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BECC laboratory 

JAPAN

URBAN LANDSCAPE  
URBAN REGENERATION  
Interdisciplinary academic class in Tokyo

edited by Olimpia NIGLIO

# 65 words ... and beyond

**BEAUTY**

**EDUCATION**

**COMMUNITY**

**CREATIVITY**

... ..

Ability

Nature

Connection

Communication

Interpersonal-communication

Children

Public Space

Pedestrian Promenade

Idea

Vulnerable human body

Opening Architecture up

Discrete space

Freedom

Environmental

Functions

Wood-like

Atmosphere

Resonance

Texture

Educational space

Tradition

Archetype

Dream

Water

People

City

Square

Cooperation

Culture

Art

Generations

Regeneration

Membrane

Japanese Culture

Flexibility

Collaboration

Sustainability

Dialectical interplay

Planning

Project

Synthesis

Diversity

Multiplicity

Multi-purpose

Authentic

Accordance

Human-scale

Learning

Music

Armony

Relationality

Efficiently

Dynamism

Bamboo

Relativity

Ispiration

Complexity

Development

Expressions

Integration

Pragmatic beauty

Future

... also, at the exhibition *Kuma Kengo. Five Purr-fect Point for a New Public Space* | Tokyo, National Museum of Modern Art [June-September 2021]

# URBAN LANDSCAPE, URBAN REGENERATION INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC CLASS

OLIMPIA NIGLIO, TSUNEAKI FUKUI

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

olimpia.niglio.53@hosei.ac.jp

In 2021 at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Design of Hosei University in Tokyo started an international and interdisciplinary academic program aimed to analyze the urban landscape in Japan in relationship with the need to valorize its historical paradigms<sup>1</sup>.

Retaking the four elements of the cosmogony: *air, water, earth, and fire* — on which both the East and the West have conceived a close connection between the human microcosm and the natural macrocosm — we have reinterpreted these four elements with news four keywords: *Beauty, Education, Community, and Creativity*. Thanks to these four keywords born also a small laboratory denominated BECC where twelve students are compared with these important topics and have analyzed them in rural small towns in Japan.

The concept of “Beauty” allowed us to reflect on the local traditions and the dialogue with nature; to come again to think about the “Education” on cultural heritage has been an important regeneration process that allowed us to read the city as a book made with many pages, many layers and with many historical stratifications (Fig.1). Analyzing the cities is not possible to exclude the “Community”, because the city is the community and that “human heritage” define the content of every local culture.

The *Community* is “Living Heritage”. The Community is Culture, is Heritage, and without it, we cannot realize anything. Community is life. The Community participates in the cultural policies and promotes local development according to with the common needs.

Observing the evolution of the cities, from the origin until the contemporaneity, we valorized the importance of the “Creativity” and above all the Social Creativity which is needed more than creativity in design for urban planning as planning projects often involve not only design change but also social reform. Urban planning and urban design projects bring greater satisfaction and pride when citizens' ideas are accepted and implemented. However, in many cultures we are still far from this type of participatory planning, but it is now essential to implement it because the city exists if there are citizens. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve, manage and design urban landscapes with respect for their natural beauty, history, human needs, and creativity.

The interdisciplinary academic class allowed us to understand the value of the intercultural dialogue and the opportunity to learn a new methodology for planning the contemporary city in relation to the community's needs and to the next challenges that nature asks us.

The following texts are the results of the reflections and proposals of the students, and we are delighted to share these with other academic institutions and other students in the world. We hope to open new cultural bridges and new cultural interchanges.

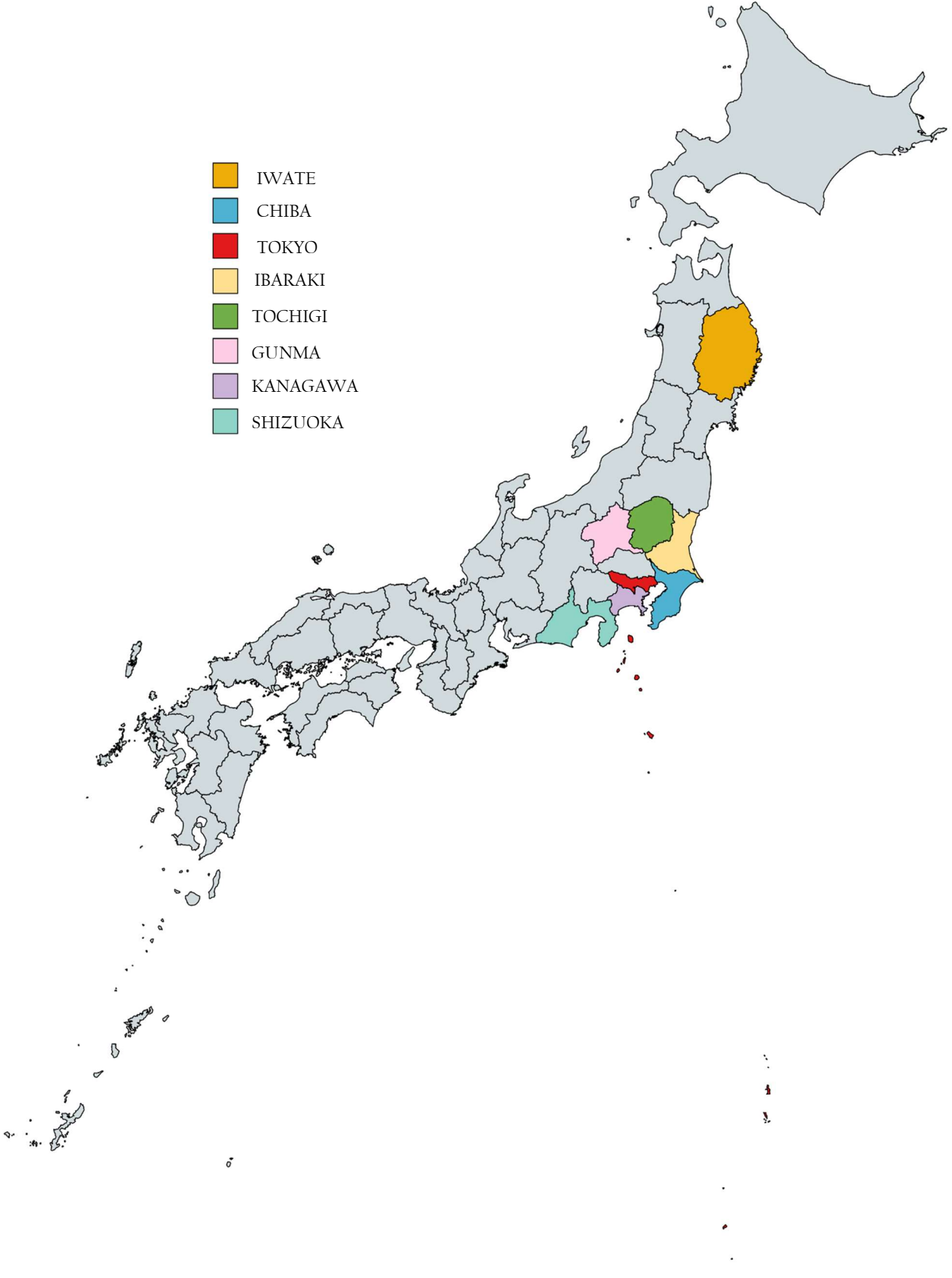
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<sup>1</sup> Students Master's Class (April-July 2021): Yuiko SAKAI, Mayu WATANABE, Manami MORITO, Rio YAMADA, Yohito HORIKOSHI, Miki HOTAKA, Kenshin MAEZAWA, Kohei FUKUI, Sota NAKAMURA, Kohei AIZAWA, Haruna SHIMURA, Mao HARADA.



港城大學





- IWATE
- CHIBA
- TOKYO
- IBARAKI
- TOCHIGI
- GUNMA
- KANAGAWA
- SHIZUOKA



Japan, Hatsushima Island, Matthias Harbers 2017

# REGISTRATION OF HATSUSHIMA AS A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

MAYU WATANABE

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

mayu.watanabe.9f@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

I chose Hatsushima Island in Atami City as my target site. I had planned to go to Hatsushima when I was in my second year of university, but I had to give up due to high waves. I would like to make a return trip someday. Hatsushima is located in the eastern part of Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. It is the only inhabited island in Shizuoka Prefecture.

We took a ferry to get to Hatsushima. We took the ferry from Atami Port, and arrived there in 30 minutes. The ferry costs 2,640 yen for a round trip.

Next, I will explain the history of Hatsushima. About 7,000 years ago. The remains of what was known as the post-Jomon period in Japan were scattered across the island. Obsidian, one of the artifacts excavated from the ruins, is found in a wide range of areas, including the Izu Peninsula, Kozushima Island 90 km away, and Kirigamine in Nagano Prefecture. From this, we can see that people have been communicating between Hatsushima and the main island across the distant sea since ancient times. Underneath the main shrine of Hatsugi Shrine, where the legend of Princess Hatsugi, who drifted to the island during the reign of Emperor Komei, has been preserved, it has been confirmed that strata from the Kofun period (mid 3rd century to late 6th century) still remain. At Hatsugi Shrine, the Kashima Dance is dedicated during the annual festival on July 17 and 18, and has been a sacred place for the people of the island since the Kofun period up to the present. The Takasugi family of Ajiko Shrine in Amishiro, south of Atami City, who have also been the Shinto priests of Hatsugi Shrine since ancient times, have a hanging Buddhist statue of the Goshu of Hatsugi Shrine that is believed to be from the Kamakura period. In addition, the Hatsugi Shrine has a building tag for renovation dated 1351, which records that there were 18 houses at that time. Throughout the Edo period, Hatsujima was under the direct control of the Shogunate, then the Odawara domain, and then the Tenryo domain again, but it has been protected by around 40 households. A record from the end of the Edo period in 1830 shows 41 households, and the number of households remained the same through the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods until the present day. The reason for this is that the land and water sources on the island are limited, so the unwritten rule has always been that the second son or younger must leave the island, and if there is no male, the female must take a son-in-law to succeed him. Cultivation and fishing were done on a communal basis, and the fruits and catches of the island were divided almost equally.

Hatsushima is part of the "Izu Peninsula Geopark. A Geopark is a program promoted by UNESCO, similar to a World Heritage Site. It promotes the sustainable development of the region by protecting its precious geological heritage and using it for environmental education and geotourism. The history of the Izu Peninsula can be traced back to about 20 million years ago through geological strata. About 20 million years ago, Izu was located a few hundred kilometers south of Honshu. At that time, Izu was a group of submarine volcanoes and was located on the Pacific Plate. The Philippine Sea Plate, on the other hand, is subducted under the Eurasian Plate, where the main island of Japan is located. About a million years ago, the Philippine Sea Plate collided with Honshu, and about 600,000 years ago, the two land masses filled the sea to form the peninsula we know today. From the time the peninsula was formed until about 200,000 years ago, eruptions occurred in many places, and large volcanoes such as Mount Amagi and Mount Tatsuma formed the framework of present-day Izu. After these large volcanoes finished their activities, one of the few independent monogenetic volcanoes in Japan started its activities and is now one of the active volcanoes of the "Higashi-Izu Volcano Group". In addition, the land of Izu continues to be pushed into Honshu by



Fig.1 Outline of Hatsushima



Fig.2 Hatsugi Shrine, a sacred place that has been around since the Kofun Period

the movement of plates, creating a variety of landforms through tectonic movements. These double and triple geological peculiarities have made the Izu Peninsula what it is today, with its many beautiful landscapes and hot springs. The Izu Peninsula is a unique place on earth, with no similar examples anywhere else in the world.

