

ICOA1667: ENGAGING LOCAL PROFESSIONALS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: THE JAPANESE "HERITAGE MANAGER" SYSTEM

Subtheme 01: Integrating Heritage and Sustainable Urban Development by engaging diverse Communities for Heritage Management

Session 1: Sustainable Development and Community Engagement

Location: Gulmohar Hall, India Habitat Centre

Time: December 13, 2017, 16:30 – 16:45

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Abstract: This paper analyses the birth, role and significance of the Japanese “Heritage Manager” system, a regional initiative to engage local professionals in the creation of a sustainable urban environment based on the conservation of cultural heritage buildings that developed after the Great Hanshin Earthquake.

The current framework for the protection of built heritage in Japan is laid by the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties of 1950. However, the original scope of this law was only a small number of monuments of exceptionally high cultural significance. The conservation and repair of these monuments was carried out by highly specialized conservation architects licensed by the government, under the supervision of the central Agency of Cultural Affairs.

However, the Great Hanshin Earthquake that struck Japan in 1995 caused severe damage not only to protected monuments but also to a large number of historical buildings that at the time lacked any kind of legal protection. It became clear then that a new approach was necessary in order to preserve those buildings and integrate them into a comprehensive urban development strategy. In order to face this challenge, the local administration of Hyogo (the prefecture most severely affected by the disaster) in cooperation with the local association of architects devised the “Heritage Manager” system, a training program aimed at providing local professionals (architects and cultural policy experts) with a set of basic skills for building conservation (survey techniques, drafting repair projects, sustainable urban planning and disaster prevention).

Since its creation in 2001, similar initiatives have been implemented by other local administrations all over Japan. The “heritage managers” trained in this way contribute to the protection of the local built heritage, and are playing a key role in the recovery effort of the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake.

Key words: *built heritage, capacity building, disaster recovery, local community*

Introduction

This paper examines the context of the creation and implementation of the *heritage manager* system in Japan, an initiative to engage local professionals in the conservation of built heritage. First, the features of the Japanese administration for the protection of cultural heritage will be discussed. Then, the event that triggered the introduction of the new system, the Great Hanshin earthquake, will be presented. The two sides of the new framework will be examined: the *registered buildings* system to protect buildings and the *heritage manager* program to train professionals. Finally, recent developments such as the *heritage doctor* program will be commented.

The framework for the protection of built heritage before the Great Hanshin Earthquake

The legal framework

Japan was one of the first countries to issue a law for the protection of cultural heritage. The *Law for the Conservation of Ancient Shrines and Temples*, enacted in 1897, provided for the protection of a few selected religious buildings of exceptional value. This law was succeeded by the *Law for the Conservation of National Treasures* in 1930, which allowed for the designation of privately owned buildings as cultural heritage, including castles and residential buildings. Finally, the current *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties* was enacted in 1950. The new law introduced concepts such as intangible cultural heritage and folk heritage, and the first examples of vernacular buildings started to be protected. An amendment in 1975 introduced the protection of *Groups of Traditional Buildings*¹.

Under the *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties*, buildings are designated at the national level as *Important Cultural Properties* or *National Treasures*. When repair work is required, designated buildings are eligible for subsidies that cover a significant proportion of the repair cost (between 50% and 85%, depending on the financial situation of the owner). By 1990, a total of 3367 structures had been designated as *Important Cultural Properties* or *National Treasures*. In addition, buildings can be designated at the local level by the municipal or prefectural governments. By 1987, around 1900 buildings had been designated by prefectural governments, and about 5600 by municipalities². However, both at national and local levels, designated buildings included mostly structures of outstanding historical and artistic value that were protected as individual monuments. A very large number of historical buildings in Japan were yet not designated, listed or registered in any way, and there were no legal measures in place for their protection at the time.

The agents: conservation architects

Most of the above mentioned designated buildings at this point were traditional wooden buildings. In cases where a major repair was considered necessary, the whole building would be dismantled, decayed members repaired using traditional carpentry techniques, and the structure would be reassembled

¹An overview of the development of the legal framework for the protection of built heritage in Japan can be found at Murakami, 2010.

²Larsen, 1994

correcting all deformations. The conservation architect in charge of the works would stay in the site for the whole duration of the repair, overseeing the works and working closely with carpenters and craftsmen. Thus, the repair process required a very specialized set of skills, significantly different from those related to the design and management of new construction. Architectural training in undergraduate or graduate schools at universities does not provide such specialized knowledge; thus, aspiring conservation architects have to undergo a specific training in order to work in the repair of nationally designated buildings. Since 1971, this training is organized by the Japanese Association of Conservation Architects (JACAM). After graduating from these training courses and meeting the necessary experience requirements, conservation architects are officially licensed by the government. Having a licensed conservation architect design the repair project and manage the works is a condition to obtain the subsidies for the repair of *Important Cultural Properties* or *National Treasures*. In 1994, there were around 150 licensed conservation architects in Japan³.

