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# **A Study on the Traditional Urban Configuration from the Hierarchy of the Open Space of Kyoto city**

**Naoko Itaya**

**Senior Research Fellow,**

**Research Center for Disaster Mitigation of Urban Cultural Heritage**

**Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan**

**Kathmandu  
Nepal**

**Kyoto  
Japan**

**WHS “Historic Monument of Ancient Kyoto”**

36° 07'39.07" N 108° 16'39.62" E

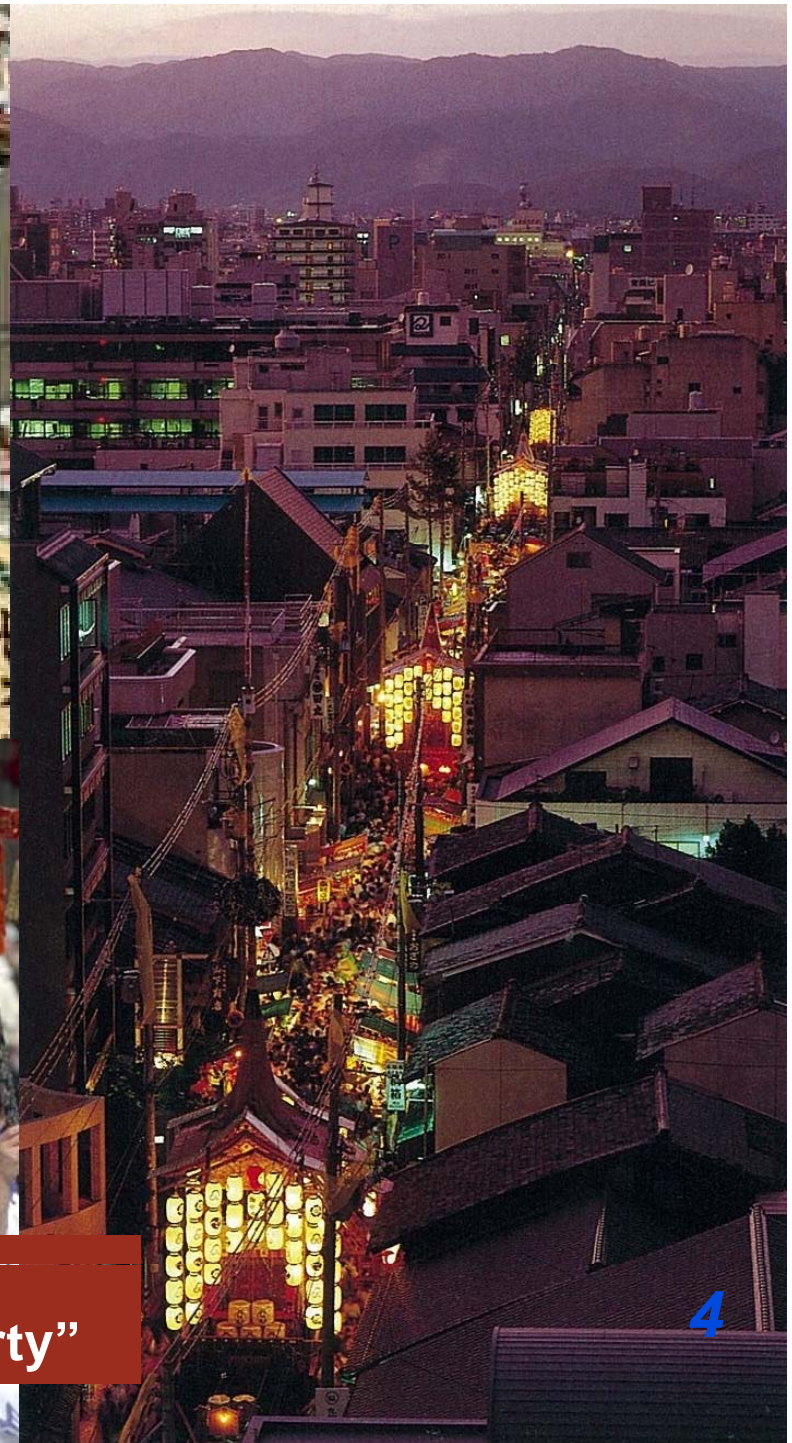
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高度 4768.08 キロメートル