The origin of Hatsushima, one of the Geoparks. Hatsushima is called an island of marine terraces, which were formed by the uplift of the sea floor. According to geological research, the area around the first terrace, where the Hatsushima Lighthouse now stands, is said to have emerged from the sea about 20,000 years ago.

### Purposes of the project

I propose that Hatsushima, with its wonderful geological nature and history, should not be limited to a World Geopark, but should aim to be registered as a World Heritage Site. The Izu Geopark, including Hatsushima, is the only geo-story in the world where the collision of active volcanic arcs is ongoing. I hope that the registration of the World Heritage site will raise people's awareness and lead to the protection of nature and human activities. Before describing my proposal for the registration of Hatsushima as a World Heritage Site, I examined whether there are any examples of the registration of both a World Geopark and a World Heritage Site, which are both sponsored by the same UNESCO.

The World Heritage Site and the Global Geopark are both sponsored by UNESCO, but there are many differences in their contents. First of all, the World Heritage sites are "A value (thing) unique to this place in the world" sites, while the Global Geoparks are "Valuable earthly heritage (goods) or Valuable culture and tradition (people)" sites. Since it is required to be the only one in the world, the registration process for World Heritage sites is more rigorous than for World Geoparks. There is also a difference in purpose. A World Heritage Site is intended for protection only, while a Global Geopark is intended for both Preservation and activation (protection, popularization of education and science, regional revitalization)

With the above differences, we will introduce one by one those that have been registered/are aiming to be registered as both World Heritage Sites and Global Geoparks. The first is Jeju Island in South Korea. In 2007, Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes were registered as a World Natural Heritage site, and in 2010, Jeju Island Geopark was registered as a World Geopark. The second is Aso, located in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan. In 2014, it was registered as a World Geopark as Aso UNESCO Geopark, and now it is aiming to be registered as a World Cultural Heritage Site as Aso Caldera - a cultural landscape that utilizes the huge caldera volcano to the utmost limit.

The Izu Peninsula is a unique place with no analogues on Earth. Underwater volcanoes before the collision, terrestrial volcanoes after the collision, and crustal movements associated with the collision have resulted in geological diversity. Many of the blessings of the Izu Peninsula, such as its unique and rich natural landscape and culture, have been nurtured by its origins and geological conditions, and should be protected as a "living peninsula" where global geological changes can be continuously observed. Considering the conditions necessary for inscription on the World Heritage List in light of the above, it is considered to be in conformity with (iii), (v) and (viii) of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

(iii) The site is unique (or at least rare) as evidence of the existence of a cultural tradition or civilization, whether extant or extinct.

(v) It is an outstanding example representing a traditional form of habitation or a form of land or sea use that characterizes a culture (or multiple cultures). Outstanding examples representing the interaction between human beings and the environment (especially those whose survival is threatened by irreversible changes).

(viii) It is an outstanding example of a major phase in the history of the Earth, such as a record of the evolution of life, an important ongoing geological process in landform formation, or an important geomorphological or natural geographic feature.

In this case, it should be inscribed on the World Heritage List, which includes both World Natural Heritage and World Cultural Heritage. In order to protect the heritage of the Izu Peninsula, we need to involve local residents in conservation activities in each region rather than working on the entire peninsula. The goal is to get local residents and outsiders who have not participated in conservation activities in the past to take an interest.

As an example of the conservation activities conducted in each region, I describe Hatsushima, the target site. The following is a list of five key words for this activity. 1, Geological Characteristics. 2, Traditional Houses. 3, Agriculture. 4, Fishing. 5, Sightseeing. Each of these will be discussed in detail. 1, Geological Characteristics. Hatsushima is said to be an Island on a marine terrace that was formed by the uplift of the seafloor and emerged into the sea. It's necessary to protect and preserve this geological feature. 2, Traditional Houses. Since it's a small island, the sea breeze is strong, so we can protect ourselves from it by building houses next to each other.

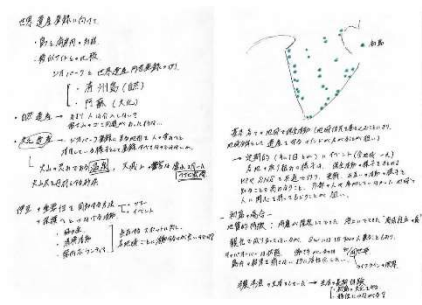


Fig.3 Proposal Memo



Fig.4 Life as a Half Farmer, Half Fisherman

The island itself has planted pine trees along the shore to protect it from the sea breeze, although the effect varies depending on the house. The other thing is that the water and gas lines are only around here. This morphology has been inherited due to the island's remote location and topographical features. 3, Agriculture. This is the situation on Hatsushima 25 years ago. Except for the residential areas of the islanders and the windbreaks around the perimeter, most of the island was farmland. Revitalize former farmland and use conventional agriculture as a tourism resource. 4, Fishing. As for the fishing port, it's still in use, and local production for local consumption is being carried out. The fishing port is still in use, and the local products are being consumed. 5, Sightseeing. There are information boards all over the island, and glamping facilities where you can stay. In order to experience the lifestyle of the party mentioned in the second key word, home-stays are available, and by incorporating farming and fishing experiences, the tradition of half-farming, half-fishing on the island can be learned. This will also lead to the protection of Hatsushima.

### Conclusion

Using these five keywords, we hope that Hatsushima will become as follows Provide a place where local residents can learn about the origins and history of Hatsushima, and conduct regular cleanup activities as a preservation activity. To encourage residents to become more active in preserving their heritage. In addition to short-term tourism such as glamping and day trips, long-term homestays will be offered so that people can experience the half-farming, half-fishing lifestyle of Hatsushima. In this way, they will be able to inherit the traditional way of life. It will also serve as an opportunity for people to learn about the culture of Hatsushima, which will lead to immigration from outside the island. It is hoped that by making it widely known to local residents and people outside the island, we can all learn about its value and lead to a movement for its protection in preparation for its registration as a World Heritage site.

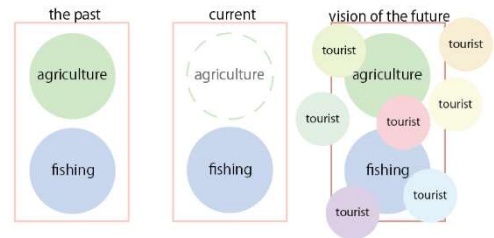


Fig.5. Proposal for the Future of Hatsushima



Takata-Matsubara. East Japan Great Earthquake and its tsunami 2011

The collapsed Rikuzentakata Youth Hostel and the Miracle Pine Tree by Akira Kouchiyama, 2011

# PARTICIPATION IN LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

KOHEI AIZAWA

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,

Major in Civil and Environmental Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University

kohei.aizawa.5i@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

*Rikuzentakata* City, *Iwate* Prefecture, is located on the eastern coast of *Tohoku* (northeastern) region of Japan. The area along the eastern coast of the *Tohoku* region, including *Iwate* Prefecture, is usually called the "*Sanriku* region" after the old name of the place.

The *Sanriku* region has a rias coast like the Rias-Bajas coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Combined with the ocean currents in the vicinity, the *Sanriku* coast is one of the world's top three fishing grounds, rich in fishery resources and a thriving aquaculture industry in the calm bays. However, sometimes the ocean does not only give us benefits, but also turns on us in a big way.

The *Sanriku* region was devastated by the *Tsunami* caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. *Rikuzentakata* City in *Iwate* Prefecture is no exception. The *Tsunami* swallowed *Takata Matsubara* pine grove, a famous scenic spot in *Rikuzentakata* City.

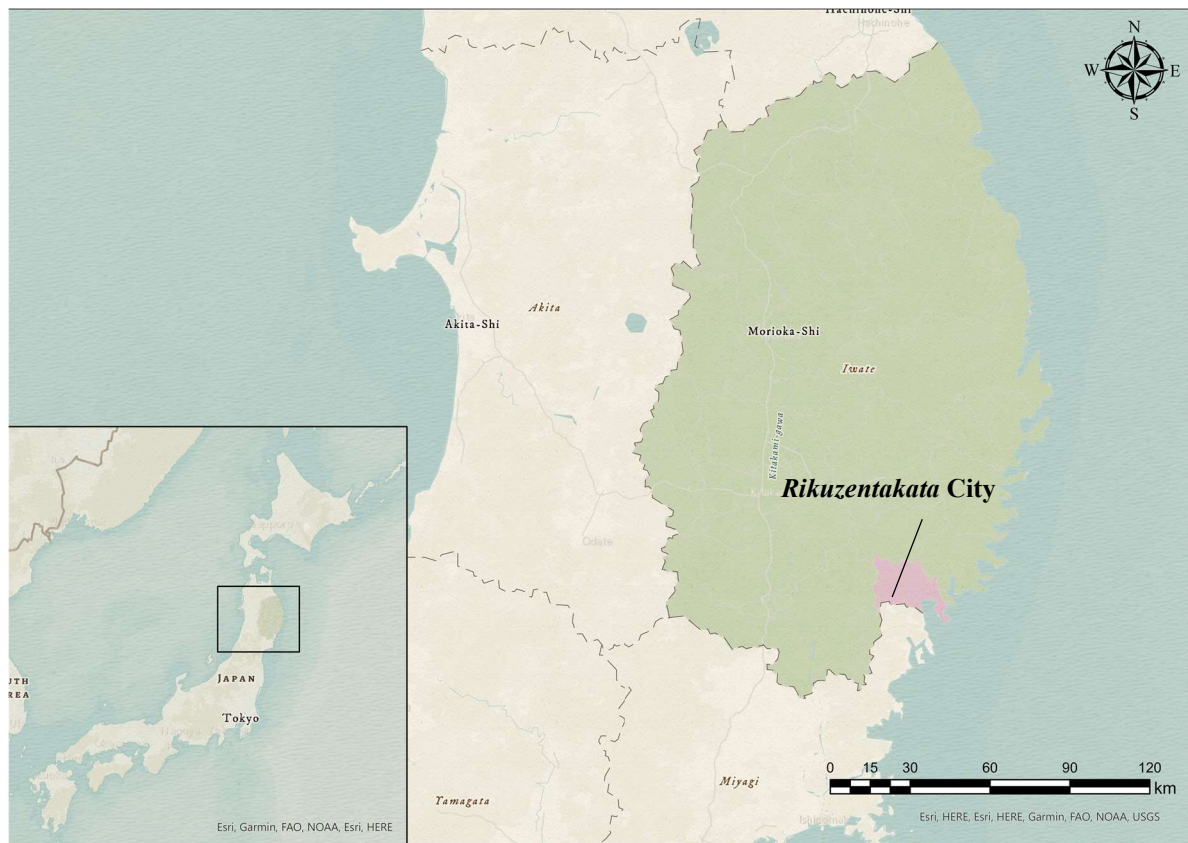


Fig.1 Location of *Rikuzentakata* City<sup>1</sup>

*Takata Matsubara*, located on the eastern shore of the city, had been a beautiful pine grove since the *Edo* period (1603-1868). In the past, it was difficult in this area to stably produce food because of the damage caused by sea winds, storm surges, and flying sand. In order to prevent such damage, more than 18,000 pine trees were planted between 1666-1673 by a wealthy merchant from *Takata* Village and the *Sendai*<sup>1</sup> *han*<sup>2</sup>. The pines had been planted

continuously since then, forming a spectacular pine grove landscape. The landscape was even admired by painters and poets of the Meiji period (1868-1911). In the Showa period (1926-1989), the pine groves were recognized for their contribution to the preservation of a rich ecosystem, and were selected by the government as an important traditional cultural property and designated as a *Rikuchu* National Park.

