape can be preserved because the same type of materials as the original ones still exist. Conditions for allowing communities to revise their fire prevention law are that communities have to provide effective volunteers for disaster prevention and the areas must not be susceptible to fire. In the future, Kyoto plans to have this law applied in other districts.



Figure 2: The revised fire prevention law of Gionshimbashi District

## 3. The passing of the district plan for the Gionmachi-Minamigawa District

District plans (*chiku keikaku*) are Kyoto-supported plans that each community needs to approve. District plans contain land use controls that are satisfactory to the community and define the specific details of the Kyoto master plan.

A characteristic of district plans is that they are appropriate to the character of old towns. Since areas in new towns are separated into many parts—such as residential areas, commercial areas, and industrial areas—small areas in old towns can be utilised by inhabitants for various uses, such as areas for living or for working. In addition, in the past, each community in the old towns made their own regulations, so the regulations became a basis for district plan development.

Drawing up district plans is the responsibility of the Town Making Section. The Section will provide guidelines to the residents. When the draft plans are finished, the section gets approval of them through public hearings before being finally enforced. At present, only three district plans in Kyoto have been launched.<sup>7</sup> Difficulties faced in making the plans are that communities must be firm enough to participate in brainstorming meetings, to solve problems, and to unanimously make decisions.





Figures 3 and 4: The traditional townhouses and townscape in Gionshimbashi District

Apart from preserving historic buildings and townscapes through legal mechanisms mentioned above, the responsibility of preserving private buildings is also shared jointly among inhabitants, the private sector, academics and the local government authorities. Here are two notable examples:

### 1. The Symbiotic Community

The Symbiotic Community is a housing project in Central Kyoto which started as a research project on appropriate housing units carried out by academics and the government sectors. Residents were invited to join in at the early stages of the design process to reduce conflicts. The Symbiotic Community is characterised by a harmonious design built in traditional townscape forms, and links between houses (private spaces) and streets (public spaces). In the programme, there are both plans for keeping the ‘order of townscapes’ and the ‘order of spaces’, and for promoting activities, including meetings between local residents and newcomers, and cultural events that provide a lively atmosphere for the aged (Takada).

The Symbiotic Community is managed by the Commission on Community Symbiotic Land Utilisation comprising “the Decision Making Entities” (communities, stakeholders, citizens’ groups and developers) and “the Support Entities” (academics and the governmental sectors).



Figure 5: The housing projects in Central Kyoto



Figure 6: The Urbanex Project

### 2. The Revival of the Traditional Townhouse (*Machiya*)

The local government, led by the Kyoto Centre for Community Collaboration, is taking various approaches towards revitalising traditional townhouses (*machiya*). The objective is to propose ways whereby people can comfortably stay and keep a modern lifestyle, while adding value to old buildings. The Centre published copies of the ‘Information Booklet for



Maintenance of *Kyo-Machiya*’ and disseminated them to inhabitants. Furthermore, the Centre organised consultation programmes, providing information on renovation and maintenance of old buildings, and instruction on taxes and expenses during construction projects.

The *Kyomachiya Sakujigumi* is a citizens’ group that takes part in developing systems of renovating *machiya*. The objective is to collaborate with owners and architects. In its four-year operation, 30 *machiya* were renovated and used for housing and commercial functions. The organisation pays much attention to the authenticity of materials, workmanships and suitable use of materials in all projects.

#### B. Software activities: creating networks of people and revitalising the historic centre

“To diversify, revitalise and perpetuate local communities” is the future prospect of urban planning in Central Kyoto (Kyoto City, *City Planning*). This concept shows that Kyoto plays an important part in developing values for the citizens’ living conditions, even creating tourism programmes which bring in a healthy income to Kyoto every year.

##### 1. Sustaining local communities

The *Machizukuri* Centre is a governmental authority that directly works to strengthen communities in Kyoto. The authority serves as a medium between people and the local government, performing various kinds of public works, for instance, preserving environments, enhancing quality of life, taking care of the elderly, and doing architectural and urban conservation projects. People’s participation in two kinds of local community groups is encouraged: traditional neighbourhood communities (*chonaikai*) and citizens’ groups (*machinami hozon kai*).

The traditional neighbourhood communities in Kyoto have been strong in their main roles of distributing welfare from the local government to the residents. In addition, these communities constantly join cultural and religious activities. One festival that showcases the strength of these communities is the *Gion Matsuri* Festival, where each community will prepare a float to join a parade.