Thus, the system for the protection of built heritage in Japan was characterized by a wide gap between a relatively small number of designated buildings, which were conserved and repaired by a few highly specialized professionals with significant subsidies from the government, and a large collection of historical buildings without any kind of protection, which received virtually no aids for their conservation and lacked prepared professionals for their adequate repair and maintenance.

The impact of the Great Hanshin Earthquake

The magnitude 7 Hanshin earthquake struck the southern part of Hyogo prefecture on January 17, 1995. The capital of Hyogo, Kobe, was the nearest major city to the epicentre, and suffered catastrophic damage. The earthquake caused the loss of over 6400 lives, destruction of buildings and infrastructure, and had a lasting effect on the economy.

The earthquake had an especially significant impact on built heritage. The affected area, which included Hyogo, Osaka and Kyoto, is one of the richest in Japan in terms of historical buildings. Affected buildings included not only nationally and locally designated buildings, some of which completely collapsed, but also many historical buildings that had no official protection. In the aftermath of the earthquake, a large number of these buildings were torn down. This large scale loss of historical buildings profoundly impacted the cultural heritage administration, architects, and local communities, who realized that measures to hold back this destruction were urgently needed.

The Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake can be considered a key event in the recent history of cultural heritage conservation in Japan. It triggered 3 major changes in cultural policy that have a lasting effect until today:

- The establishment of the *Registered Cultural Properties* system
- The creation of the *heritage manager* system
- The implementation of structural analysis and reinforcement of cultural heritage buildings

This paper will examine the first two points, which are closely interrelated and reflect a change in the cultural heritage administration from a closed system limited to a few highly specialized experts to a more participative scheme that aims at engaging local professionals and communities.

³Larsen, 1994

The establishment of the *Registered Cultural Properties* system

In 1996, just one year after the Hanshin earthquake, an amendment to the *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties* introduced the system of *Registered Cultural Properties*. Under this system, in addition to the previous categories of *Important Cultural Properties* and *National Treasures*, *Registered Buildings* became also protected.

The system of *Registered Cultural Properties* is characterized by its flexibility compared to the *Important Cultural Properties* and *National Treasures*. While the latter two categories have strict regulations concerning the alteration of the current state of the building, the *Registered Cultural Properties* system tries to lighten the burden on the owner by not imposing restrictions on reforms of the building, as long as they do not affect more than one fourth of their visible area. In addition, larger reforms and even demolition are also allowed as long as a notification is filed in advance. Conversely, the subsidies allocated for the repair of *Registered Buildings* are much lower than those for *Important Cultural Properties* and *National Treasures*. As previously mentioned, subsidies can cover as much as 85% of the repair costs in the latter two categories. However, in the case of *Registered Buildings* only 50% of the repair project design fee can be covered by subsidies, as long as the repair project is supervised by a licensed conservation architect⁴. In practice, it can be difficult to meet this requirement as the number of licensed conservation architects is small compared to the demand. Regarding the actual repair works, the full cost has to be covered by the owner. Other benefits include partial fiscal exemptions and subsidies of up to 50% of the costs related to the opening of the building to the public.

In spite of these limitations, the *Registered Cultural Properties* can be considered to have succeeded in greatly enlarging the scope of buildings officially protected as heritage. As of October, 2017, there are 4935 structures protected as *Important Cultural Properties* and *National Treasures*, and 11259 *Registered Buildings*.

The creation of the *heritage manager* system

In the aftermath of the Hanshin earthquake, as demolition of historical buildings became widespread in Hyogo prefecture, it became clear that new tools were necessary to protect the built heritage. In 1999, the Hyogo Prefecture Board of Education approached the Hyogo Architectural Association in order to devise a program to train architects in the basic skills for the management and repair of heritage buildings. This initiative would crystallize in the first *heritage manager* course in January 2002⁵. The 60 hour course was directed at architects and professionals of the building sector, and consisted of lectures on cultural heritage administration, repair techniques, urban planning and conservation, and practical sessions⁶. After graduating from the course, trainees were registered as *heritage managers*. These professionals were expected to fulfil three main tasks:

- identifying buildings for their designation as registered buildings and preparing the required documentation for the registration
- designing repair projects for historical buildings, including registered buildings
- contributing to the integration between heritage building conservation, urban planning and local

⁴Goto, 2009

⁵Sawada, 2015

⁶Hyogo-ken, 2003

communities

Similar programs were subsequently implemented by the prefectural governments of Kyoto (since 2005), Tokushima (2007), Shizuoka (2008) and Kanagawa (2009). Since 2010, thanks to the involvement of the *Japan Federation of Architects & Building Engineers Associations*, the initiative became widespread to the national level. By 2014, 31 prefectural governments and 2 municipalities have implemented *heritage manager* training programs, and 2102 professionals have been trained⁷. In addition, several networking initiatives, such as an annual meeting of *heritage managers*, have been put in place to encourage interconnection and sharing of information.

The *heritage doctor* program

The *Registered Buildings* and *Heritage Manager* programs have already proven useful not only for the day-to-day protection and management of built heritage but also for the response to natural disasters.

