La crescente distruzione del nostro patrimonio è una conseguenza del cambiamento tecnologico, dell'inquinamento, della cupidigia e della negligenza. Insieme ad un aumentato senso di apprezzamento per il passato, ciò rende tali reliquie ancora più preziose e famose e, di conseguenza, in pericolo. Nello stesso tempo, il passato che si cerca di preservare e ricostruire si è esteso nel tempo, nello spazio e nel contenuto, includendo oggi una più vasta serie di strutture ed opere artigianali di prima. Ma neanche queste addizioni soddisfano la moderna nostalgia e molta storia viene inven-tata per rispondere alla crescente richiesta.

La nuova popolarità della conservazione storica produce quattro dilemmi:
1) Cosa salvare dal passato e perché.
2) Come usare ciò che si è salvato.
3) Come evitare che il falso passato sommerga quello vero.
4) Come la preservazione, lodate in se stessa, possa impedire l’uso alternativo del passato.

Questo saggio considera ognuno di questi problemi e conclude:
1) La preservazione, necessariamente selettiva, dovrebbe costituire un elemento di equilibrio tra grandi monumenti e scenari familiari di ogni giorno.
2) Poiché una piccola parte del nostro patrimonio può essere tenuta nei musei, internamente o esternamente, la maggior parte di ciò che viene salvato deve essere usato di nuovo e quindi adattato alle moderne esigenze.
3) Il processo di conservazione vero e proprio come quello di valutazione, altera i siti e gli artefatti protetti e, poiché tali trasformazioni delle reliquie è inevitabile, ciò non dovrebbe essere deplorato.
4) Forse siamo troppo esclusivamente preoccupati per la preservazione e troppo poco per l’emulazione. Il passato sopravvive non solo per essere salvato, ma anche per ispirare atti creativi nel presente e nel futuro.

THE CASE OF THE ISE GRAND SHINTO TEMPLE IN JAPAN

Bunji Kobayashi

The Jingū or the Ise Grand Shinto Temple in which the ancestor of the Japanese Imperial family is enshrined is well known for its simple and beautiful temple structures. The form and style of the buildings, it is said, have been well preserved from the ancient time, because they have been rebuilt every twenty years in the same as originals, using the same kind of materials. In this brief talk, I would like to describe how the temple has been rebuilt for the past thousand of years and discuss the problems of such a programmed renewal activity, or shikinen-zōtai in Japanese, from the point of conservation of buildings.

Because the Imperial ancestor was enshrined in the temple, the temple was originally located in the Imperial palace, but it was soon decided to move the temple out of the palace. After a couple of moves, according to the Nihon-shoki or the oldest chronicle in Japan, the temple was finally and permanently founded at the present place by the Isuzu river in the reign of Emperor Suinin. It can be said that as the power of the Imperial family grew, the family goddess became that of the region and then of the nation. The symbol of the goddess is a mirror which was, we are told, given to the goddess when she came down from heaven to this country in the age of mythology.

The god of food and agriculture was then enshrined in the temple during the reign of Emperor Yuryaku some several centuries later. This shrine became the outer temple while the first was called the inner temple, resulting in the two focus temples in the vast temple complex of the Jingū.
2.

I think mention must be made briefly about Shintoism or the native religion in Japan. Primarily Shintoism was originated as a sort of animism, but later it was combined with the worship of ancestors whose spiritual power was partly worshiped and partly adored. There is usually no particular icon nor figure, but God is believed to present himself on something which ranges from a mirror, a piece of white paper, to a stone, a tree, or even a mountain or a hill. It was also believed that every god stays somewhere in heaven and comes down to this world on the occasion of festivals. It can be said that there was originally no structure dedicated to a god, but a piece of sacred ground enclosed by, for example, either a series of sacred trees or a sacred straw rope entwined with tufts of white paper.

When people held a festival, they made a temporary shelter for a god to stay in and invited him down from heaven. The god stayed in the shelter for the period of the festival and returned to heaven after the festival was over. After the festivities were finished, the shelter was finally burnt. In other words, such a shelter for a god was built and burnt as a festival was held.

As a shelter was elaborately made, however, people tried to keep it permanently. Then a shelter was, as is usual the case, rebuilt whenever it was deteriorated. And yet, people felt awed to offer a god a deteriorated building to stay. Thus, an idea came into being to renew a building every certain years before complete deterioration.