Meanwhile, there are more than 100 citizens’ groups established in Kyoto City. The citizens’ groups are one parts of the whole system of participatory implementation of urban planning projects. Each group performs ongoing duties, and its members can select to join activities they in which they are interested.



Figure 7: Summer festival at the traditional neighborhood communities



Figures 8: ‘Gion Matsuri Festival’

## 2. Reviving historic centres through economic activities

In reviving historic centres to prevent out migration from the city centre, as well as to add value to historic buildings, the government and communities collaborate on many projects, including:

- Promoting the *Nishijin Soho* Project: this is a pilot project created by Kyoto to enhance small and medium investments in old districts and to renovate *machiya* and historical buildings for re-use as offices. The project is carried out by a non-profit organisation (NPO), the Kyoto *Nishijin Machiya Studio*, by coordinating with citizens and developers.
- Creating a network of museums and galleries: this is a project to produce modern art and handicraft in the traditional Kyoto style. The *Machiya Club Network* is an organisation working to persuade new artists to stay and work in *machiya*. Moreover, it promotes artists' communities by creating art festivals.
- Creating a system of lease and sale of *machiya*: this is a project to add value to old buildings through joint investments between residents and developers. The *Kyomachiya Joohoo* Centre is an NPO which takes part in this system. It collects information about the traditional townhouses and matches them with people who desire to rent or buy these spaces.

Besides reviving historic centres through economic activities, other ways to rejuvenate the life of towns include organising cultural activities and doing research for the raising of the quality of life. The citizens' groups working on these activities are the *Kyomachiya Tomonokai* and the Sustainable Community Centre Japan (SCCJ).

The *Kyomachiya Tomonokai* aims for the sustainability of the traditional customs of Kyoto, and to enhance the uses of *Kyo-machiya*. Activities include promoting cultural activities and strengthening local communities, such as through traditional festivals and Kyoto cuisine. The SCCJ works to improve traditional communities. Information technology is a tool used to help link communities and develop the lives of the handicapped and elderly people. The projects start with a research process, after which the knowledge is passed to the public through training programmes.



Figure 9: An Italian restaurant, reused from traditional townhouses. The construction works are performed by *The Kyomachiya Sakujigumi*.



Figure 10: *the Kyoto Nishijin Machiya Studio Project*



Figure 11: *the NTT Project of the Kyoto Nishijin Machiya Studio Project*

## ***The Old District of Nara***

Nara is a valuable old city in Japan. In 710, Heijo-kyo (the old name of Nara) was established as the first full-scale capital city in Japan. Plans for the capital were based on ancient Chinese capitals. Heijo-kyo served as a capital until 784; the emperor then moved his court and government to Nagaoka-kyo and ten years later to Heian-kyo, now known as Kyoto.

After the Nara period, when royal and political sectors had been moved to other places, Nara was left with only two great temples: Todai-ji and Kofuku-ji. Vital communities were formed around the temples. Since then, traces of the old Nara have gradually disappeared due to the transformation of settlements. However, traditional elements, known as Nara-machi, still exist in ‘the outer capital’—a temple hamlet located eastward and outside of the rectangular main capital layout.

Architectural conservation in Nara was initiated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when survey projects of historic buildings were done. In 1919, Nara was declared a site under the Law for the Preservation of Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, modernisation caused the local governments to do large public facility projects, for instance, the prefectural offices and the railway system. Until the Second World War, construction brought conflicts between local people and the local government. This inspired people to work towards preserving the old buildings that were being rapidly destroyed by that time.

Today, the citizens’ groups formed in the period of modernisation continue to work to expand both the number and variety of projects. The following section presents the work of the Nara *Machizukuri* Centre Incorporated Association (NPA), an NPO working for architectural conservation. It is a good case as it was initiated and implemented by local people, not under the government’s preservation system.

### **The Conservation Process**

The NPA is an NPO and different from the *Machizukuri* Centre, Kyoto, which is supported by the local government. The functions of the NPA are to build collaboration between people and the local government and to create networks of communities and citizens’ groups. To expand its network, the NPA is part of the Asian West Pacific Network for Urban Conservation (AWPNUC). The NPA conducts research to gain knowledge of architectural conservation, to preserve the environment, and to manage communities in historic districts according to the noble principles of *machizukuri*.

### **Conservation Activities**

#### ***A. Hardware Activities: preserving historic architectures and townscapes***

In Nara-machi, a number of historic buildings are protected under the national programme of *Denkenchiku*. However, valuable buildings and areas owned by the private sector are preserved by their owners. Private historic buildings are protected via the district plan (*chiku keikaku*), the result of mutual work by the owners and the NPA.

