

“Bouhan Machizukuri” (Community Building for Crime Prevention) in Japan

日本の「防犯まちづくり」の現状

Kimihiko HINO*
 樋野 公宏*

犯罪認知件数は 2002 年の 285 万件をピークに減少傾向にあるが、現在も犯罪に対する国民の不安は高止まりしている。こうした不安や自治意識の高まりを背景に防犯ボランティアが急増し、その数は今や国民の 50 人に 1 人に達するほどである。

本稿では「防犯まちづくり」を、犯罪の起きにくい環境・状況を作り出すことを目的に、住民、行政等が連携して行う活動の総称と定義し、まず花作りを通じた防犯活動に取り組む安城市の事例、安全マップづくりを空間改善につなげる松山市の事例を紹介する。次に、ハード面の取り組みとして、防犯建物部品、防犯モデルマンション登録制度、計画段階から防犯に配慮した土地区画整理事業の事例を紹介する。最後に、ソフト、ハードに渡る取り組みを総合的に推進する東京都足立区の取り組みを紹介する。

Keywords: Volunteer, Cooperation, Neighborhood Safety Map, Building Parts, City Planning
 ボランティア、協働、地域安全マップ、建物部品、都市計画

1. Crime prevention in Japan as seen through statistics

Following the trend of increasing numbers of recorded crimes in Japan since around 1980, there was a surge in the numbers of crimes in the late 1990s and by 2002 the annual number of crimes had reached 2.85 million (Fig.1). This surge in the number of crimes in Japan began in 1995, which was the year when 6,434 people lost their lives in the Great Hanshin Earthquake (January) and a new religious movement perpetrated a sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway (March). These events coupled with the mood of stagnation following the bursting of the bubble economy led to a sudden rise in the nation's sense of insecurity. The number of crimes subsequently decreased, with approximately 1.7 million cases in 2009, yet the nation's sense of insecurity with regard to crime remains at a high level. Rather than insecurity concerning crime perpetrated against oneself, we can deem this insecurity as being caused by large-scale reporting by the media of just a few atrocities as well as factors that are not necessarily related to crime, such as economic recession and political uncertainty.

According to the “factual investigation of housing requests” carried out by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in 2008, the second-highest ranking item in a list of 30 “important points regarding housing” was “public order and crime prevention,” while the highest ranking item in a list of 12 “factors considered to be important when raising children” was “the crime prevention characteristics of housing and local surroundings” (Fig.2). The prevention of crime is not only a problem for the police to deal with, but rather it can be described as having become an important item in the construction of housing and urban environments.

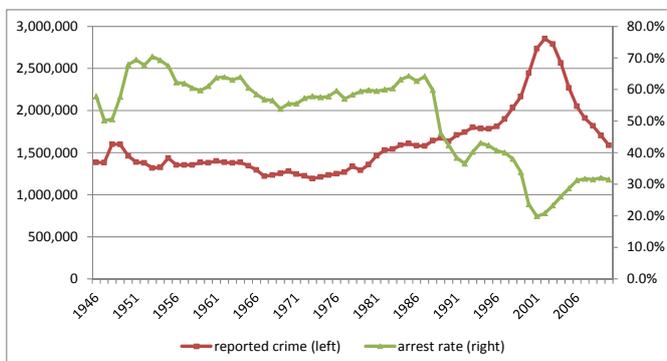


Fig.1 Japan's recorded crime rates

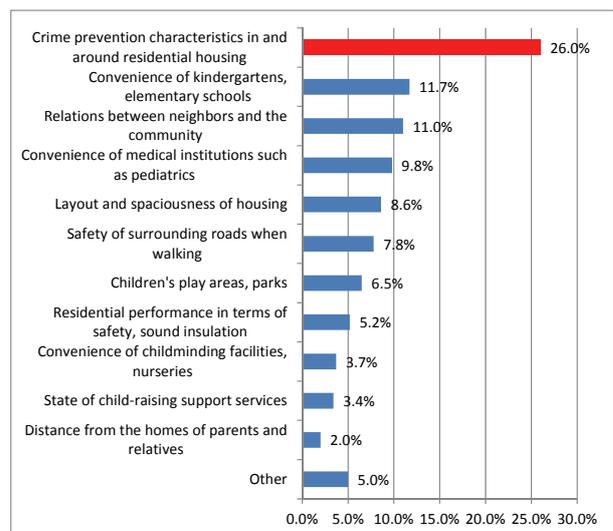


Fig.2 Factors considered to-be important when raising children (Factual investigation of housing requests by MLIT)

* 正会員・独立行政法人建築研究所 (Building Research Institute)