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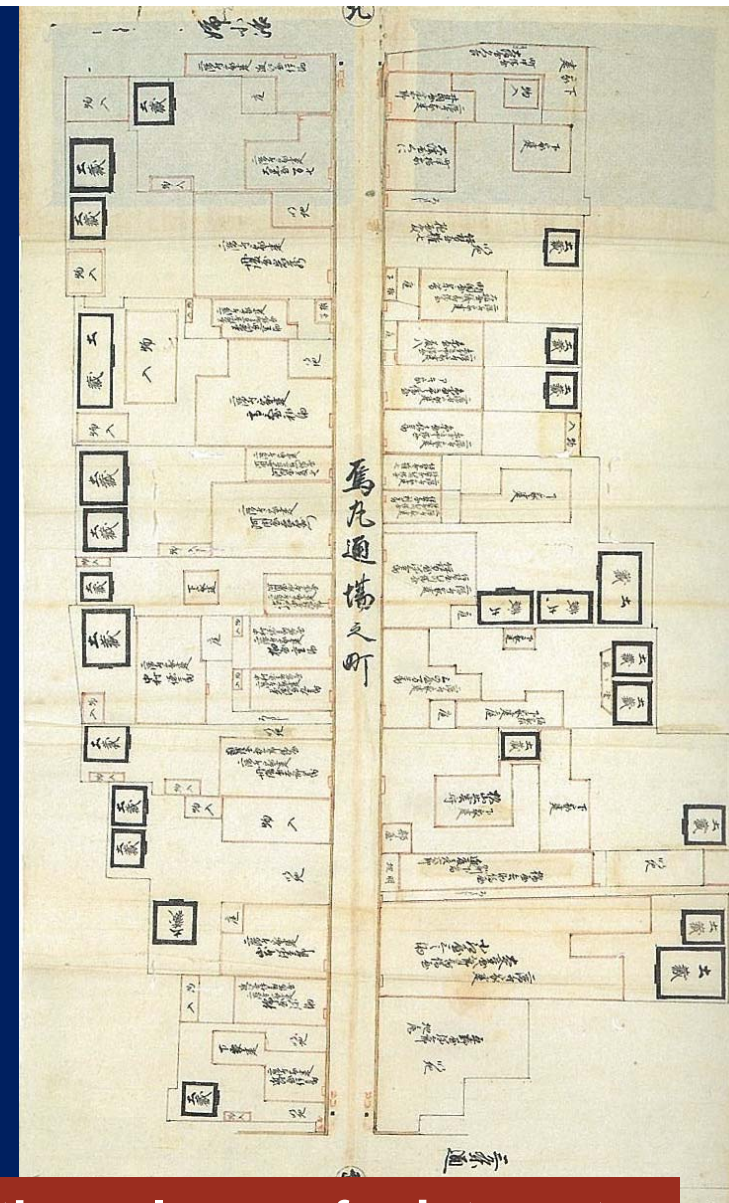
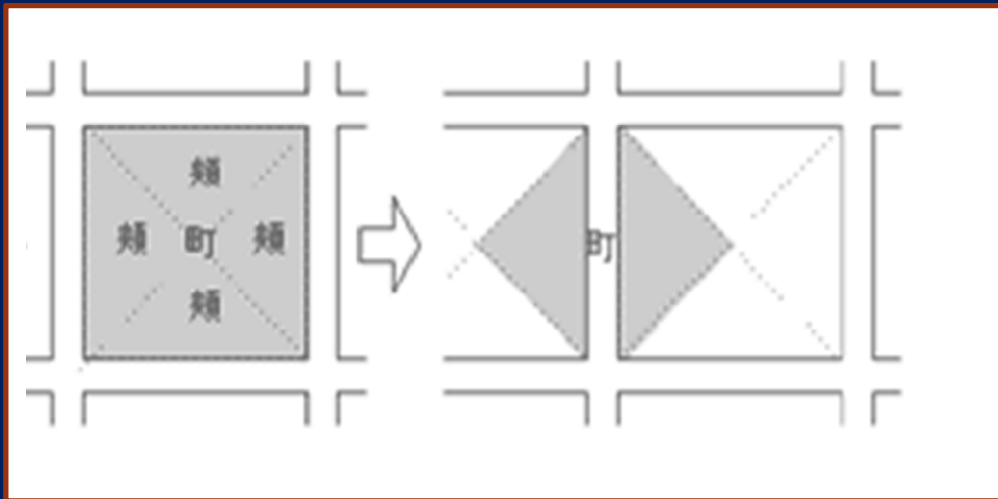
**In the middle of Kyoto, there are 32 Historic Urban Units “Cho”, where parade of Yama-Hoko Floats take place during the Kyoto Gion Festival**



**Gion-Festival is designated as  
“Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property”**



Gion-Festival is held by the communities in these urban units  
“Cho”



In 8<sup>th</sup> C, Kyoto had 120m square grid for the palaces of aristocrats. By the 14<sup>th</sup> C, merchants had settled in the town house “*Machiya*” with their facades facing on the street.