The District Plan of Nara was first initiated by the local government. In 1985, Nara conducted a survey project for the street construction plan (*toshi keikaku doro*). In the plan, the streets through the old district were widened from 8 to 16 metres. This continued until 1990, when residents and the NPA established the conservation and development plan (*toshi keikan jorei*) with a supporting budget from the private sector. It took two years for the plan to be completed, and the NPA proposed it to Nara.

Preparing the conservation and development plan made the NPA strong. Moreover, the concept of participatory work had started spreading. In 1994, the conservation and development plan set standards for the development and conservation of Nara-machi townscape (*Nara-machi keikan keiseichiku*), standards which received the most public support ever.

The standards consisted of guidelines on architectural and physical elements, boundaries demarcating Nara-machi, and the qualification criteria for subsidies. The architectural guidelines were derived from the character of historic buildings and townscapes and emphasised the maintaining of the townscapes' uniqueness. Nevertheless, the architectural guidelines were also flexible. Under them, owners could renovate buildings and replace old materials with new ones provided they kept to the buildings' original characteristics.

As mentioned above, the NPA successfully enforced the standards because there is no punishment in the community's rules. Instead, the NPA motivates inhabitants to follow guidelines by providing subsidies.

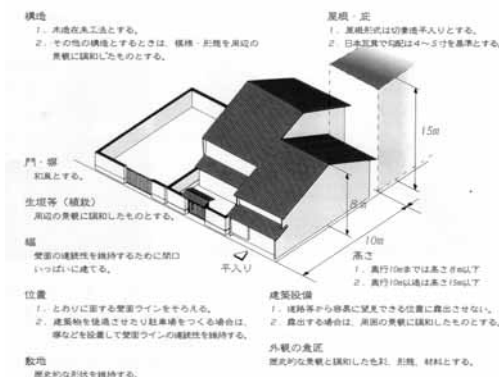


Figure 12: *The Nara-machi townscape formation* consists of architectural and physical element controls for helping buildings in the area derive good ventilation and are in well organized.



Figures 13-15: Examples of renovated traditional townhouse in the old district of Nara. Some of them are kept in originality, some are adapted to modern styles, and some are changed for comfortably uses.

## B. Software Activities: Creating networks of people and revitalising the historic centre

### 1. Sustaining local communities



Activities to sustain local communities are the foundation of public projects, especially in the process of coming up with standards for developing and conserving the Nara-machi townscape. From NPA members' comments, in the early stages of the group, only a few people attended meetings and the local government also paid less attention to supporting local communities. This was normal at the time when citizens' groups were just starting in Japan because they were not familiar with the participatory process involved in urban planning projects that had been controlled by the government for a long time.

At present, activities to sustain local communities are regularly conducted. The NPA organises monthly meetings to build good relationships between inhabitants and newcomers to the area. Furthermore, the group enhances traditional activities such as festivals of local shrines and events promoting handicrafts of the area.

## 2. Reviving historic centres through economic activities

- Activities for improving the residents' quality of life: because 25 per cent of the inhabitants in the old district of Nara are elderly people, the NPA has conducted a project to collect information on places where they can enjoy a quality life— traditional shops and restaurants, small clinics and public baths.
- Activities for enhancing tourism: in 1989-1990, when the community made the district plan, it also initiated the plan for open museums (*hakubutsukan*) covering museums and galleries in the area. The most important museum is *Nara-machi Monogatari-kan*, which also includes the main office of the NPA, a meeting place, and a children's library. In addition, renting out spaces for events brings income to the NPA. Another well-known museum is *Shiryo-kan*. This place presents the history of the community such as collections of signs and antiques from the old shops in the neighbourhood.



Figure 16: An old style restaurant in the old district of Nara.



Figure 17: A souvenir shop in the area.



Figure 18: *Shiryo-kan*, a museum presents history of the community.



Figure 19: Nara-machi Monogatari-kan, an important place for supporting activities.



Figure 20: The atmosphere of Nara-machi as an attractive tourist spot in Nara.



Figure 21: A monthly meeting of the NPA.

## APPLYING THE *MACHIZUKURI* CONCEPT IN THE CONSERVATION OF THE RATTANAKOSIN AREA, BANGKOK, THAILAND

This section will compare the conservation process and activities in Japan with those of Thailand. At the end, an application of the Japanese conservation concept will be presented.