*Takata Matsubara* has survived many *Tsunami* disasters, such as the 1835 *Sanriku Tsunami*, the 1896 *Meiji Sanriku Tsunami*, and the 1960 Chilean Earthquake *Tsunami*. Each time, the pine trees which were died or torn down had been regenerated by the citizens. However, the Great East Japan Earthquake wiped out all of *Takata Matsubara* pine groves. The power of the massive *Tsunami* was unimaginable, and it washed away not only the pine groves but the Sandbar topography.



Fig.2 Photos of *Takata Matsubara* before and after the *Tsunami*<sup>2</sup>

The *Tsunami* generated by the Great East Japan Earthquake wiped out the traditional landscape of *Takata Matsubara*, leaving only a glimmer of hope. While almost all of the pine groves were overturned by the *Tsunami*, only one pine tree survived the massive *Tsunami*. People called it "the Miracle Pine", and it encouraged the people of *Rikuzentakata* as a symbol of their recovery from the disaster.

However, "the Miracle Pine" was confirmed to have died a year later due to salt damage caused by the soil covered by the *Tsunami*. Many citizens were saddened by this fact. Therefore, the city decided to preserve the tree as a monument. It took about a year to convert the tree into a monument, and the completion ceremony was held in July 2013. The monument of "the Miracle Pine" continues to inspire people as a symbol of the recovery from the earthquake.



On the other hand, the pine groves are the original landscape that the citizens have been familiar with since their childhood. Without restoring the beautiful scenery of *Takata Matsubara* pine groves, the reconstruction of the hearts of the citizens cannot be achieved. The city community began planting trees in 2017 to restore the beautiful pine groves of the past, and has planted 40,000 pine seedlings to May 2021. The area where *Takata Matsubara* once existed is now being developed as the *Takata Matsubara Tsunami Reconstruction Memorial Park*.

It is said that it will take about 50 years to restore the beautiful pine groves as they were before the Great East Japan Earthquake. In order for *Takata Matsubara* to achieve true recovery, sustainable management of pine tree growth and preservation of the environment are required.

### Purposes of the project

In the reconstruction of *Rikuzentakata*, the restoration of hardware such as infrastructure and housing is very important. However, it is just as important to heal the hearts and minds of the people by preserving the remains of the disaster, such as "the Miracle Pine", and by revitalizing the community. It is also important not to let the memories of the disaster fade away.

In this project, a wide range of people, including not only residents but also tourists, will work to keep the memory of the disaster from fading away.



Fig.3 The scenic beauty of *Takata Matsubara*(Before the Great East Japan Earthquake)<sup>3</sup>

In *Rikuzentakata*, facilities have been constructed to pass on the memories of the disaster to future generations. For example, the construction of a monument to "the Miracle Pine", the monumentalization of the remains of the earthquake, and the construction of a national park and a memorial facility. These facilities serve to evoke memories of the disaster in viewers and to educate children about the memory of the disaster. I think that the existence of such facilities will have an important value not only to the region but also to the world.

On the other hand, it is necessary to pass on information not only passively, but through active experience. For example, experience of the planting of pine trees, the reconstructed fisheries and other livelihoods, and the restoration of salt-affected lands. These reconstruction efforts require not only monetary support, but also the work of many different people, not just locals. Direct participation in the recovery process will create a dialogue between those who have not, such as children and people from different regions. In this way, the memories of the disaster will organically remain in the community and throughout Japan. The main objective of this project is to contribute to the recovery process not only for the volunteers who participated at the time of the disaster, but also for the people who are living now and living in the future.

The project is a collaboration between the local government and local organizations to bring together tourists and volunteers. Participants will be invited to help with the work necessary to restore the pine forests and farmland in *Rikuzentakata* City. The participants will be taught how to grow pine trees and how to restore salt-damaged farmland. In addition, working together with people who have experienced disasters creates a dialogue between people those who have not.

When people from different backgrounds work together to rebuild a land, the history and memory of the disaster becomes their own. This is an important process to prevent the memory of the disaster from fading away.

Actually, there is a non-profit organization in *Rikuzentakata* City dedicated to the preservation of the pine forests. In addition, there are many people who work in the disaster legacy centers, all of whom are working to pass on the experience of the disaster to future generations. They will be an indispensable part of these activities.

### Conclusion

No matter how much danger there is of a similar disaster occurring in our own area, it is difficult to see a disaster that happened in a distant or unrelated area as our own. And despite the memories and thoughts of the people in the affected areas, the memories of disasters fade from our memories as time goes by.



Fig.4. Activities to restore salt-affected farmland<sup>4</sup>

Disaster recovery is not about restoring a city to its original state. In the process of restoring, the memory and meaning of the disaster must be etched into the city and its people. This will save people's lives in the future disasters.

The purpose of this project is to encourage people of different attributes to become involved in the land in a concrete way toward recovery, and to pass on the memories of the disaster as their own affairs, rather than letting them fade away.

By participating in the reconstruction of a specific area, the project participants are able to see disaster recovery as a personal matter. Above all, they will gain wisdom and knowledge to recover from possible future disasters. The lessons learned from the disaster will be passed down from generation to generation. The reconstruction and transmission of the landscape of the disaster-stricken area is a necessary element of disaster recovery.

---

<sup>1</sup> City located in present-day Miyagi Prefecture

<sup>2</sup> Caln. A self-governing organization that existed in Japan from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. It functioned like a small state with its own political, economic, and social cohesion.

Photos | Credits

Fig.1. Created using Arc GIS (Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS).

Fig.2 [https://www.thr.mlit.go.jp/bumon/b06111/kenseibup/memorial\\_park/Iwate/file/prev/Iwate\\_committee01\\_05.pdf](https://www.thr.mlit.go.jp/bumon/b06111/kenseibup/memorial_park/Iwate/file/prev/Iwate_committee01_05.pdf) [2021/07/20]

Fig.3. Ibidem.

Fig.4. <http://www.asahi.com/special/10005/TKY201106040344.html> [2021/07/20]



Sunset across the Ryōgoku bridge from the bank of the Sumida River | Katsushika Hokusai, 1830

# SUMIDA RIVER SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE TOUR

SOTA NAKAMURA

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University

sota.nakamura.4e@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

Site: Bokuto area, Sumida Ward, Tokyo

The Bokuto area (the area surrounded by the Sumida River, the Arakawa River, and the Kitajikkengawa River), which is the subject of this project, was a place where many citizens visited during the Edo period (1603-1868) as a day trip destination from the city of Edo. It is said that many people who were involved in the art of poetry, calligraphy and painting loved this place.

In 1804, one of them, Sahara Kiku, opened a garden in Mukojima called Mukojima Hyakkaen. Many literati gathered there, and it became famous as a place of elegance. It is now designated as a place of scenic beauty and historic site. Since Sahara Kiku possessed a statue of Fukurokuju, literati began to look for New Year's delights associated with Fukurokuju. When they found out that Bishamonten was enshrined at Tamonji Temple and Benzaiten was enshrined at Chomeiji Temple, they decided to somehow arrange the seven gods of good fortune\*.

\*Seven Gods of Good Fortune: A combination of seven deities worshipped as gods of good fortune. The seven gods of good fortune are Daikokushin, Ebisushin, Bishamonten, Fukurokujushin, Benzaiten, Hoteison, and Jurojin. 1420 saw the appearance of a procession of people masquerading as the seven gods of good fortune, and in the Edo period (1603-1868), the procession became increasingly popular and was used as a subject for art and entertainment.

Continuing their search, they found that there were small shrines to Ebisushin and Daikokushin at the Mimeguri Shrine and a wooden statue of Hoteison at Kofukuji Temple. The only remaining deity was Jurojin, but since the deity at the Shirahige Shrine near the Hyakkaen was called Shirahige (white beard), he must be in the form of an old man with a white beard, which made him the perfect choice for Jurojin. This is where the seven gods of good fortune came together.

In this way, a New Year's event was held to visit the following six places: Tamonji Temple, Shirahige Shrine, Mukojima Hyakkaen, Chomeiji Temple, Kofukuji Temple, and Mimeguri Shrine, and the event became popular among the common people through a group called the *Sumidagwa-shichifukukai* Association.

This custom continues to today and is registered as an intangible folk cultural asset of Sumida Ward. During the New Year season, an event is held to visit six shrines to collect the Goshuin (sacred seals) and to collect the seven gods of good fortune on a palm-sized treasure ship.

Going around the shrines dotted around the area means using the stores along the way, creating interaction among people and creating a circulation in the area. I learned in my class that "communities of people connect cultures, and communities themselves become cultures." I thought that the "Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune Tour" would be a perfect subject for my project.



Fig.1. Seven gods of good fortune depicted in the "Fukujinn-Sumidagawa-Yuran-Emaki"



Fig.2. The seven gods of good fortune arranged on a treasure boat.

## Purposes of the project

The goals of my project for the "Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune Tour" were to

1. develop a pilgrimage course
2. Increase the number of opportunities to visit the shrine
3. Carry out conservation and succession efforts.

The project consists of the following three steps.

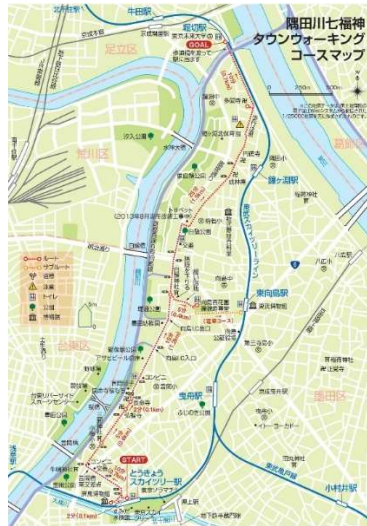


Fig.3. The course selected by the *Sumidagawa-Shichihukukai*.

The first step is to develop the pilgrimage route. The current pilgrimage route designated by the *Sumidagawa-shichihukukai* runs through a public space, which makes it difficult to follow the route because the roads are paved in different ways and there are few signs. In addition, the roads are narrow because they pass through residential areas, and it is necessary to be careful when walking. Therefore, we will set up signposts in front of each of the shrines and temples along the course, and write explanations about the Seven Gods of Fortune of Sumida River. In addition, there are several stores along the course, such as *Chomeiji-Sakura-Mochi* and *Kototoi-Dango*, which are supporting organizations of the *Sumidagawa-shichihukukai*, where visitors can get information about the Seven Gods of Good Fortune tour. In this way, the course will become easier to understand and more crowded.

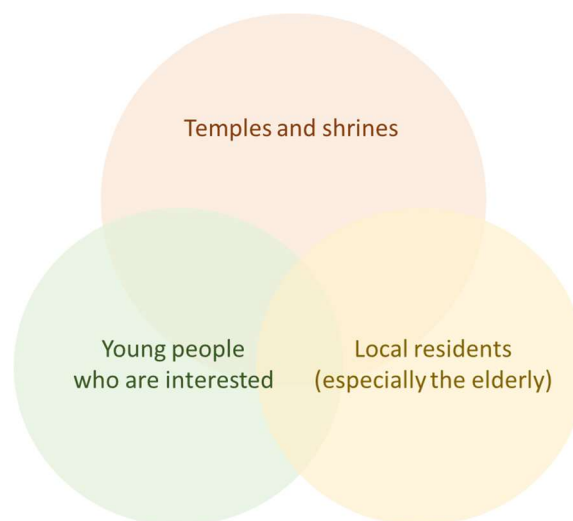


Fig.4. Interaction that occurs within the precincts of shrines and temples.

