
Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Heritage in Japan
1. **The Japanese conservation system for industrial heritage**

   I would first like to present an outline of the Japanese conservation system for industrial heritage. Japanese cultural law designates 5 categories of cultural properties, “tangible cultural properties”, “intangible cultural properties”, “monuments”, “cultural landscape”, and “groups of traditional buildings”. The national government also designates “important cultural properties-national treasures-” and “historic sites, places of scenic beauty, natural monuments” as important matters to be conserved.

   It is an orthodox preservation system that designates a single site or building in these categories without recognizing “places of scenic beauty” and “groups of traditional buildings”. Most all cultural properties in this system have been designated as single sites and buildings, for example shrines, temples, ancient sites, and castles. Places of scenic beauty and groups of traditional buildings are new cultural properties that come from a perspective beyond the orthodox view.

2. **The standing position of industrial heritage in the present system**

   Industrial heritage had not been included in the designation of cultural properties in 1989 when the Agency for Cultural Affairs used the word “Kindaikaisan” to represent the heritage of industry, transportation, and civil engineering which significantly contributed to the modernization of Japan. This is industrial heritage based on the transfer of industrial technologies from Western countries. I think the reason for the difference in terminology is that there is a difference between Japanese and Western-based development. The industrial modernization of Japan began around the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the opening of Japan.

   It was twenty years ago that industrial heritage was officially established as one of Japan’s cultural property categories, although there were several existing sites and industrial buildings which had been designated important cultural properties before official categorization. I have selected some famous examples such as the “entrance of the Mint Bureau”, and “model barn at Sapporo Agriculture college” as buildings that are important cultural properties. The “Kosuge Dock”, “smelting furnace at Nirayama” are examples of historic sites. At the time these places were designated important cultural sites, there was no intention to reuse them for their industrial heritage.

   The Agency for Cultural Affairs began a national research project on “Kindaikaisan” in each prefecture starting in 1989, this became the final phase. Incidentally, I made arrangements and established the first national project in Gunma prefecture in 1989. Accounting for important cultural properties and historical sites made great strides since the 1990s based on the influence of this national research project.

   From this time onward, designated industrial heritage sites began to range from single points of interest, for example a single building, to much larger arrays of structures or areas, such as a railroad or canal.
3. Existing examples

Here are several examples of the reuse of industrial historical sites on a large scale before standards for their preservation were established in the 1990s. Two famous examples, are the Otaru Canal, and the “Minato Mirai” area in Yokohama.

Otaru is a major city in Hokkaido in the north of Japan. It was developed after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, and was the frontier of Japan. There are a few sites of traditional Japanese heritage on Hokkaido, but historical sites also include industries founded after the middle of 19th century. Otaru was a main port of entrance to Hokkaido and was the first town developed on Hokkaido. The Otaru canal was established at 1923 and used until the second world war. It fell out of use because the system of port transfer system, using containers rather than barges. Local Otaru city government planned to fill in the canal in 1960s but then a grassroots movement was established to preserve the canal. As a result, the canal was filled in to half its original width to make a walking promenade that runs along the canal. Old warehouses stand in a row along the canal, and old buildings still stand in the center of the downtown near the canal.

Sightseeing in Otaru became very popular among Japanese nationwide because information about the historical site became widely known following newspaper articles about the canal preservation movement. It is estimated that more than 8 million tourists visit Otaru. It still remains a popular tourist destination.

I am doubtful, however, that the Otaru sightseeing boom has played a role in the promotion of the city because most tourism revenue goes to a large central company without Otaru residents and restaurants directly benefitting. The case of Otaru is a success in industrial heritage preservation, but not a success in the development of a local economy through preservation.

Another famous example of the redevelopment of an industrial area in a city is the Minato Mirai waterfront area in Yokohama where old facilities such as docks, warehouses, and shipyards, etc. remained. The city government made a redevelopment plan including historical heritage in this area without following the traditional city redevelopment plan which typically created vacant lots by demolishing old buildings. Regarding the background of this new concept, I think that the Yokohama City planner was influenced by the new trend in city planning such as seen with the Boston harbor redevelopment.

Yokohama City planners created a dynamic waterfront that gives visitors and residents a good impression of the city from the remains of an old industrial area.

4. World heritage and industrial heritage in Japan

The preservation and reuse of Japanese industrial heritage deserves the attention of the World Heritage community. “Tomioka” is a typical example of the Japanese
world heritage movement, much like Kyushu’s Yamaguchi site and some other places that were registered on the tentative list of world heritage sites with the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Iwami Ginzan is the only world heritage industrial heritage site in Japan. It is a silver mine that dates from the late medieval and early modern period whose significance was before Japan’s industrial revolution. There are no recognized world heritage sites in Japan that were constructed during and after the Meiji era, that is, during Japan’s modern age.

One of significant features of “Tomioka” is that it is more than a single industrial site; it is an amalgamation of related agricultural and industrial sites.

Moreover, it is an important matter to develop the local economy after registration as a world heritage site.

5. Future prospects
There are a lot of industrial sites to show that Japan was the first non-Western country, which was not a colony, to establish modern industry. Gunma prefecture’s World Heritage movement plays an important role in demonstrating the value of industrial heritage to Japanese. These cultural properties might be regarded as more important for reuse than for traditional preservation.

The reuse and repurposing of industrial heritage sites is the next direction for Japan. I intend to promote the redevelopment of local economies through industrial heritage. It is necessary for us to plan on how Japan should best reuse its industrial heritage sites.
Conservation and Adaptive Reuse of Industrial Heritage in Japan

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The Japanese conservation system of industrial heritage

Homepase of the the Agency for Cultural Affaires
### Structures Designated as National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties (classified by period) As of April 1, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shinto shrines</td>
<td>561 (37)</td>
<td>1,160 (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist temples</td>
<td>846 (154)</td>
<td>1,115 (160)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castles</td>
<td>53 (8)</td>
<td>235 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residences</td>
<td>94 (12)</td>
<td>150 (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmhouses</td>
<td>338 (3)</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>192 (3)</td>
<td>262 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>2,084 (214)</td>
<td>3,698 (262)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious architecture</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>Residential architecture</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<td>School architecture</td>
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<td>Cultural facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial, transportation, civil engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
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<td>4,272 (262)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A parenthesized numeral indicates the number of National Treasures included in the figure that precedes it.
Existing examples
Otaru Canal
Existing examples
Minato-Mirai area in Yokohama
World heritage and industrial heritage in Japan
Iwami-Ginzan
World heritage and industrial heritage in Japan
Tomioka-silk-mill, in Gunma Pref.
World heritage and industrial heritage in Japan
Farm-House of Tomizawa, in Gunma Pref.