It is not definite when such a renewal system of the Ise Temple came into being, but it is generally said that it was initiated in the reign of Emperor Tennu, late seventh century, and the first programmed renewal was carried out in the fourth year of Emperor Jito’s reign in 690 and the second in 709, nineteen years later. Such a renewal system was also applied to other shinto temples of ancient origin. The intervals between renewals were not always the same; some every 20 years, some 30 years, and some even 60 years. Twenty years interval was most common. But such a renewal system was suspended in many temples mainly due to financial problems. The Ise Shinto Temple in question has been the only one example which preserves the system to this day.

We do not know why the number of twenty years was chosen to renew buildings; some say the number twenty is the largest number which can be counted on the human fingers and toes. Others say that twenty years signified the average working years of one human generation in the ancient time. At the same time it is true that a wooden structure usually lasts twenty years in condition on an average. But considering the different number of years in the case of other Shinto temples as mentioned above, none of those interpretations are adequate. Also it must be stated that such a renewal system was never applied to Buddhist buildings. In any case, the renewal system gives a Shinto building an organic character; it was reborn, grew, and died like a living creature.

Documental evidence of the renewal system of the Ise Grand Shinto Temple is found in the Engi-shiki or the Rules of the Engi Era which was compiled and presented to the Emperor in 827. It says:

In the case of the Grand Jingū or the Ise Grand Shinto Temple, the Shōden (main hall), the Hōden (treasure house), and Gebenden (storage) are to be rebuilt every twenty years. As for the Watara-no-miya (the outer temple), Betsugū (branch temples), and Yoshia (other temples), temple buildings should be rebuilt according to the same system. All is to be made by new timbers.

It should be noticed that no mention is made concerning the style and size of the new buildings, nor is that to follow the previous buildings. It says further that there are two sites for major buildings prepared side by side and that they should be used alternately.

The Engi-shiki also mentioned four rituals to be held during the process of the renewal work. They are:

1) Yamaguchi-sai: to be held in a forest to pray for divine protection of lumbermen.

2) Saichū-sai: to be held in front of the tree marked for use as the sacred column of the new main building.

3) Chinshichi-sai: the ground-breaking ritual for the sites of the new buildings.

4) Funahira-zukuri-sai: funahira means the sacred box in the shape of a boat in which divine symbols are kept. This ritual is held to mark the felling to trees for making of the sacred box.

When the recent renewal was carried out in 1973, they held more than thirty rituals during the nine years of work. Everything was done in an impressive religious atmosphere. Almost every stage of the building work was marked by a ceremony such as one to mark the start of the felling operation, one to beseech divine protection for the carpenters, one for setting up the framework of the new main building, one marking the completion of thatching work, one to install the sacred column under the floor of the newly built main hall, one marking the completion of the renewal program and beseeching divine protection, and finally one to move the divine symbols from the old main hall to the new by a train of priests,
The long train of white-robed priests proceeds at a slow, measured pace along the pebbled path from the old hall to the new, accompanied by ancient Shinto music. The scene is shrouded in complete darkness and an extremely solemn atmosphere.

In the case of the Ise Shinto Temple, it is very important that in both inner and outer temples, the old main hall is still standing and not destroyed until after the new one is completed and the symbols of a god move in. In other words, one can easily compare the new building with the old and see that the renewal is not a renovation nor an elaboration, but simply a faithful replica of the old. Therefore, little change is made in terms of size, form, shape, or details of the buildings. That must be the very reason why such an old structure has been well kept, so to speak, intact for thousand of years.

3.

Since the first renewal of major buildings of the Ise Grand Shinto Temple in 690, the renewal has been made faithfully, but not always regularly, and the recent renewal made in 1973 was the 60th renewal. Except the first renewal, the 59 renewals are classified into the following periodic intervals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interval (in years)</th>
<th>Frequency (in times)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3 (only before 886)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>27 (regularly, 905-1323)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>22 (regularly since 1629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1 (1364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 (1609 &amp; 1953)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1 (810)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1 (1391)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1 (1462)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>1 (1585)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated above, the intervals of both 19 and 20 years were most common; the former from the tenth to the early fourteenth century, while the latter from the early seventeenth century to the present. Even though the interval of 20 years was clearly stated in the Enki-shiki, its interpretation seemed varied; before the fourteenth century, 「every twenty years」was probably understood as 「every twentieth year」. But the important thing is the fact that the renewal work has been made, except in one case, rather regularly from 690 to the present.