The second is to increase the number of opportunities to visit the shrine. Currently, each shrine is open only from January 1 to 7, and we can collect Goshuin (sacred seals). This means that outside of those seven days, the course is not particularly active. However, to unnecessarily hold that event all year round is the exact opposite of connecting

traditions. Therefore, I would like to think about the use of the precincts of shrines and temples during times other than the New Year season. Originally, shrines were spaces that took root in the community, and within their precincts, local people interacted with each other. I think that we can seek such a role for the precincts of shrines today. It is also possible that young people like me who are interested in the traditions and history of the area, will visit and interact there.

The third is "conservation and succession efforts. Currently, it is the "Sumidagawa-shichihukukai" that is mainly responsible for the preservation and succession of the "Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune Tour". However, in order to protect and pass on local traditions, we believe that it is necessary for the entire community to take action, not just one group. One of the first things we need to do is to inform the younger generation about the cultural assets of the region by having them learn about the Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune tour during field trips and classes at local elementary and junior high schools. If some of them become interested and walk the pilgrimage course individually (or with their families), this will help to connect this culture. Next, ask companies and organizations to participate in the volunteer walk. This will allow local businesses and people to maintain and restore the pilgrimage route on their own.



Fig.5. Students picking up trash as volunteers

### Conclusion

With the above three steps, the Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune Tour and its pilgrimage route will become even better. Even though I myself live in Sumida Ward, I had no idea about this intangible folk cultural asset until I researched it. I am sure that there are many such people. Through this project, local residents will be able to reaffirm the value of this cultural heritage. In Professor Olimpia Niglio's class, we were taught that a community includes the elements of "Culture, History, Memory, Humanity, Education, Landscape, Ethics, Traditions, and Identity. This project is exactly the kind of community shaping that the professor mentioned. Through this cultural asset, people who live in the area and people who go to local schools and workplaces will be connected, and a unique community will be formed in the Sumida Ward Bokuto area.

In addition to the Sumida River Seven Gods of Good Fortune Tour, there are many other cultural assets registered in Sumida Ward. I hope that this will be an opportunity for the people of Sumida Ward to pay attention to other cultural assets, and that the community will take the initiative in preserving and passing them on.



Japan, Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture, 2018



# A MULTI-GENERATIONAL, COMMUNICATIVE URBAN HUB

YOSHITO HORIKOSHI

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

yoshito.horikoshi.3w@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

Ashikaga is my hometown where I was born and raised. Ashikaga is located in the southwestern part of Tochigi prefecture, with a population of 150,000 and an area of 178 square kilometers. Ashikaga has a population of 150,000 and an area of 178 square kilometers, about the same size as Foggia in Italy. The textile industry has been flourishing since ancient times, and silk fabrics in particular have spread throughout the country as Ashikaga Meisen. Today, Ashikaga is a tourist town with many tourist attractions, and one of them is Ashikaga School.

Ashikaga Gakko is a university founded by Ashikaga Kaneyoshi in the Kamakura period (1185-1333 ). There are many theories about the founding of Ashikaga Gakko, some say it was founded in the Nara period (710-794 ), others in the Heian period (794-1185). In the Muromachi period (1333-1573), Uesugi Noritsune built the foundation of the school by inviting Kigen from Engakuji Temple in Kamakura and donating books. In 1467, the school was moved to its present location. The school's main focus was Confucian studies, and it is said that more than 3,000 students were enrolled at one time. Francis Xavier, a Christian missionary, described it as "the largest and most famous university in Bando, Japan," and reported about Ashikaga Gakko to foreign countries as well.

The Ashikaga Gakko was closed in the Meiji era (1868-1912) and became a national historic site in 1921.

In 2015, Ashikaga City was recognized as a Japan Heritage Site in cooperation with Mito City and three other cities, in order to protect Japan's proud cultural assets and pass them on to future generations by utilizing them as tourism resources.

Ashikaga City has also formulated a landscape plan in order to make the best use of its rich natural and historical resources, and the area around Ashikaga Gakko has been designated as a priority landscape area.



Fig.1. Site Map



Fig.2 Ashikaga Gakko. Ashikaga city HP [<https://www.city.ashikaga.tochigi.jp/page/nihonisan.html> 2021/07/23]

### Purpose of the Project

The streets around Ashikaga Gakko are laid out with cobblestone pavement and lined with old houses, creating an elegant atmosphere reminiscent of little Kyoto. The Matsumura Memorial Hall, built in 1925, is a two-story wooden building with a Japanese style hipped roof. It is now open to the public as a nationally registered tangible cultural property. It exhibits furnishings and household items that were handed down in the Matsumura family during the Edo, Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods. In addition, materials from politicians such as Chinnosuke Yokota, the Ashikaga-born Minister of Justice, as well as cultural figures and scholars of the time are also introduced.

The Ashikaga Machinaka Yugakukan (Ashikaga Town Museum) is located at the entrance of Gakkou-sama-dori Street as a sightseeing base. The Ashikaga Machinaka Yugakukan was opened in 2003 and provides information on the history and culture of Ashikaga. It was renovated to expand the rest area for tourists who enjoy walking around the town, and the grand opening was held in November 2008. As a move to target tourists, parking lots are being developed, and many parking lots are available.

However, the area around Ashikaga Gakko is considered to be an important area in the city due to the development of traditional streetscape including stone folding and the development of centers such as Ashikaga Machinaka Yugakukan.

On the other hand, these developments are mainly aimed at tourists, and I believe that the streets around Ashikaga School are not familiar to local residents and are recognized as places where there is no reason to stop by.

If you look at the area around Ashikaga Gakko, you will find many schools and educational and learning centers. Our goal is to attract students and other local residents to the Ashikaga Gakko area. In order to realize this goal, this project proposes the construction of an urban center around Ashikaga Gakko. We believe that the facilities of the urban center, in conjunction with the school and other facilities, will help to revitalize the town by attracting the young people who have been staying away from the area.

As an existing community, we will create a multi-generational exchange between the young and the elderly by using it as an urban base for tourist guides, who are mainly made up of elderly volunteers. By doing so, we aim to form a sustainable community and contribute to the local society.

In Ashikaga City, there are several vacant lots owned by the city. If you look closely at the signs, you will see that they are labeled as "land for urban development projects," and there is land with potential for urban renewal lying dormant. In this proposal, we will focus on these "sites for urban development projects".

This area is a priority area in the landscape plan. For this reason, we will start with a social experiment to understand the interest of the community by setting up temporary facilities, rather than immediately carrying out hardware development. For this reason, the first step is to establish a base by using container houses. After that, we will set up a working group of citizens, including users, to discuss the development of the center. These teams will function as a consolidator of opinions and will give concrete shape to the center. In addition, we will use post-it notes and other tools to collect the opinions of citizens and tourists who visit the site on a daily basis, in order to gather their requests for the design of the space and the functions of the site. We will collect the opinions of the citizens and tourists who visit the site on a daily basis.



Fig.3 Analysis of current situation and target sites for maintenance. Google Earth

The container house in the experimental stage will not only be a place to place containers, but will also be designed in such a way that it can be seen from the outside. By doing so, we will realize an environment where people can see and be seen, and eliminate the boundary between the town and the container house. By doing so, we hope that the activities inside the container house will expand not only to the interior but also to the city.

In addition, the interior space is designed as a facility that can be used by anyone, rather than being equipped with specific functions. If we provide too many functions, there is a possibility of limiting the usage. We will keep the functions to a minimum, as a space that can be used freely by the users themselves. In this way, the space can be used as a hub for events such as the marché held regularly in front of the Ashikaga School gate.

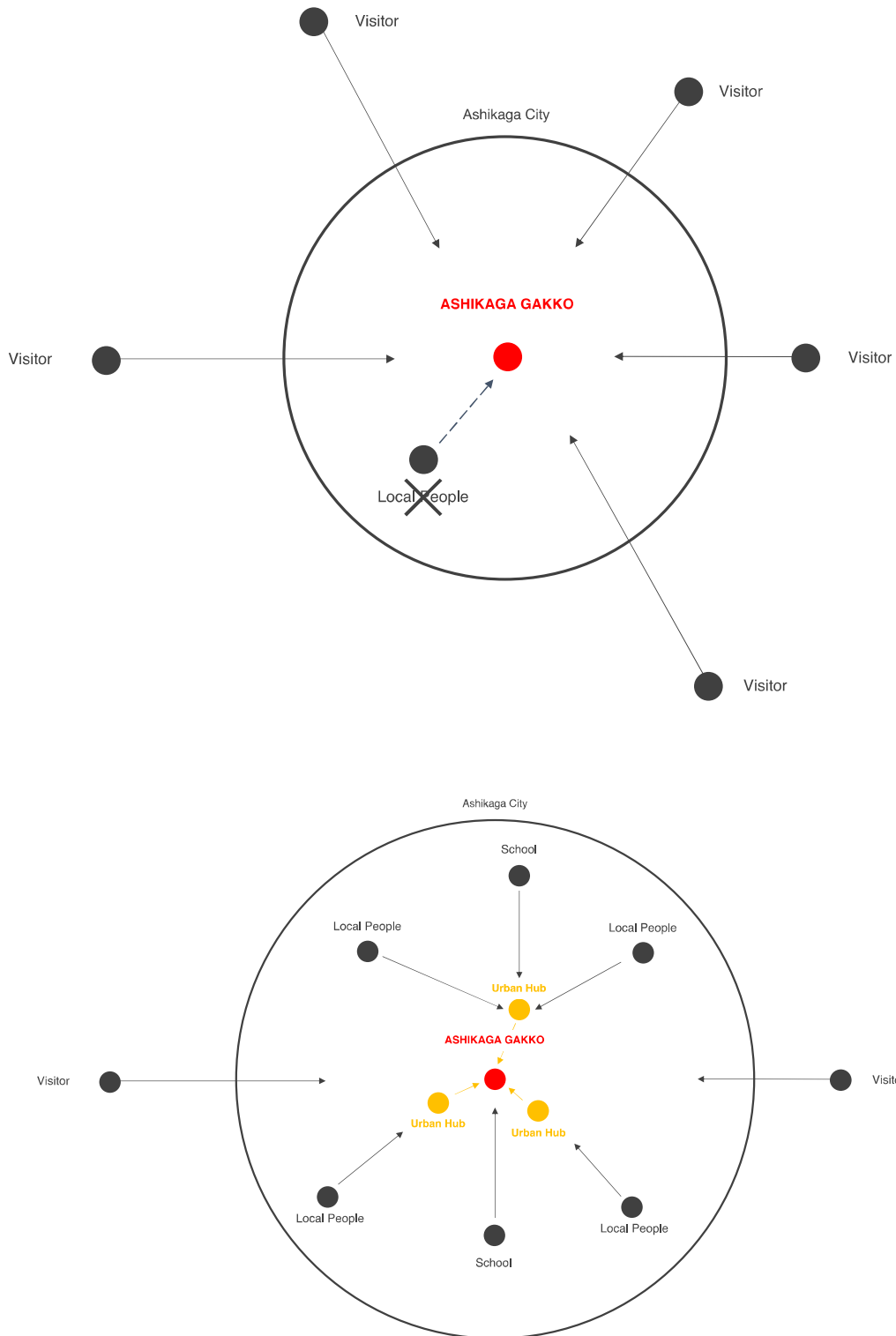


Fig.4. Future Vision of the Project

By designing such a free urban base, we can create a dialogue among people with various attributes, such as volunteer guides, students, and tourists. We believe that this will lead to new exchanges and the creation of new value in the region.