### *The Conservation Process*

In Japan, case studies on conservation show it is supported by public participation at two levels. At the planning level, conservation plans are part of the master plan of the city. The local governments frame the overall outline of conservation and development plans and encourage local residents to cooperate in making district plans according to the Historic Preservation *Machizukuri* Ordinances. At the implementation level, collaborations between local government authorities and inhabitants are established. In Kyoto, the Town Making Promotion Section sponsors the *Machizukuri* Centre which plays a middleman role. In the old district of Nara, the NPA, a citizens' group, works as a coordinator.

In the Rattanakosin area, at the planning level, there have been improvements in encouraging people to take part in the urban planning process. Throughout the 1970s, conservation movements were formed by concerned academics and architects to protect the area from destruction during the high economic growth period.

People formed two main citizens' groups: the Conservation Group of the Association of Siamese Architects (ASA), and the Arts and Environment Protection Association. These two groups forced the national government to include the conservation of Krung Rattanakosin in the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan. It should be mentioned that citizens were able to influence conservation efforts for the Rattanakosin right from the first stage.

In 1982, a planning process encouraged professionals to take part in, and launch the first conservation plan to the public. It was known as the Master Plan for the Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin. Thereafter, when the local government authorities implemented policy plans by making action plans, there were several methods to persuade people to participate in the conservation process, such as consultation and public hearings.<sup>8</sup> However, the process of implementing conservation plans was still in the hands of the government. This is



different from the process of implementing district plans (*chiku keika*) in Japan, which places importance on a mutual process among the inhabitants, citizens' groups and the local governments.

In addition, the implementation of the Master Plan for the Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin has not seen good results. Through 22 years of operation, only one in 20 plans has been completely implemented. One of the main causes for the plan's failure is duplication in the efforts of the local government authorities when it comes to conservation. Even if the Committee for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin and Old Towns (one of the national government authorities), collaborates with other authorities,<sup>9</sup> several authorities have not been working together consistently but have been duplicating efforts to implement plans in conservation sites.

Furthermore, public participation has been ineffective because inhabitants have less chance to gain information on policy plans and to take part in any of the processes. As a result, the plans have been not accepted or implemented willingly by inhabitants. (Team Consulting Engineering and Management Co. Ltd. 103-4).

After the above comparison of Japanese and Thai conservation efforts, the following suggestions for applying the Japanese concept in the Rattanakosin area are proposed.

The Committee for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin and Old Towns can be improved by having the committee assign a collaborating agency to coordinate the local government sectors involved in conservation in the Rattanakosin area. For example, the urban planning section, The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), which mainly implements conservation plans, could be designated as a collaborating agency. Alternatively, a new organisation formed by partnerships among local residents, developers and the local government authorities can be assigned to be a collaborator.

Moreover, the assigned collaborating agency should also help promote conservation plans to local groups, so that the Rattanakosin communities are themselves able to support conservation plans.

### ***Conservation Activities***

Japan's approach to architectural and urban conservation by way of *machizukuri* can be adopted through 'hardware activities' and 'software activities'.

#### ***A. Hardware Activities: preserving historic architectures and townscapes***

In Japan, urban planning laws involving public participation are known as Historic Preservation *Machizukuri* Ordinances. Articles are derived from these ordinances which are suitable for the character of each district and are concerned with preserving historic elements and with enhancing functional values. In addition, the process of passing laws place importance on the rights of inhabitants living in their historic neighbourhoods as well as on local pride.

In the Rattanakosin area, since 1976 efforts to conserve the area have mainly followed three concepts: the promotion of green areas and open spaces, the conservation and restoration of old valuable buildings and architecture, and the reduction of building and traffic densities (Synchron Group Co. Ltd.). These concepts resulted in the policy plans under the Master Plan for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin, and local ordinances. It can be said that almost all of the projects in the master plan are focused on preserving historic monuments and moving out other buildings and communities so there is clear sight of the historic monuments.

There are many examples of the negative impact of projects that abide by the three main concepts. The conservation and improvement of the Mahakan Fortress project forced communities located at the back of the fortress and the city wall to move out. To create an uncluttered view of Wat Bowon Satan Suthawat, there was a plan to demolish the National Theatre and the School of Theatrical Arts. The project of enhancing areas around the Prasumen Fortress includes a plan to tear down shophouses along the city moat that has not been put into action.

The plan to improve areas by the Chao Phraya River—including the Tha Phra Chan (pier), Tha tien (pier) and Pak Khlong Talad (market)—involve moving out communities and old markets near the river. Reducing the density in Rattanakosin by moving the government offices out of the historic district has affected local businesses.