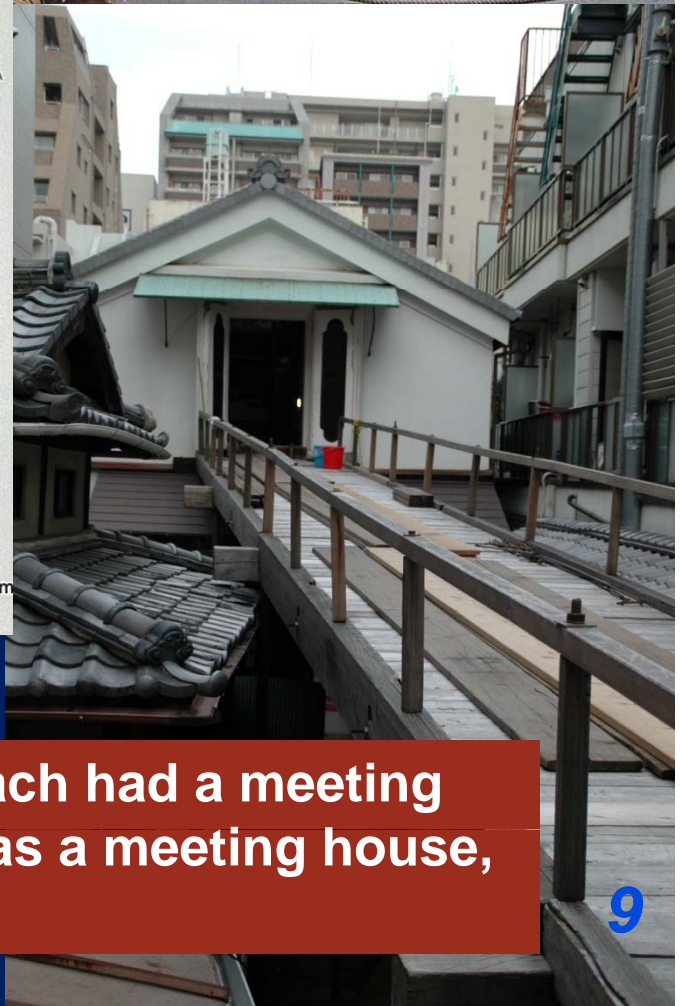