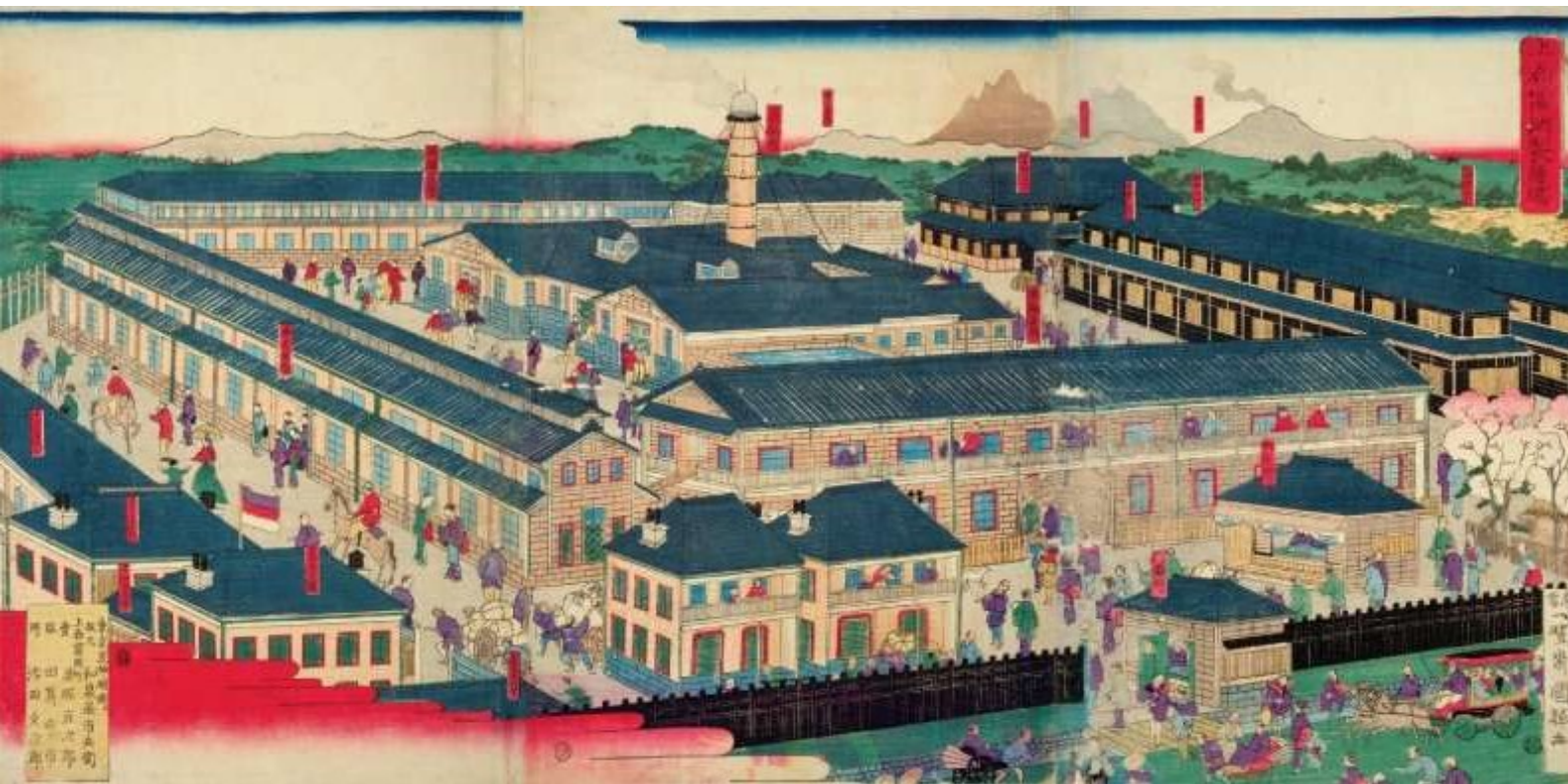
### Conclusion

Through these efforts, we are trying to create momentum for Ashikaga as a town by turning people's attention to Ashikaga Gakko, which is an important historical legacy of Ashikaga. On the other hand, it is important to develop this project not only as a point of reference around Ashikaga Gakko, but also as an initiative that can spread across the entire city. Furthermore, it is necessary to design a mechanism to ensure that these efforts do not become transient.

In particular, we should not rely on students or other members who change frequently, but rather on elderly people who are capable of participating continuously. In some areas of the city, there are only a few young people, and we believe that by collaborating with such areas, we can establish a network of human connections that will lead to the realization of dialogue among multiple generations.



Fig.5. Community Image [Aki Hamada Architects HP: <https://aki-hamada.com/> 2021/07/23]



This wood-block print depicts the Tomioka Seishijo (Tomioka Silk Mill), Japan's oldest silk-reeling factory, which was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2014.

# CONVERSION OF VACANT HOUSE INTO PLACES FOR EVERY PERSON

HOTAKA MIKI

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

hotaka.miki.3a@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

I chose Tomioka City, where the Tomioka Silk Mill is located, as the target site for this project.

First, let me explain about the Tomioka Silk Mill (Figure 1). It was a government-run instrumental silk mill established by the Meiji government in 1872. There were three basic ideas behind this model factory: first, to introduce Western spinning technology; second, to use foreigners as instructors; and third, to recruit women from all over the country, who would return to their hometowns after completing their training and become instructors in instrumental spinning. Under the guidance of Paul Brunet, a Frenchman who was hired based on these ideas, a model government-owned instrumental silk mill (Tomioka Silk Mill) was established, incorporating Western technology. The Tomioka Silk Mill was a large-scale instrumental silk mill built by the Japanese government.



Fig.1. Location of the Tomioka Silk Mill

The 140-meter-long silk mill was the largest silk mill in the world at that time, with 300 spinning machines (Figure2). After World War II, automatic spinning machines were introduced and the mill was active as a spinning mill for a long time, but with the decline of Japan's spinning industry, it finally ceased operation in March 1987. In September 2005, all the buildings were donated to Tomioka City, and since then, Tomioka City has been preserving and managing them. In July 2005, it was designated as a National Historic Site, and in July 2006, the main buildings were designated as Important Cultural Properties, and in June 2014, it was included in the World Heritage List. In addition, in December of the same year, the three buildings, the spinning mill, the west cocoon mill, and the east cocoon mill, were designated as National Treasures.

Next, I will describe Tomioka City. The population is 47,285 (males: 23399, females: 23886) and the area is 122.85 square kilometers (residential land: 12.02 square kilometers, rice field: 8.33, field: 20.54, forest: 27.45, field: 3.38, miscellaneous land: 51.13). In spite of its inland terrain, the average annual temperature is around 14 degrees Celsius, and the annual precipitation is around 1,000 mm.

It is blessed with a mild climate throughout the year, with almost no snowfall and more than 200 sunny days a year.

Next, I would like to talk about the scenery of Tomioka City. The landscape of Tomioka City, where the Tomioka Silk Mill is located, is mainly composed of the following three elements. The first is the variety of nature and topography. The region has a variety of faces, from steep mountains to intricate valleys, green slopes along rivers, and plains. The second is the shape of urban areas, villages, and buildings. They were formed over a long period of time in the nature and topography of Tomioka City. The third is the activities and activities of the citizens of Tomioka City. These include, for example, life, liveliness, sericulture, farming, various industries, festivals, and human connections.



Fig. 2: The current Tomioka Silk Mill [Tomioka City]

Lastly, I would like to talk about the urban structure that forms the present Tomioka City. In Tomioka City, there is a historical road called "Shinshu Hime Kaido". In the early Meiji era (around 1870), the road was often used by women visiting Zenkoji Temple. The current urban planning of Tomioka City is based around this highway and the Tomioka Silk Mill. In this plan, the closer the zone is to the Tomioka Silk Mill, the stronger the restrictions on building height and color.

### Purposes of the project

In Japan, it is currently difficult to cope with general issues such as the declining birthrate and aging population, the concentration of population in the capital city of Tokyo, and the hollowing out of commerce, as well as issues unique to the tourism industry such as unstable income due to corona.

In addition, in Tomioka City, the increase in the number of vacant houses and stores and the hollowing out of the city have become a problem. Such vacant houses and stores include buildings with traditional structures. Currently, Tomioka City is working on the preservation and renovation of these traditional buildings and renovation of vacant houses as part of its landscape creation plan (Figure3). However, specific measures focusing on people, such as lack of communication among local residents have not been taken, and the issue remains unresolved.

Therefore, I consider these empty houses and stores as the target of my project. The five keywords of this project are as follows.

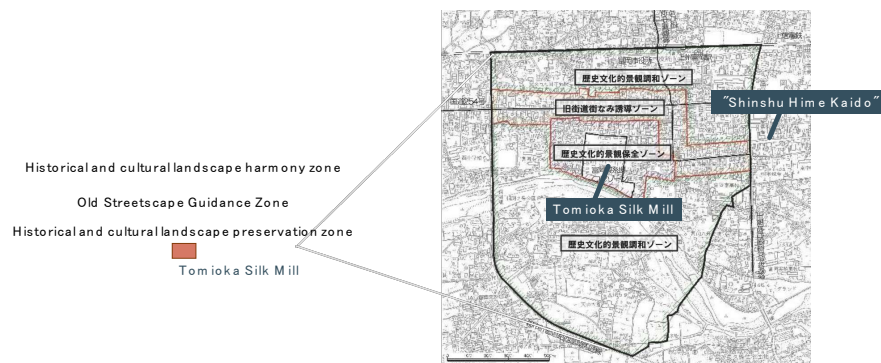


Fig.3. Urban planning in Tomioka City [City Planning Division, Construction and Waterworks Department, Tomioka City: Outline of the Tomioka City Landscape Plan  
[https://www.city.tomioka.lg.jp/www/contents/1000000000869/files/keikankeikaku\\_gaiyou.pdf](https://www.city.tomioka.lg.jp/www/contents/1000000000869/files/keikankeikaku_gaiyou.pdf) 2021/07/23.

- Surrounding city center
- Vacant houses, vacant stores
- Dialog among people
- Education
- Reconstruction

And my goal was to reconstruct this traditional townscape, which developed in line with the prosperity of the Tomioka Silk Mill, by using empty houses and stores in the urban area around the mill to create a dialogue among diverse people.

Next, I'll talk about my specific project. First, the following are some examples of issues that Tomioka City residents are facing, one for each generation.



- Elderly person)  
A familiar store has gone out of business.
- Parents' generation)  
We started to go shopping at a large shopping mall.
- Sub-generation)  
After school, we go home directly.

These problems are caused by the lack of facilities to go out in the neighborhood, and this will create a situation where residents are not walking in the city.

In response to this situation, I came up with the idea of a project called "Conversion of vacant traditional buildings and stores into places for all kinds of people". The methodology consists to follow four steps.

- Step 1  
Gathering Stakeholders for vacant houses and stores.
- Step 2  
Walk around empty houses and stores with students from nearby schools and stakeholders and people from nearby shopping streets.
- Step 3  
Divide into groups for each building you like and think about what kind of place you want.
- Step 4  
In each group, people from all walks of life work together to transform it into an ideal place.