Several important earthquakes have hit Japan since the Great Hanshin earthquake. Damaged *Registered Buildings* received subsidies covering 75% of the repair cost in the Chuetsu (2004), Noto (2007), and Tohoku (2011) earthquakes⁸, and of two thirds of the repair cost in the Kumamoto (2016) earthquake⁹.

Additionally, a new initiative known as the *heritage doctor* program was started in the aftermath of the Tohoku Earthquake. The program was initiated in 2011 as a result of the cooperation between the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese Government (ACA), the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ), and The Japan Institute of Architects (JIA), among other institutions. Through funding provided by the ACA, architects from AIJ and JIA were dispatched to the areas affected by the earthquake as *heritage doctors* in order to assess the damage to historical buildings, regardless of their category or type of designation. The program continued during 2012 and 2013, with *heritage doctors* conducting follow-up surveys and providing technical advice for the repair. In these programs, architects that had graduated from the *heritage manager* course were selected to be dispatched as *heritage doctors*¹⁰. A similar *heritage doctor* program is now being implemented to support the recovery after the Kumamoto earthquake.

Conclusions

The *Registered Buildings* and *heritage manager* systems introduced after the Great Hanshin earthquake have already proven effective at enlarging the scope of the protection of built heritage and involving local professionals in the conservation process. However, the gap in terms of subsidies for repairs between buildings designated as *Important Cultural Properties* or *National Treasures* and *Registered Buildings* is still important. Similarly, there is a large difference in specialization level between licensed conservation architects and *heritage managers*. In order to make possible a more integrated heritage conservation model, where professionals of different levels of specialization can cooperate organically and involve local communities and administrations, measures are needed to reduce this gap. Such measures could include a more gradual system of subsidies and incentives, and more levels of specialization to reduce the distance between regular and conservation architects.

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⁷Sawada, 2015

⁸Goto, 2015

⁹Yano, 2017

¹⁰Shinoda, 2015

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ICOA1667: ENGAGER LES PROFESSIONNELS LOCAUX A LA CONSERVATION DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT BÂTI: LE SYSTEME « GESTIONNAIRE DU PATRIMOINE » JAPONAIS

Sous-thème 01: Intégrer le patrimoine et le développement urbain durable en engageant Diverses communautés pour la gestion du patrimoine

Session 1: Développement durable et engagement communautaire

Lieu: Hall Gulmohur, India Habitat Centre

Date et heure: 13 Décembre, 2017, 16:30 – 16:45

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Alejandro Martinez est un architecte et spécialiste du patrimoine. Formé en tant qu'architecte en Espagne, il a obtenu son doctorat à l'Université de Tokyo avec une recherche sur la conservation du patrimoine bâti en bois japonais. Il travaille actuellement au Centre japonais de coopération internationale en conservation, à l'Institut national de recherche sur les biens culturels de Tokyo, où il gère des projets de coopération pour la conservation du patrimoine entre le Japon et l'Asie du Sud-Est. Il est membre du Comité international du bois de l'ICOMOS.

Résumé: Cet article analyse l'émergence, le rôle et la signification du système «*Gestionnaire du Patrimoine*» japonais, une initiative régionale visant à impliquer les professionnels locaux dans la création d'un environnement urbain durable basé sur la conservation des bâtiments du patrimoine culturel après le grand tremblement de terre de Hanshin.

Le cadre actuel de la protection du patrimoine bâti au Japon est défini par la loi de 1950 sur la protection des biens culturels. Toutefois, le champ d'application original de cette loi ne concernait qu'un petit nombre de monuments d'une importance culturelle exceptionnelle. La conservation et la restauration de ces monuments ont été effectuées par des architectes du patrimoine hautement spécialisés, agréés par le gouvernement, sous la supervision de l'Agence centrale des affaires culturelles.

Cependant, le grand tremblement de terre de Hanshin, qui a frappé le Japon en 1995, a causé de graves dommages non seulement aux monuments protégés, mais aussi à un grand nombre de bâtiments historiques qui, à l'époque, ne bénéficiaient d'aucune protection juridique. Il est alors apparu qu'une nouvelle approche était nécessaire pour préserver ces bâtiments et les intégrer dans une stratégie globale de développement urbain. Pour faire face à ce défi, l'administration locale de Hyogo (la préfecture la plus touchée par la catastrophe), en coopération avec l'association locale des architectes, a conçu le système «*Gestionnaire du Patrimoine*», un programme de formation destiné aux professionnels locaux (architectes et experts en politiques culturelles), avec un ensemble de compétences de base pour la conservation des bâtiments (techniques de diagnostic, préparation de projets de restauration, planification urbaine durable et prévention des catastrophes).

Depuis sa création en 2001, des initiatives similaires ont été mises en œuvre par d'autres administrations locales dans tout le Japon. Les « *gestionnaires du patrimoine* » ainsi formés contribuent à la protection du patrimoine bâti local et jouent un rôle clé dans l'effort de relèvement suite au séisme de Kumamoto 2016.

Mots-clés: *Patrimoine bâti, communauté locale, récupération post-désastre, capacité de construire*