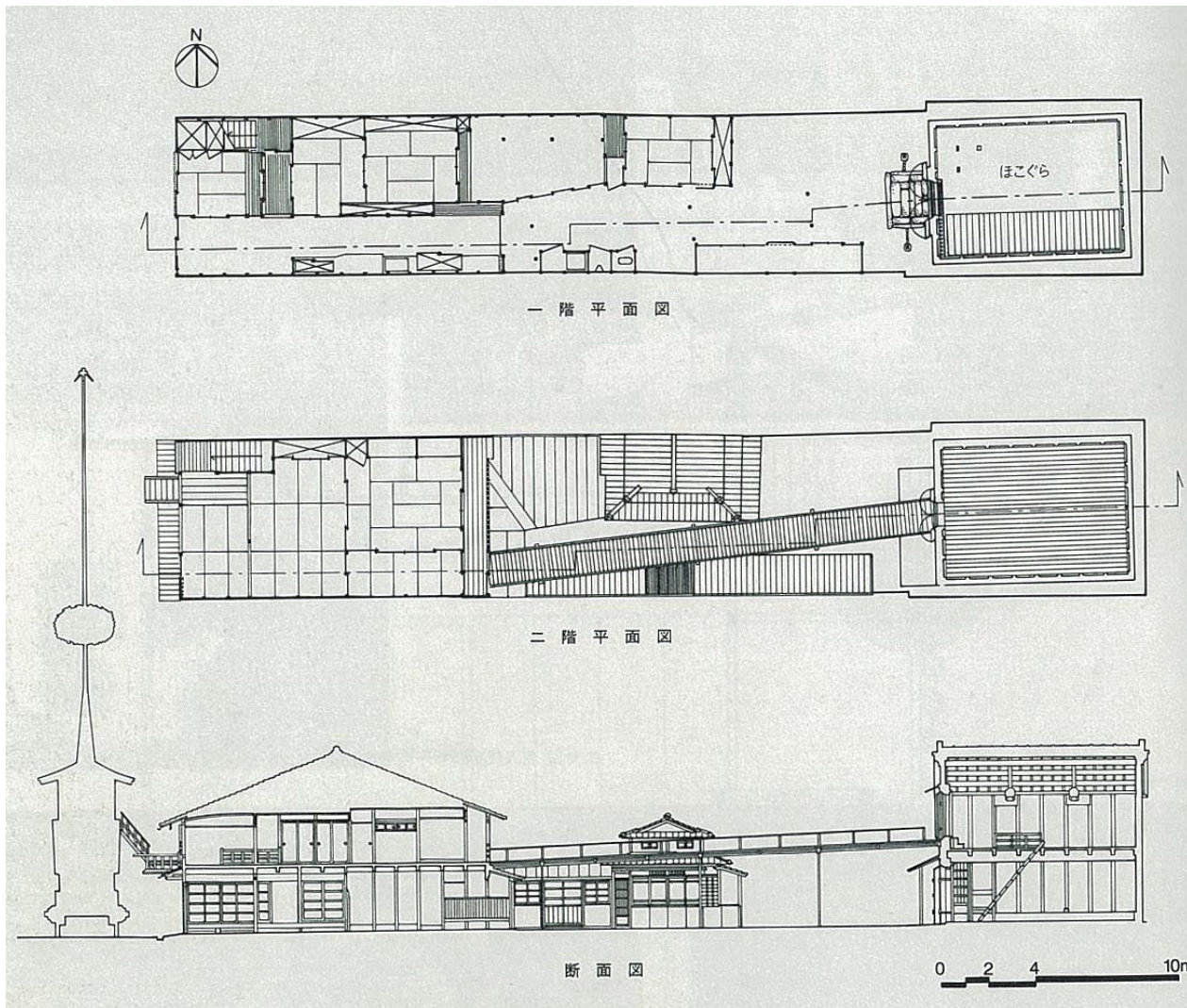


