

Management of historical districts by committee of residents
30 years of Kawagoe Ichiban-gai street Townscape Committee

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In Japan, in the "Preservation District for Groups of Important Historic Buildings" selected by the country, it is obligatory to obey the rules prescribed in the "preservation plan" based on the law.

On the main street "Ichiban-gai" in the castle town and Kawagoe located 30 km from Tokyo, voluntary management of the historic district by residents' townscape committee continues before being selected as a preserved district in 1999. In 1986 the residents (shop owners) signed an agreement to manage the streets by committees composed of their representatives. The committee patterned the characteristics that historical buildings should protect and set up a rule book, learning Alexander's pattern language. The committee has controlled the building activities in the district based on it. Its activities continued even after selection of national preserved districts, celebrating its 30th anniversary last year.

In this case study, I will consider the following points on the outcomes of this committee: 1) What features of historical buildings are being evaluated, patterned and protected, 2) How does the committee operated, and 3) Does the committee succeed in inducing appropriate modern buildings?