Since only one conservation project was completed, other projects that had potential impacts on the local residents' way of life and possibly creating conflicts over the use of land by communities have not been successfully implemented.<sup>10</sup>

The main obstacle in adopting and passing the district plan concept with a participatory approach in the Rattanakosin area is property rights. Because almost all of the citizens in Rattanakosin have no property rights, at least 80 per cent of the land is in the hands of government ministries or the Crown. Conservation and development policies are developed based on the government's and land owners' decisions. However, to include public participation in the conservation process should not be overlooked; public hearings and consultation should be utilised.

#### *B. Software activities: creating networks of people and revitalising the historic centre*

##### 1. Sustaining local communities

In Japan, the methods used to revitalise the historic centre include sustaining local communities and reviving the economy of the historic centre. In the Rattanakosin area, top-down projects in the master plan and action plans work to move out local communities and tear down buildings that are in use but are of less historic value. On the other hand, since 1997, there have been local movements against this such as the Civic Society of Klong Ku Muang Derm and the Civic Society of Bang Lamphu, Tatiem Community. Moreover, in the same period, people power became evident through the registration of 1,700 communities in Bangkok by the BMA.

The *Machizukuri* Centre is a good example of community collaborations that could be adopted for the Rattanakosin area in that it works as a common area for citizens' groups to meet and work together. In addition, the local government in the Rattanakosin area should give more opportunities to citizens' groups to join conservation activities in their neighbourhood.

##### 2. Reviving the historic centre through economic activities

In the master plan and implementation plans for the Rattanakosin area, most of the projects to revive local economies are large-scale projects which are operated by the local government or private sector. Hence, local residents cannot participate in the projects or earn income. The Rattanakosin area could learn from Japan in implementing projects that are small and appropriate for local needs and investments. Regenerating the local economy as well as integrating communities into the historic areas will help the Rattanakosin area become Bangkok's living heritage.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In 1961, the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ) established a Sub-Committee for Research on Historic Dwellings. From 1962 to 1965, the Cultural Properties Protection Commission carried out surveys of important buildings, and later in 1968, it merged with the Cultural Bureau to become the Agency for Cultural Affairs (*bunkacho*), which is an extra-ministerial bureau of the Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural (*Monbunsho*).

<sup>2</sup> The transformation of Kyoto started with the construction of a water supply project, electric plant and electric railroad.

<sup>3</sup> The law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (*bunkazai hogohou*) of 1950.

<sup>4</sup> The system of government in Japan is centralised. Because architectural and urban conservation activities are part of administrative processes, decision making regarding conservation at the national level is progressively transferred to the prefectural level and the municipal level (Inaba 3).

<sup>5</sup> These laws include the District Plan System (1980), which emphasises obtaining the agreement of residents as a basic step in making plans; the City Planning Master Plan System (1992), which makes the city responsible for establishing methods to reflect citizen perspectives in making plans; and the 2002 revision of The City Planning Act, which obliges planners to add rationale documentation to plans submitted for public review (Kyoto City 2005 63).

<sup>6</sup> Collaborations have not worked with the Cultural Properties Preservation section, whose duty is the preservation of cultural heritage.

<sup>7</sup> The three district plans are those of Gionshimbashi, Honnou Gakku and Shutoku Gakku. It should be mentioned that the community of Gionshimbashi managed to make a district plan because of the strength of the community and due to its being listed under the Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings of the central government (*Denkenchiku*). Therefore, the townscape of Gionshimbashi is preserved in better authentic condition than other areas, which are not in a preservation system.

<sup>8</sup> In 1998, institutes and a company purposed studies for specific plans for historically significant areas in Bangkok, namely the Tatian and Pakklong Talad communities; Sam Prang communities, and Thaprachan and Thachang Communities, and Banglamphu Communities, and submitted to City Planning Bureau, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

<sup>9</sup> In the Committee for Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin and Old Towns, representatives from each government sector dealing with urban planning and conservation jointly participate. The committee has the right to make final decisions on conservation and development plans in the Rattanakosin area.

<sup>10</sup> One project that was completed is the Conservation of Multipurpose Space for Cultural Activities in front of Wat Sutat Thep Wararam and Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Office by Team Consulting Engineering and Management, Co. Ltd. in 2004. (*The Report of Revised Plan of Conservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin (Final Paper)*). Office of Environmental Policy and Planning. pp. 103-4.)

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