The communities in these urban units are organized along streets called *"Tori"*

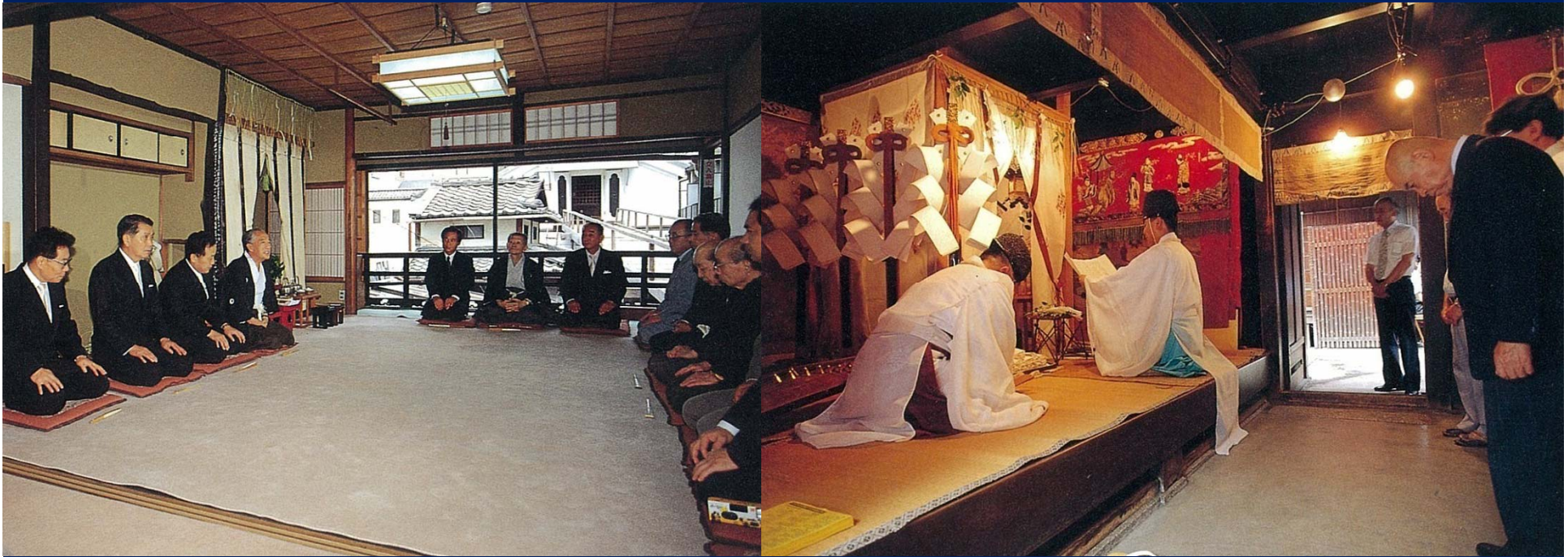


In the 17<sup>th</sup> C, city residents were better and they needed to defend themselves. “*Tori*” was to be a Semi-Public Open Space for “*Cho*”.





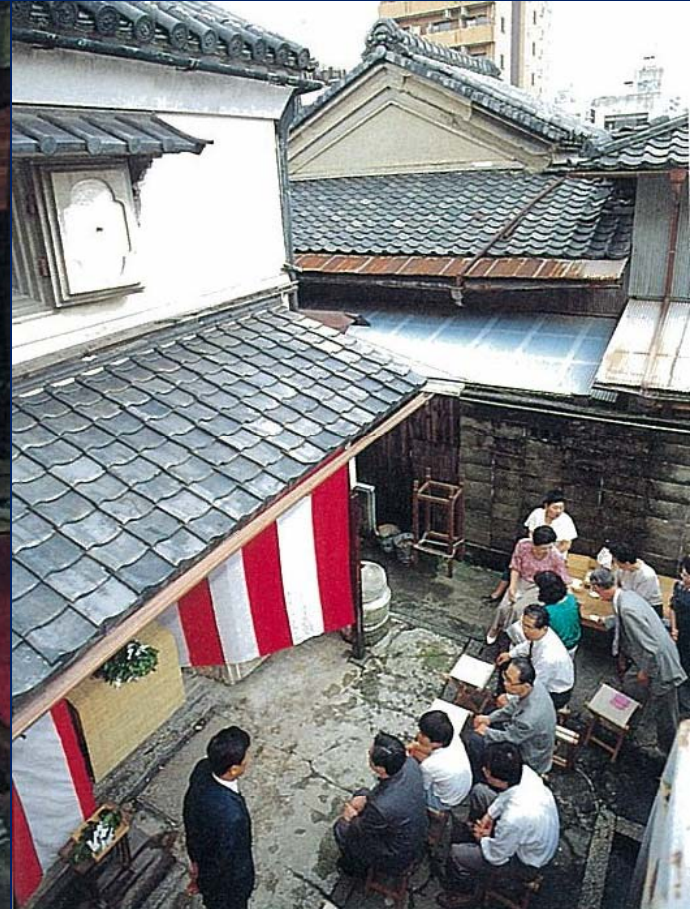
Each Urban Units formed a community, and each had a meeting place called “*Kaisho*“. Traditional “*Kaisho*” has a meeting house, a warehouse and a small shrine.