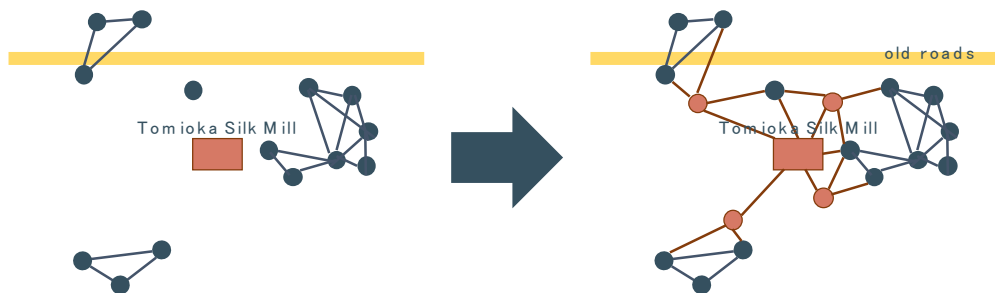


Fig.4. Image of the reconstruction in this project

This is not just a project to welcome tourists who come to see the heritage sites, but a project by the residents for the residents to imagine the city of the past from the perspective of a modern person, and to reconsider how the city should be.

### Conclusion

- The following is an example of the results of the project.
- Stakeholders)  
Brighten up the city with disused buildings!
- Elderly person)  
We often go to familiar stores to chat.
- Parents' generation)  
We started to go shopping at neighborhood store.
- Sub-generation)  
After school, we're going to stop by the building after school.
- Tourists)  
We are able to interact with many Tomioka residents not only at the Tomioka Silk Mill but also in the surrounding towns.

In other words, this means that there are residents and tourists walking around in the city. It also means that residents are aware of the significance of heritage conservation and the importance of multigenerational communication.

Through this project, I hope that the vacant traditional buildings will not only become vessels for the residents and tourists but will also serve as an opportunity to update the local way of life that has been cultivated in this area. The experts only design the projects and take care of the hard work. It is up to the residents to implement the project and create a vision for the future of their community, which I believe is a more realistic plan.



Ibaraki Prefecture. Mito. Kodokan (2021)

# URBAN REGENERATION PROJECT

## KODOKAN

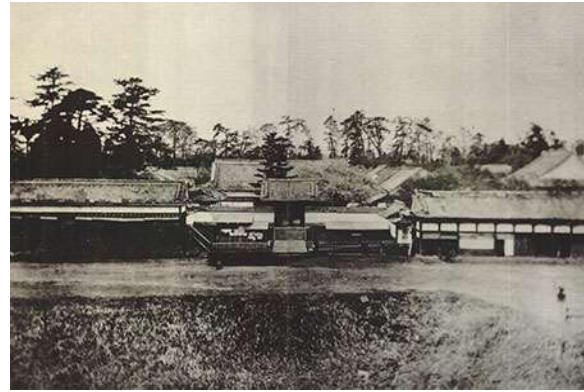
MANAMI MORITO

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

manami.morito.7x@stu.hosei.ac.jp

### Introduction

#### Kodokan



I have selected this local heritage because it is a special national historic site in my home prefecture of Ibaraki.

### Overview of Kodokan

This site is in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture.

Kodokan, a school of the former Mito clan, was established as one of the key measures for the reform of the clan administration. At the time of its establishment, the site covered an area of approximately 10.5 ha, making it the largest domain school in Japan. In addition to the Seicho (school hall) and Jizendo, there were also the Bunkan, Bukan, Igakukan (medical hall), Observatory, Kashima Shrine, Bagua Hall, Confucius Temple and other buildings, as well as a stable, a training ground, an arena and an artillery range, making it a comprehensive educational facility.

The age of entry was 15, and students were obliged to remain in school until the age of 40. There was no graduation system, so it was a lifelong education. The emphasis was on both learning and the martial arts: Confucianism, etiquette, history, astronomy, mathematics, maps, waka poetry and music were taught, while the martial arts included sword fighting, spear fighting, jujutsu, military science, guns, horsemanship and swimming. The medical school, which trained doctors, also taught medicine, vaccinations and pharmaceuticals.

After a period of turmoil at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Kodokan was closed in 1872 with the promulgation of the Gakusei (school system) and used as a temporary prefectural office and school building. The main gate, the main office and the Jizendo building, which survived many wars, were designated as National Important Cultural Properties in 1964. 3.4 ha of the building is now designated as a Special Historic Site of Japan as the Old Koudokan. The area is also famous for its plum blossoms, with 800 plum trees of 60 varieties planted in the area.

In April 2015, the area was recognized as a Japan Heritage Site established by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

### About the project

#### About Ibaraki Prefecture and Mito city

Ibaraki Prefecture, where I live, has been at the bottom of the prefecture attractiveness rankings for seven consecutive years until 2019. Last year we moved up to 42nd place, but we are still hovering around the bottom. One of the reasons for Ibaraki's low favorability rating is that it has fewer prominent tourist attractions than other prefectures. We therefore believe that it is important to strengthen and protect the local heritage of tourist destinations.

Local laws of Mito have set up 5 leading projects to increase the number of tourists. Historical Tourism Town Planning which is one of the 5 lead projects. Now Mito city has a history of 400 years since the founding of the Mito clan and a lot of historical resources. Therefore, In Mito's urban planning, it is necessary to position historical resources as a tourist resource in Mito City's tourism, make the most of them, and promote tourism town planning that makes the most of history.

In Mito's urban planning, goal was to triple the number of visitors to the Kodokan.

However, the number of incoming tourists to Mito, where Kodokan is located, fell drastically in 2011. This is thought to be due to reputational damage caused by the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Since then, the number of visitors has shown signs of recovery, partly because of efforts to dispel rumors, but it has not returned to the "pre-earthquake state". For this reason, Mito City's urban planning promotes the creation of an attractive city that makes the most of its history and nature and is developing projects that will lead to an increase in the number of people who interact with the city, making use of its rich natural and historical tourist resources.

In view of the above, I would like to strengthen Kodokan as a historical and educational heritage.

### Purposes of the project

Kodokan, the largest clan school in Japan, is an important historical and cultural heritage of Mito City. In addition to Kodokan, there are various other historical and cultural heritages that remain or have been restored in the area. In addition to the heritage sites, the area is also densely populated with schools, from elementary schools to high schools.

This project aims to:

- bring people closer to the culture, history, and heritage of the area.
  - create a place where people of all ages can **interact with each other**.
- We think that achieving these goals will lead to increased tourism.

### About Specific proposal

First, Building a Bridge Guard Plaza.



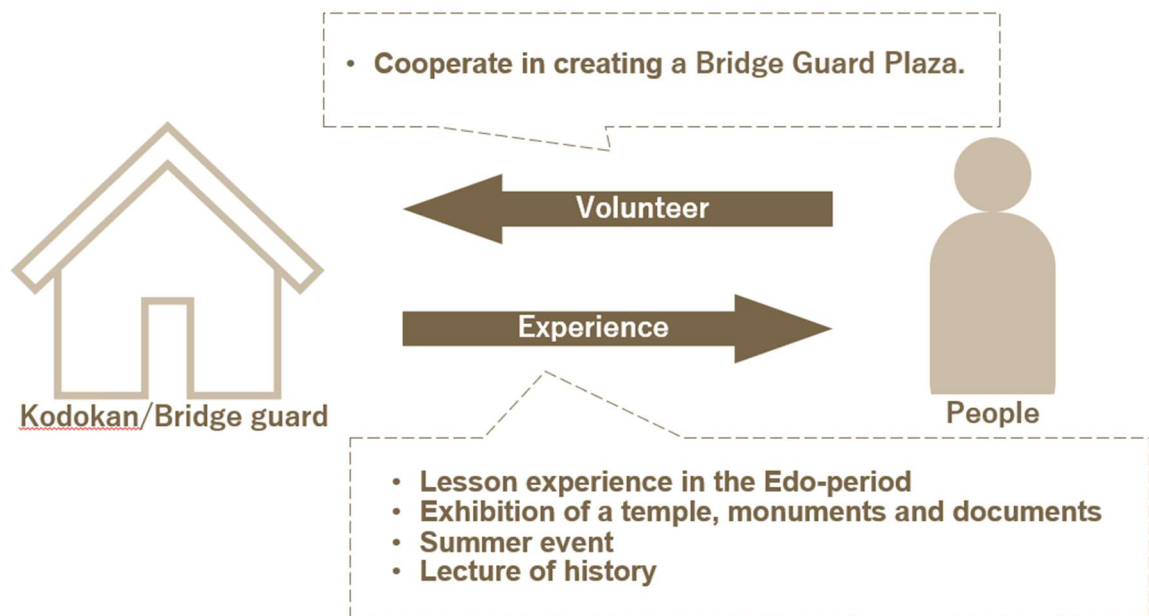
The bridge space (The part enclosed in red) in front of the Kodokan was a parking space for trucks when the Otemon gate of Mito Castle was being restored and maintained until 2020. Now it is not used for anything and there is a field (about  $30 \times 30 \text{ m}^2$ ).

There is no space for people to relax in the current Kodokan Park. Where can tourists and people in this area rest? I believe that there needs to be a place to rest around the heritage site.

In addition, one of the things that Mito City is focusing on is to make the area around Kodokan and Mito Castle a walking course. However, since there is no space to relax in this walking course, few people want to walk this course, don't you think? I think that the walking course needs a space where people can relax.

Therefore, we will turn this bridge space into a plaza where people can relax and interact with each other.

Second, Win-Win system.



This system will be implemented when we build the Bridge Guard Plaza.

This is a system that allows people to receive a variety of free experiences at Kodokan in exchange for volunteering to help build the plaza.

Examples of the experiences at Kodokan are:

- Lesson experience in the Edo-period.
- Exhibition of a temple, monuments, and documents.
- Summer event.
- Lecture of history.

Examples of the volunteering to help build the plaza are:

- Cooperate in creating a Bridge Guard Plaza.
- Planting plant seeds.
- Making a bench or table.
- Painting on the bricks of the flower bed.

I hope to make this initiative available to individuals, families, schools and other groups.

People naturally have a love for what they have experienced and been involved in. We naturally have love for what we have experienced and been involved in, and we want to tell our family, friends, and acquaintances about what we love. I intend to use this effect to increase residents' interest in Kodokan, and to promote tourism.

### Conclusion

After the realization of this project, I hope that:

- This project will bring people closer to the culture, history, and heritage of the region.
  - The Bridge Guard Plaza will become a space where people of all ages can relax and interact with each other.
  - Increasing the number of tourists and contributing to the revitalization of Mito City and Ibaraki Prefecture.
- Since Kodokan is a very attractive place as a historical and cultural heritage, I would like many people to know about this site and to visit it.



Chiba Prefecture. A view of old Sawara (2021)

# LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT OPENS TO ALL CITIZENS

KOHEI FUKUI

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

kohei.fukui.5d@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

Sawara is known as the "Little Edo of Hokusai". Against the backdrop of the Tone River, goods were transported to Edo (now Tokyo), and the area around the Ono River, a branch of the Tone River, became a river port and was lined with inns and stores. Along the Ono River and along the Katori Kaido, there are rows of stately wooden buildings. Katori City is located in the northeastern part of Chiba Prefecture.

This city is surrounded by nature, history, and culture, including rural landscapes and satoyama that remind us of the original landscape of Japan, and the natural scenery around the Tone River in the Suigo-Tsukuba National Park. In terms of industry, Katori City has long been known for its early rice production in Suigo, and with its mild climate and fertile farmland, it serves as a food production base for the Tokyo metropolitan area.

The history of Sawara can be seen from ancient times. When the Yamato Imperial Court unified Japan, it placed great importance on Katori and Kashima Jingu Shrines as the foremost bases in the east, which can be seen in the fact that in 927, only these two shrines were given the title of "Jingu", giving them a superior status.

To the north of this area, an inland sea called "Katori no ura" opened up, which became an important means of transportation and distribution from ancient times to the Middle Ages, and whoever conquered this area gained great power. In 1368, it was recorded that the Katori Shrine had obtained the right to rule over the seafarers.