It is not really true to say, however, that the style of old structure has been kept intact to this day. In fact, there were minor changes and alterations made in the renewals during the past thousand of years. Professor Dr. Toshiro Fukuysama had made thorough research in this area. According to his research, the oldest main hall restored from documental evidences dates back to the fifth renewal in 766. The basic size, form, and construction of the main hall (inner temple) are almost the same as the present one, but there were naturally some changes. They are, for example:

a) Chigi or the extended projections of gables on both sides of the roof as well as katsuogi or the decorative bars placed on the ridge were more slender than the present ones.

b) The width of the front doors and the front steps were narrower. The latter's slope was also a little steeper.

c) The hand rail around the open veranda was a little higher. The style of its posts and beams was different.

d) Heads of the front posts of the hand rails along the steps are covered by giboshi or decorative metal caps similar to a Buddhist building.

That was added in 1057.

e) As for the construction, front beams were on the side beams originally of orioke style in Japanese, while the present one has front beams under the side beams or kyoro style in Japanese. This change was made in the 41st renewal in 1585. At the same time, each beam became thicker following their own fashion.

f) The gable construction is almost the same, but each element such as central post, side posts, as well as principal rafters became thicker again in 1585. As such, the ancient rather delicate gable construction was replaced by heavier one. Incidentally, such ancient gable construction is also seen in the gable of the main hall, Horyu-ji Buddhist temple, from the seventh century.

g) Under the thatched roof, thick wooden boards were placed on rafters in 1585, and copper plates were recently added on the wooden boards. These are invisible, however.

h) Decorative metal plates were added later.

As one can notice, the 41st renewal made in 1585 was very important; first of all, it was made 123 years after the preceding renewal due to the unstable situation of the nation. The main hall (inner temple) which was rebuilt in the 40th renewal in 1462 was deteriorated and finally torn down by typhoon in 1500. There was no regular main hall in the inner temple for more than eighty years until next renewal in 1585. In other words, there was no main hall to copy for the next renewal. Fortunately,
the main hall of the outer temple was standing. It was slightly smaller but similar to that of the inner temple and could be a good sample building for carpenters. Some documents indicate that, in face of next renewal, priests and master carpenters gathered to discuss the size of each building element to find out its real size, checking up and document instructions and sketches of the main hall. Because they had problems in finding out exact size of each member, they decided to design somehow according to their own taste and fashion. That might be the reason why some evident changes were made in that renewal in 1585.

4.

The Ise Grand Shinto Temple had its own territory which provided enough fund to support the renewal work in the ancient age. In addition, the nation’s tax was supplied to carry out the work, if necessary. In the medieval age, however, feudal loads encroached on the territory, resulting in some financial crisis of the temple. Since the Ise Temple had the direct connection with the Imperial court, every ruler who could dominate the nation respected the temple and donated fund for the renewal work.

As for carpenters, government provided them in the ancient age, but the temple started to have its own groups of carpenters in the medieval age. There were four groups of carpenters, each headed by master carpenter/priest. Document in the 12 century indicates that each group consists of eleven carpenters including a head. Therefore, there were 44 carpenters all together who were engaged in the renewal work. Local carpenters in the territory were also collected to serve, if necessary. To build the main hall (inner temple) in 1228, for example, 33 workers served for 55 days to fell trees in a forest and another 33 carpenters for 75 days at the building site. There were no measured drawings of any building until seventeenth century, but were some sketches of details and precise descriptions of building elements from which Dr. T. Fukuyama restored the eighth century main hall (inner temple) shown in Fig. A.

At present, the renewal work must be done by private donations from all over Japan, and local residents living within the vicinity of the temple volunteer to carry logs and to bring pebbles to the sacred land within the outer fence of the main hall, to mention a few. In fact, such residents’ life is still closely tied up with the temple both economically and spiritually.

It is still true that, thanks to the programmed renewal system, form and style of the wooden structures of the Ise Grand Shinto Temple have been well preserved from at least the eighth century or much earlier down to the present. And yet, it is also true that present buildings are not precise copies of the ancient ones as mentioned above. But the basic size, form, and style still represent the architectural simplicity of ancient wooden structure. The programmed renewal system could be called certainly a conservation of wooden buildings which would be otherwise deteriorated shortly.

In this case, a temple building was never friezed, but reproduced continuously from time to time just like successive human generations, being respected and supported by the nation as well as by the people. In that way, temple buildings have been alive through a thousand of years and given us not only the physical, but also spiritual beauty of architecture.

* * *

My acknowledgement should go to the following scholars and their books. I am also grateful to Mr. Tauneyasu Mori, Architect, Head of the Building section, the Ise Grand Shinto Temple, for useful information and advices.