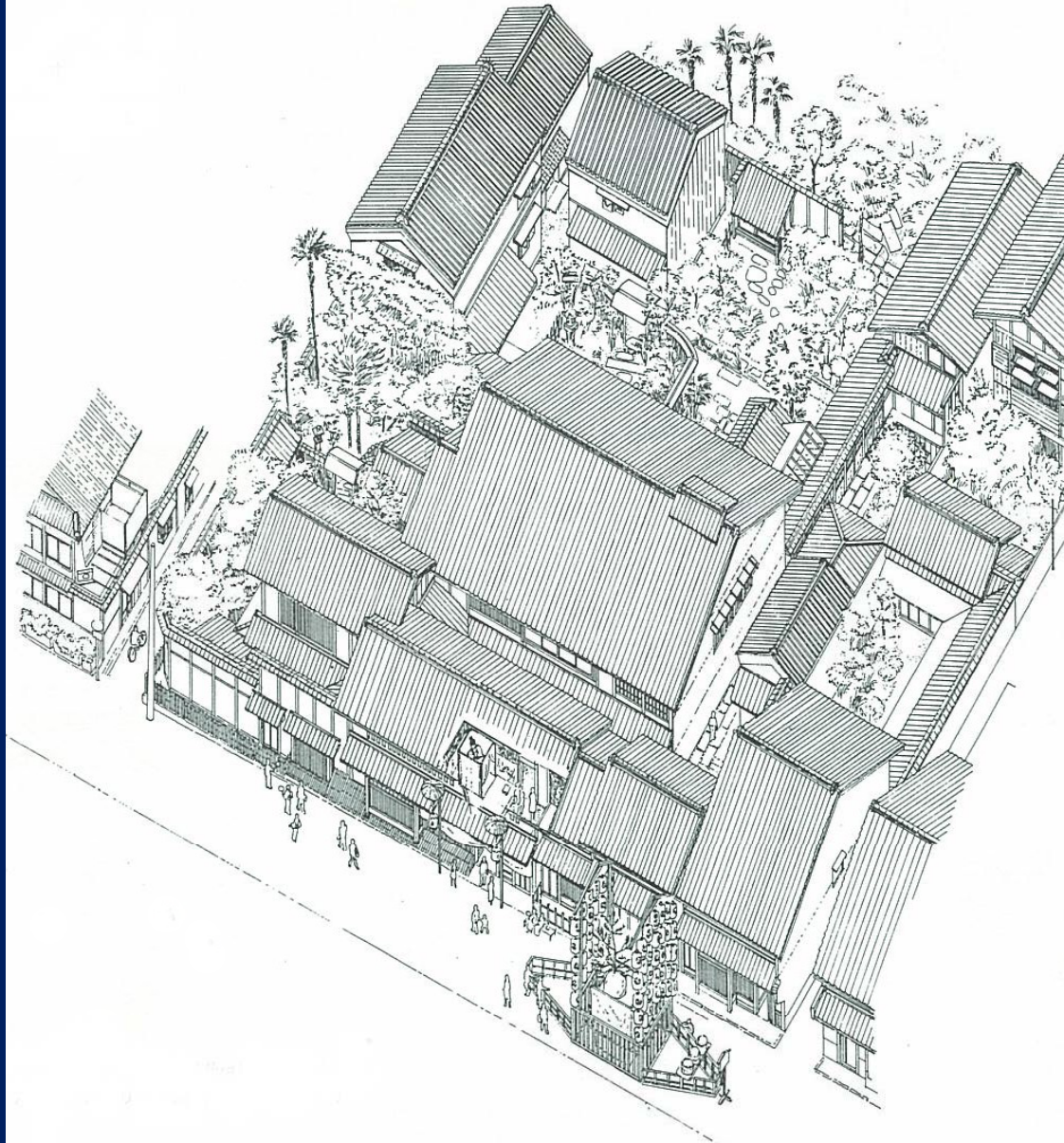
In a Meeting House “*Cho-ie*”



In a warehouse and a small shrine



The Garden of the meeting place is a Semi-Private Open Space



The private town house “*Machiya*”



The traditional town house “*Machiya*” has small gardens, which are Private Open Spaces.