In the early days of the medieval society, Sawara was a farming village centered on Katori Jingu Shrine, but later developed into an area with urban functions, such as a town assembly, as commerce and industry developed.

During the Warring States period, a regular market called "Rikusai Ichiba" was permitted in the Shinjuku area, indicating that the city had entered an era of commodity economy from its previous subsistence lifestyle. This trend accelerated in the Edo period (1603-1868), bringing about a major change in commerce and distribution, and according to the "Sawara-mura Sanjyuku Ichiba Miseike Shogyo" of 1742, there were 68 stalls in the Kamijyuku market, 77 in the Nakajyuku market, and 27 in the Shimojyuku market, indicating that the area was quite busy. In the middle of the Edo period, there were 11 townships in Honjuku and 14 in Shinjuku.

The prosperity of the city was based on the shipping routes that were made possible by the relocation of the Tone River eastward and the vast production and consumption areas, including the 16 islands. Interaction with Edo brought not only economic benefits but also high culture, leading to the float festival and the production of scholars such as Ino Tadataka.

The town of Sawara, with its prosperity in shipping and commerce, continued to flourish even after the Meiji era (1868-1912), and remained prosperous until around 1965, when it switched to automobile transportation.

After that, as the means of transportation and the forms of goods sales changed, it declined rapidly in stages and lost its commercial status.



Fig.1. Sawara's cityscape

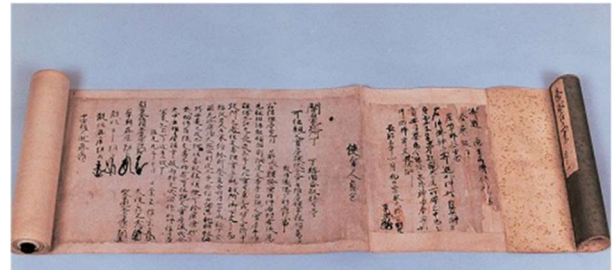


Fig.2. The Order of the Seafarers, 1368.

After the opening of the railroad in 1898 until around 1955, local goods were collected and shipped to Sawara Station by boat or car. The volume of cargo handled at Sawara Station peaked in the Taisho era, surpassing that of neighboring stations.

The trade area during this period was a 30 km radius from today's Narita City to Kashima City, with three hundred thousand people. The center of Sawara was along the Katori Kaido and the Ono River until around 1955, when it moved to the area around the station, and now it is located in the new urban area along the national highway

Katori City has enacted the "Katori City Planning Ordinance" as a mechanism to develop activities through citizen collaboration in each region.

The city will provide financial support as well as human resources support as each council formulates and carries out its own community development plan. In addition, an external committee of experts will be set up to provide consultation and advice to the councils in an effort to better realize citizen cooperation.

The City Planning Ordinance is a system that makes it easier for residents to work together to voluntarily promote activities such as "making the community more livable" and "making the community more attractive. With this system, the city will actively support citizens' collaborative activities in more diverse ways than ever before.

Resident Self-Governance Association is an organization that is made up of various entities active in the community, such as residents, residents' associations, district social cooperatives, welfare committee members, PTA, children's associations, and senior citizens' clubs, all of which work together and cooperate with each other within the scope of an elementary school district.

While fostering and supporting the leaders of these activities, they also consider the importance of the community, share opinions from various perspectives, and hold discussions and carry out activities with the aim of creating a better community. They play a leading role in local community development.

### Purposes of the project

The streets of the Sawara district prospered to the extent that it was called "superior to Edo," due to its water transportation. The people adopted the culture of Edo and sublimated it into their own unique culture. The townscape that still retains these vestiges can still be seen along the Ono River and Katori Kaido. Sawara's "Important Preservation District for Traditional Buildings" is recognized as a "living townscape," with many merchant houses still in business, having taken over the family business from the past.

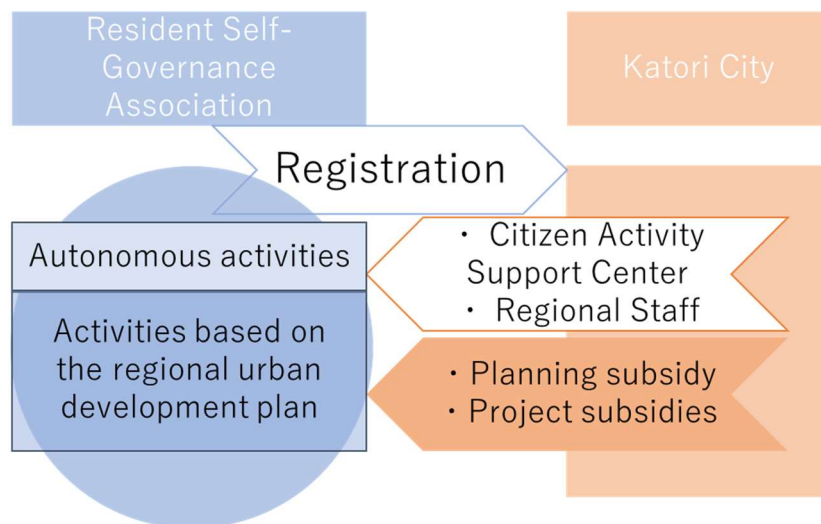


Fig.3 Image of urban development ordinance system

In this municipality, while awareness of residents' cooperation in community development has been fostered, the rate of participation in residents' activities is reported to be low. Only a few enthusiastic residents participate in the consultative meetings, resulting in biased opinions, which do not reflect the true needs of the residents. Therefore, this project aims to provide opportunities for meetings and to reflect more of the needs of residents in urban planning.





Fig.4. Sawara Grand Festival

### Conclusion

This project will provide opportunities for meetings to promote self-governance with the participation of residents. Since it is difficult for residents to make decisions directly, the local government and experts will provide support for residents' autonomy. Meetings are held not only on weekdays, but also at night and on holidays, and are open to anyone who wishes to participate.

Purpose: To encourage dialogue with the citizens on the following topics

1. Residents' needs for a livable city
2. The state of Sawara's townscape
3. The state of water transportation in Sawara

This project will allow us to better reflect the opinions of the residents in city planning. We believe that this will lead to better city planning. In the end, we believe that we will be able to positively consider difficult topics such as the revival of boat transportation.



Fig.5. Ships of the Tone River Water Transportation



Tokyo Prefecture. Shibuya. Meiji Jingu Shrine. Detail of the garden (Olimpia Niglio, 2018)

# MEIJI JINGU SHURINE SHIBUYA WARD

RIO YAMADA

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

rio.yamada.7t@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

I select Meiji Jingu Shrine as the local heritage site to be strengthened in Shibuya Ward. Meiji Jingu Shrine is a Shinto shrine located in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. The shrine is dedicated to Emperor Meiji, the 122nd Emperor of Japan, and Empress Shoken. In 1912, Emperor Meiji passed away, and in 1914, Empress Shoken passed away. The people of Japan expressed their passionate desire to honor the spirit of the gods and respect and adore the sacred virtue of the gods forever, and the shrine was built in Yoyogi, a place closely associated with the gods. Since then, the Meiji Shrine has been praying for the prosperity of the Imperial Family, the prosperity of Japan, and world peace.

The shrine usually attracts the largest number of worshippers in Japan on New Year's Day, but on a normal day, the shrine's luxuriantly growing woods and austere atmosphere of divinity quietly embrace the prayers of the people. Festivals and events are held throughout the year, and during the spring and autumn festivals, the shrine grounds are filled with various events of celebration and dedication.

The shrine also offers prayers for ceremonies such as weddings, the first visit to the shrine, and the seven-five-three festival, as well as for household safety and purification.

Before the Meiji Jingu Shrine was built, this area was called "Minami Toshima Imperial Land" (owned by the Imperial Family) except for the area around the current Imperial Garden, most of the land was farmland, and the landscape continued to look like a wasteland.

The shrine's vast forest of 700,000 square meters is an artificial forest planted with 100,000 trees donated from all over Japan for the construction of the Meiji Shrine, with the aim of creating an "eternal forest."

During the construction of the forest, forestry experts considered what could be planted to make it an "eternal forest" and decided to plant trees such as vertebrae, oaks, camphor trees, and other light-leaved trees to be the main constituent trees in the future. The reason for this was that in the Taisho era (1912-1926), Tokyo was already suffering from pollution, and the big and old trees in the city were dying one after another. So, in anticipation of the next hundred years, I concluded that the Meiji Shrine would only be able to grow if it was a terrestrial tree.



Fig.1. Meiji Jingu Shrine. General actual view.

The Jingu Gaien Garden is an extremely important place historically, for the nation, and for Tokyo's urban development. The inner garden, built in 1920, was designed to maintain the solemnity and dignity of the Shinto shrines, while the outer garden was designed to be a place for physical fitness and mental and physical training, as well as a center for the dissemination of culture and art, and to be open to as many people as possible by providing green spaces and cultural and sports facilities. The shrine was built in 1926 with the aim of providing a green space and cultural and sports facilities that would be open to as many people as possible.

Since then, many sports grounds, including the Meiji Jingu Stadium, the sacred ground for student baseball, have been developed, and many facilities were used during the 1964 Olympics, making the city a concentration of Japan's representative sports facilities.

Half a century after its completion, the National Stadium is aging and deteriorating in terms of functionality, making it difficult to use for large-scale international competitions, and a resolution passed in February 2011 by the non-partisan Parliamentarians for the Success of the Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan has triggered plans to rebuild the National Stadium.



Fig.2. Meiji Jingu Shrine. Historical photo

### Purposes of the project

Shibuya Ward, where Meiji Shrine is located, is located in the center of Tokyo and is known as a "youth town" lined with fashion buildings. For better or worse, it is a city with an unusual bustle. Because it is an urban cityscape, there must be a community within it that seeks the peace of greenery and nature. That is why we need to permanently preserve the greenery of Meiji Shrine in Shibuya Ward for the future. To this end, this project aims to deepen the understanding of the greenery of Meiji Jingu Shrine among the next generation.

In order to preserve the rich greenery that exists in the city for the future, it is important for children and young people to understand the Meiji Jingu Forest. It is also important to engage in cross-cultural exchange.

It is important to provide a place to introduce the history of the Meiji Jingu Forest. They also need to be easily accessible. For children, the use of animations with cute characters will enable them to understand while having fun. It is also suggested that such contents be created for foreigners as well.



Fig.3. Meiji Jingu Shrine. Specific actual detail of the natural site.