T. Fukuyama & Eizō Inagaki: Jingū (the Ise Grand Shinto Temple), Tokyo, 1975.
Le Grand Temple Shinto à Ise au Japon est bien connu pour la simplicité et la beauté de sa structure. Il est également connu parce que ses bâtiments principaux ont été reconstruits tous les 20 ans tout en gardant la dimension, l'aspect et le style originaux. La première reconstruction date de l'année 690 et la dernière, réalisée en 1973, est la soixantième. Les édifices principaux sont situés en deux endroits et ont été utilisés alternativement, en d'autres mots, il existe deux ensembles d'édifices, un ancien et un nouveau, côte à côte, conservés ainsi pendant un certain temps de façon à pouvoir s'inspirer de l'un pour reproduire sa taille, sa forme et son style dans l'autre. Jusqu'au XVIIe siècle, on ne trouve aucun plan à l'échelle sinon des descriptions précises de chaque élément de construction et des croquis des détails, ce qui a permis de rester fidèle à l'original lors de la rénovation.

Les bâtiments du Temple Shintoiste de Ise n'ont jamais été fermés mais continuellement rénovés au fil des années et des générations humaines qui se succédaient. Bien que des modifications de peu d'importance soient intervenues au cours des ans, ce système de rénovation continuelle est un sort de conservation pour les structures de bois qui autrement auraient été rapidement détruites.

NAME: PROFESSOR DR. BUNJI KOBAYASHI - Nihon University - Japan.

SUBJECT: DOCTRINE

TITLE: THE CASE OF THE ISE GRAND SHINTO TEMPLE IN JAPAN.

SUMMARY:

The Ise Grand Shinto Temple in Japan is well known for its simple and beautiful structures. It is also famous that its major buildings have been rebuilt every twenty years keeping the original size, form, and style. The first renewal was carried out in 690 A.D., and the recent one made in 1973 was the 60th. In fact, there are two sites for main buildings prepared side and they have been used alternately. In other words, two sets of buildings, old and new, were standing side by side for sometime that helped people to check both in size, form, and style. There were no measured drawings of any building until the XVII century, but precise description of every building element and sketches of details. These are the main reasons why they could renew buildings keeping the previous style.

Buildings of the Ise Shinto Temple were never frozen, but continuously renewed from time to time just like a succession of human generations. Even though they suffered some minor changes in the course of many years, still such a renewal method was a type of conservation technique of wooden structures which would have otherwise deteriorated rapidly.
El Gran Templo Sintoista de Ise, en Japón es bien conocido por sus sencillas y hermosas estructuras. También es famoso porque sus edificios más importantes han sido reconstruidos cada veinte años, guardando su tamaño, forma y estilo originales.

La primera reconstrucción fue ejecutada en el año 690 y la más reciente, de 1973, es la número sesenta. De hecho, existen dos sitios que han sido usados alternativamente para los edificios principales. En otras palabras, dos conjuntos de edificios, viejos y nuevos, se han conservado durante cierto tiempo, para poder copiar en el antiguo, el tamaño, forma y estilo para el nuevo. No hubo planos a escala de ningún edificio hasta el siglo XVII, sino solamente descripciones precisas de cada elemento constructivo y croquis de detalles. Esta es la razón por la que ha sido posible renovarlos guardando fidelidad al original.

Los edificios del Templo Sintoista de Ise nunca han sido clausurados, sino continuamente renovados de tiempo en tiempo en la misma forma que se suceden las generaciones humanas. Aunque han sufrido cambios menores en el curso de muchos años, este sistema de renovación es una especie de conservación para estructuras de madera que de otra manera se habrían perdido en corto tiempo.
Il Tempio di "Ise Grand Shinto" in Giappone è rinomato per le sue semplici e belle strutture. È anche famoso per il singolare fatto di essere stato ricostruito ogni venti anni mantenendo la dimensione, la forma e lo stile originali.

La prima ricostruzione risale al 690. La più recente, del 1973, fu la sessantesima. La ricostruzione del nuovo edificio si è svolta, ogni volta, accanto a quello precedente, alternativamente. Entrambi gli edifici rimanevano poi vicini l'uno all'altro per un certo tempo, permettendo così ai visitatori di controllare la fedeltà della ricostruzione.

Tutto ciò veniva eseguito senza alcun disegno in scala degli edifici, fino al XVII secolo, con la sola guida di una precisa e completa descrizione, corredata dai disegni dei particolari.

Gli edifici del tempio di "Ise Grand Shinto" non erano decorati, ma continuamente rinnovati di volta in volta proprio come si rinnova una serie di umane generazioni.

Sebbene essi abbiano subito alcuni insignificanti cambiamenti nel corso di molti anni, si può senza'altro affermare che un tale sistema di rinnovamento è stato una specie di conservazione delle strutture lignee che si sarebbero, altrimenti, deteriorate in breve tempo.