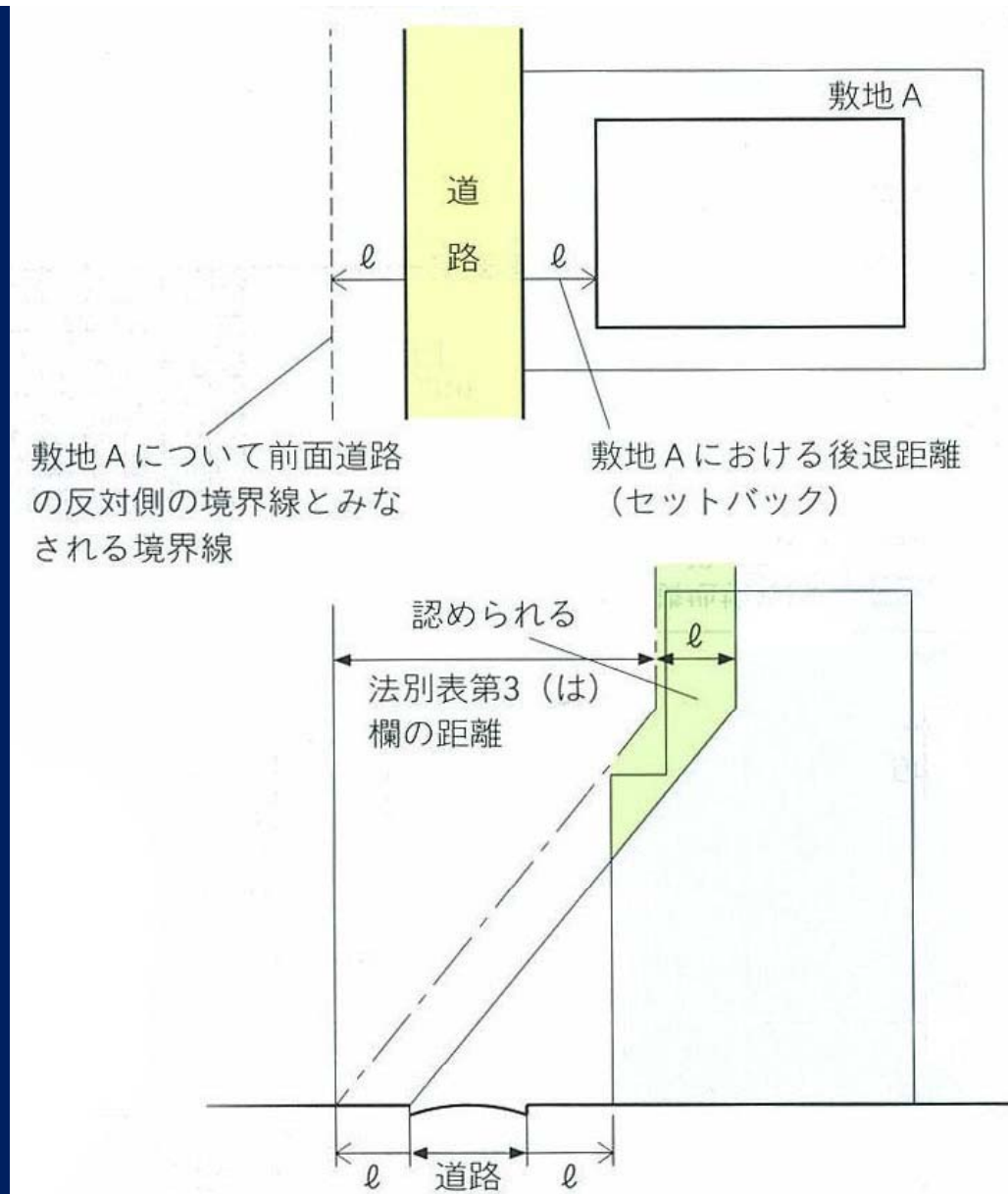


The traditional Urban Units had these many different open spaces, along with close and intimate local communities, which have formed soft and flexible areas that contribute towards the safety of inhabitants.

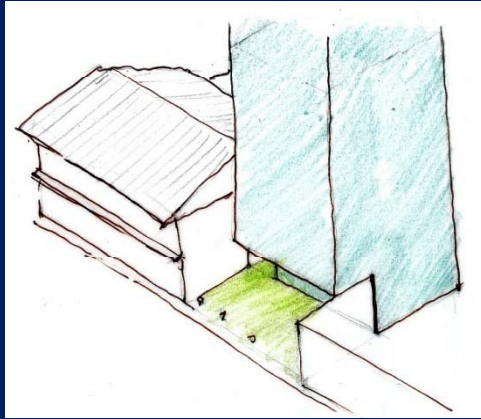
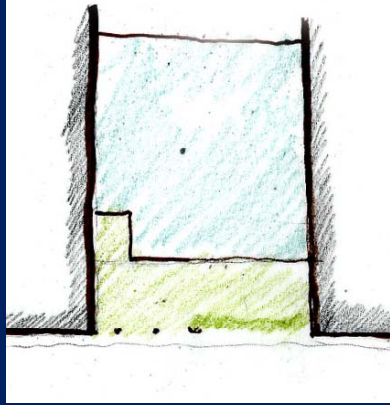


**Compared with this, what about the open spaces today?  
The Japanese city planning system today is that of wide roads  
and fire-proof buildings, which are “solid” and “hard”, for urban  
safety.**





In the law, a building is set back from the boundary of a street so that the building would be as large as possible.