Fig.4. Meiji Jingu Shrine. The community

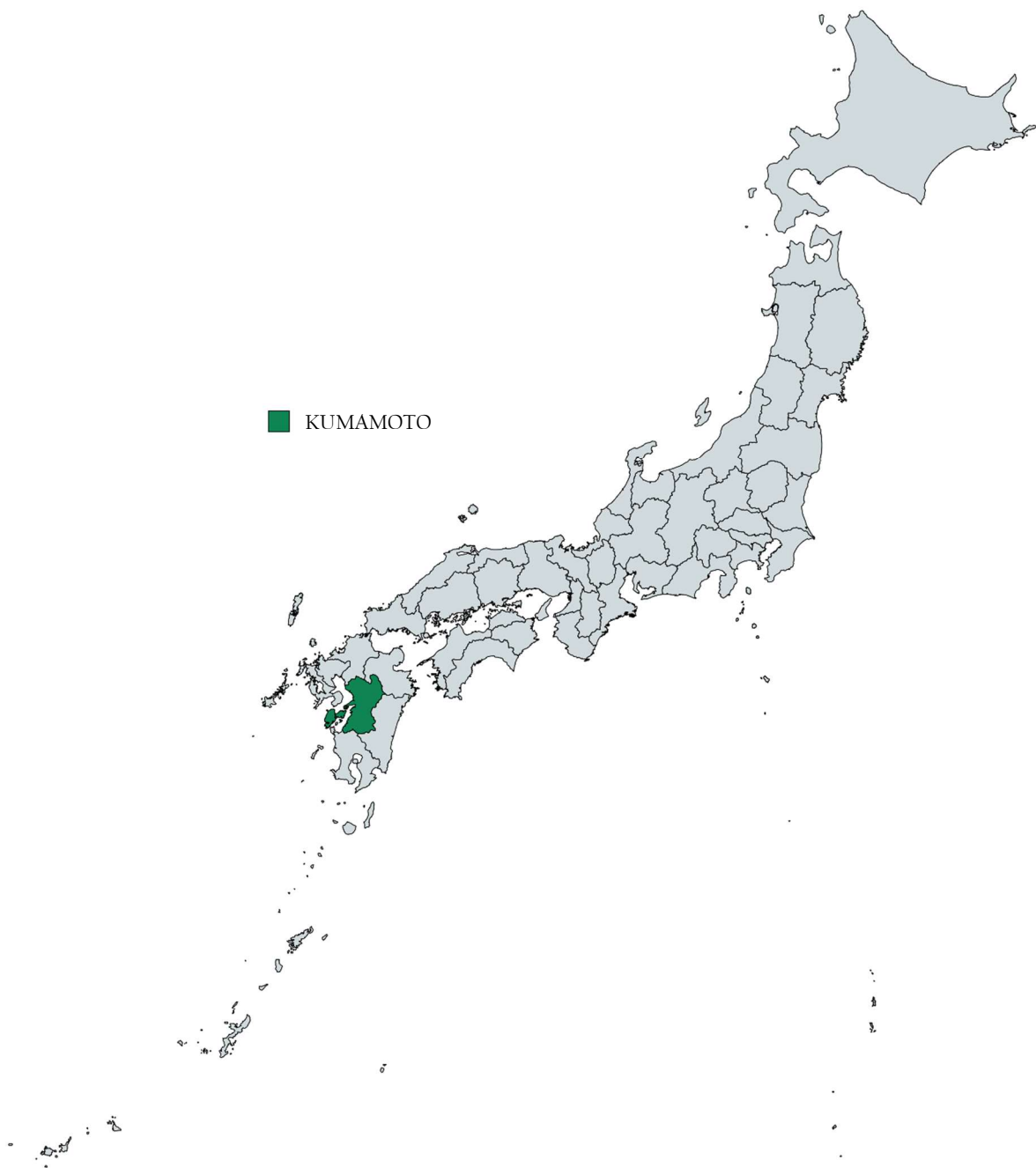
### Conclusion

By passing on to the next generation the history of the Meiji Shrine and the knowledge of how our predecessors protected the vast urban forest that is the symbol of the Meiji Shrine, we will be able to curb the decline in Tokyo's greenery that has occurred in recent years. Even if the greenery outside of Meiji Jingu Shrine continues to diminish, the continued existence of the vast forest of Meiji Jingu Shrine will become a symbol of "hope" for the permanent existence of greenery in Tokyo. With the existence of such a symbol, we can borrow knowledge from the factors that cause the greenery of Meiji Shrine to continue to exist in the city and find hope that the greenery in other parts of the city will also develop in a new and lasting way.

Also, by communicating with people from overseas, you will be able to rediscover your own culture and further deepen Japanese people's understanding of Meiji Jingu Shrine.

In addition, through cross-cultural exchange, we will be able to convey the greatness of the artificial forest at Meiji Jingu Shrine to foreigners, and by learning about examples in other countries, we will be able to create a more permanent forest.





■ KUMAMOTO



Kumamoto Prefecture, Kurokawa Onsen, Detail, 2017



# KUROKAWA ONSEN

YUIKO SAKAI

*Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,  
Faculty of Engineering and Design  
Hosei University*

yuiko.sakai.8r@stu.hosei.ac.jp

## Introduction

I chose Kumamoto Prefecture for this presentation. There are three reasons. Firstly, it has been five years since the Kumamoto earthquake and the eruption of Mount Aso (occurred in 2016), and I thought that we should prevent the damage from fading away. Secondly, I thought it was necessary to pass on the damage to the next generation. Thirdly, one of my relatives was a victim of the Kumamoto earthquake, so it is a familiar case to me.

As a project to stop the fading of the damage caused by the Kumamoto earthquake and the eruption of Mount Aso and to pass it on, I chose the hot spring resort of Kurokawa Onsen and the surrounding Aso area in Kumamoto Prefecture.

Kurokawa Onsen is a hot spring resort located in the Aso region of Kumamoto Prefecture, on the border with Oita Prefecture, in the north central area of Kyushu.



Fig.1. Kurokawa Onsen. Before the 1960s [<https://www.kurokawaonsen.or.jp/about/> 2021.7.21]

The history of Kurokawa Onsen goes back to the Edo period. In the mid-Edo period, Kurokawa Onsen was known as a therapeutic hot spring (Touji: to recuperate by bathing in hot springs). Even in the Meiji era (1868-1912), semi-retreating lodgings continued to exist as hot springs that were effective for treating injuries. The history of Kurokawa as a hot spring resort began after World War II.

In 1960, the Kurokawa Onsen Tourist Ryokan Cooperative Association was established by six inns, and the concept of a "hot spring resort with a collection of open-air baths" was developed. 1964 saw the opening of the "Yamanami Highway", which temporarily attracted more tourists, but soon became "noisy". The "Yamanami Highway" was the starting point for traffic to Kurokawa Onsen.

Kurokawa Onsen was stagnant for a while, but in the 1970s, a ray of light began to appear. The "second and third generation" of ryokan owners began to appear in Kurokawa as sons-in-law, and they began to use their experience in the city to create a new type of hot spring resort.

In 1986, the Ryokan Association was reorganized and focused on creating a landscape for the entire Kurokawa area. The Ryokan Association is divided into three sections: the Signboard Team, the Environment Team, and the Planning and Public Relations Team. The signage team removed all 200 signs that had been standing in different places and replaced them with unified communal signs. The environment team pruned trees and planted trees to make the then bleak hot spring village, with nothing but cedar mountains, look like a picture-perfect landscape. The Planning Team proposed a "bathing bill" to allow the use of all open-air baths in Kurokawa Onsen in order to save inns that could not have open-air baths due to site limitations.

From the 1990s, the number of guests increased to 400,000 a year, thanks in part to the bathing bill. But then came the biggest crisis of all.

In 2016, the Kumamoto earthquake struck twice, registering a maximum intensity of 7 on the Japanese seismic scale. Some inns were forced to close for extended periods of time, but thanks to warm support from all over the country, the number of guests has gradually returned, and by 2018, it is almost back to pre-quake levels.

Here are some of the projects that are currently taking place around Kurokawa Onsen.

Kurokawa Onsen has been running a composting project since 2020. In the composting project, food scraps from the ryokan will be turned into fully ripe compost, which will then be used by local farmers. After that, the vegetables are served at the inn. As a hot spring resort in the satoyama area, the project was started with the idea that it should not be limited to just using the geothermal energy, water, grasslands, forests, and beautiful scenery that nature has blessed us with. The young generation of the community is also participating in this project.



Fig.2 Location of Kurokawa Onsen

### Purposes of the project

In the introduction, I introduced the history of Kurokawa Onsen, and the current efforts being made. From here, I will talk about the sense of crisis I feel towards this town and what I would like to improve and introduce the project I have in mind.

First, I would like to introduce the five key words of my project: Kumamoto earthquake and Mt. Aso eruption, damage, agriculture, inheritance, and giving back. First, I would like to talk about the Kumamoto earthquake and the eruption of Mount Aso and the damage. In 2016, these two disasters hit Kumamoto Prefecture. As I mentioned above, the Kumamoto earthquake was so big that it recorded a maximum intensity of 7 on the Japanese seismic scale. As for the eruption of Mt. Aso, it was the first explosive eruption in 36 years, since 1980, and the city of Aso was covered with volcanic ash, causing great damage. Next, I would like to talk about "agriculture". In Aso, where Kurokawa Hot Spring is located, one of the largest grasslands in Japan is maintained by human management of the grasslands through "wild burning," "grazing," and "grass collection. In recognition of this, the area was registered as a World Agricultural Heritage site in 2013 as a "sustainable agriculture". However, this agriculture has also been affected by two disasters.

Based on the above background, now that five years have passed since the disaster, I wanted to pass on the details of the disaster to people all over Japan and inform them of the current situation in order to prevent the damage from fading away. Therefore, I propose to make it possible to purchase crops harvested in Aso, which is registered as a World Agricultural Heritage site, on the Internet. I thought that by enclosing a sheet of paper describing the damage and the current situation when we send the crops, I could not only promote the agriculture of Aso, but also raise awareness of the disaster. Furthermore, we will be able to give back to the people who



Fig.3. Damage caused by the eruption.  
<https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZZO76384800Q4A830C1000006/> 2021.7.21.



Fig.4. Agriculture in the Aso region (grazing).  
[https://www.maff.go.jp/j/nousin/kantai/giahs\\_3\\_040.html](https://www.maff.go.jp/j/nousin/kantai/giahs_3_040.html) 2021.7.21

supported us during the disaster by providing them with more opportunities to eat our products. This is not all. We will also be able to convey the charm of Aso to those who cannot visit Aso and Kurokawa Onsen due to the effects of the new coronavirus that is currently raging. The current project was completed in the area around Kurokawa Onsen, but my proposed project can affect people in other areas as well.

However, there is a problem here. I assume that it is difficult for farmers, some of whom are elderly, to sell their vegetables directly online. So, I would like to suggest that young people, who are also involved in the composting project in Kurokawa Onsen, collect crops from each farmer and consolidate the crops in one base for shipping.

The flow of the project is illustrated below.

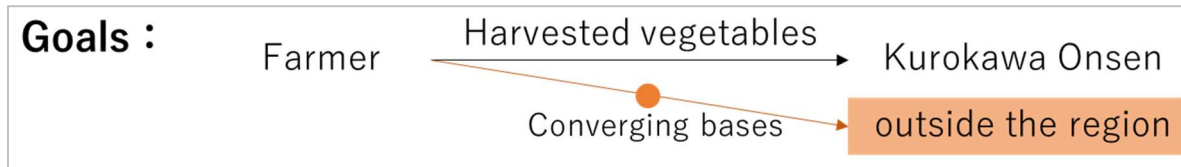


Fig.5. Project Flow

### Conclusion

I propose this project and hope that it will fulfill the following objectives: to pass on the memory of the disaster, to inform people about the current situation, to thank (give back) the people who supported us through the crops, and to convey the charm of Aso from the crops to people all over Japan.

However, I also hope that this project will help to develop and revitalize inter-regional exchanges and make the Aso region more attractive to other regions. This is because Japan's rural areas are experiencing a very serious decline in population, birthrate, and aging population. I believe that communicating the appeal of the city and increasing the number of people who consider moving here is one way to solve these problems. So, I want to remember that this is an issue that is close to me as well, and I want to actively communicate its appeal to the outside world.



Tokyo, Chiyoda-ku, Takebashi.  
Walls of the Imperial Park  
[Olimpia Niglio, 2021]



Tokyo, Chiyoda-ku, Takebashi.  
Walls of the Imperial Park  
[Olimpia Niglio, 2021]

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