**As a result, the new high rise buildings have a set-back space. The streets join this set-back space and make a wide public street for transportation facilities. But no Semi-Private Spaces.**



**The conflict between the traditional space structure and the contemporary city planning is causing serious confusion in the historic urban areas of Kyoto.**



**Why do we need Open Spaces?**



**In 1995, we experienced the Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake.**



**Open Spaces played various roles such as 1) temporary accommodations tent: 2) rescue camps for medicine, water or others: 3) storage for salvages objects: 4) sites for temporary houses.**

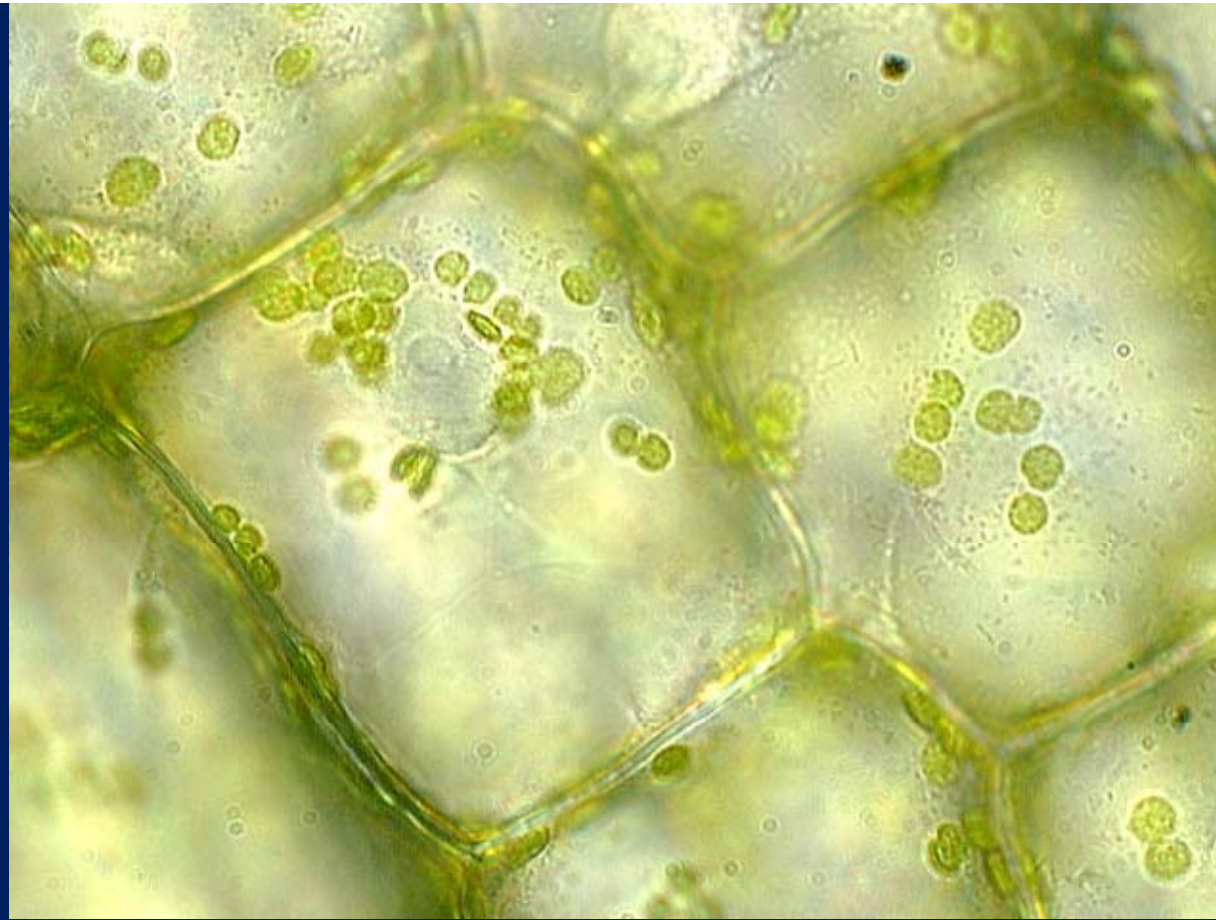


**Usual**



**After the Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake**

**The presence of neighboring Open Spaces are important.**



**Organic Urban Units like cells, and the system for the urban area will make a safer city.**

**The challenge we have to face today is how we can protect the historic urban area by using the modern techniques and city planning and at the same time utilizing the soft and flexible configuration that traditional historic urban areas have.**