It is in circumstances such as these that crime prevention volunteers have become active, even in their own local areas. According to the National Police Agency, the number of crime prevention volunteer organizations has continued to increase since statistics were first recorded in 2003, and as of 2010 there were some 44,508 such organizations with a total of approximately 2.7 million members (Fig.3). These figures indicate that 1 in 50 of the population of Japan is a crime prevention volunteer. Particularly symbolic among these activities are patrols by crime prevention patrol cars equipped with flashing blue lights (popularly referred to as “*ao-pato*” – literally, “blue patrol”). This initiative became possible in December 2004, following increasing opportunities for voluntary crime prevention activities, and as of the end of 2010 there were more than 35,000 registered vehicles. This increase in crime prevention activities is not merely a response to increases in the numbers of crimes and insecurity regarding crime, but can also be perceived as an expression of autonomous awareness of attempts to resolve regional issues locally. This context and background introduces Japan's “Bouhan Machizukuri” initiatives.

2. Working towards “Bouhan Machizukuri”

I defined Bouhan Machizukuri as being “a general term for activities conducted by the cooperation between residents and administrations, etc., with the purpose of preventing crime by producing environments and situations in which crime is less likely to occur.” The important keywords here are “prevention” and “cooperation.” The thinking behind “prevention” is the exact opposite of post-crime support through the correction in prison of criminals by means of the criminal justice system. “Cooperation” is based on the thinking that various countermeasures will become possible by the joining of various agents' forces. Due to a limited space, it was impossible to include many items in the definition mentioned above, but other important requirements of “Bouhan Machizukuri” include a combination of software such as residents' patrols and improved hardware in buildings and public spaces. Needless to say, the prevention of crime itself is not the most urgent goal but is rather nothing more than one factor in improving quality of life. In recognition of this, it is the essential to promote “Bouhan Machizukuri” from a comprehensive outlook, combining wide-ranging purposes such as townscape, welfare and regional revitalization.

It is from this kind of perspective that I will introduce in this section two districts where I am assisting. In Sasamecho District in Anjo City (Aichi Prefecture), there is an example of adding a crime prevention aspect to a popular flower raising activity. In Kume District in Matsuyama City (Ehime Prefecture), there is an example of a long-term “Bouhan Machizukuri” initiative in the form of an initiative for children's sound upbringing.

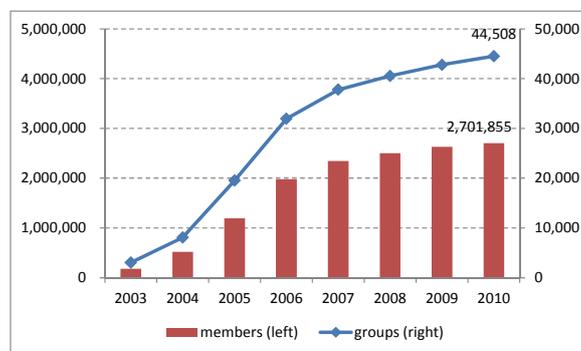


Fig.3 Changes in numbers of crime prevention volunteer organizations and their members

2.1 Mimamori (Surveillance) Flowerpot project (Sasamecho District, Anjo City)

1) District outline

Sasamecho District, in the north of Anjo City, has approximately 2,000 households and a population of around 6,000. This district was an agricultural zone that prospered through the cultivation of pears, but with the opening of a new station on the Tokaido Shinkansen Line in 1988 and a surge in the number of houses there due to a land readjustment project came a trend for increasing amounts of crime, such as burglary and theft from motor vehicles. An elementary school was opened locally in 2006, making cooperation with the local area a challenge.

2) Crime prevention by means of flowers

Accordingly, it was decided that a “Mimamori flowerpot project” would be carried out to increase the numbers of eyes watching out for elementary school students by having residents water flowerpots positioned in front of the doorway of every house as children make their way to and from school. Sasamecho District was the first area in Japan to carry out flower raising as a crime prevention activity.

The flowers (pansies) were provided by the local Agricultural and Forestry Senior High School and planted in flowerpots by local residents who gathered at the elementary school. Pansies have long lives and can be maintained with relatively simple trimming. Small labels (25mm x 55mm) are inserted inside the flowerpots affixed with stickers showing the activity name along with the mascot of Aichi Prefectural Police. Some felt that these labels were too small, but the labels were designed to minimize resistance from residents with only a little interest in “Bouhan Machizukuri”.

Participants were encouraged to place flowerpots in locations offering unobstructed views of public spaces such as school zones, parks, and to take care of the flowers by watering them while children make their way to and from school.

3) Initiative details and assessment

A questionnaire survey showed that many participants placed flowerpots in locations where they could watch over roads and that flowers were watered daily. Also, no less than 60% of respondents answered that their “opportunities to greet and converse with local residents and elementary school students increased,” while three out of four respondents answered that there were increases in “awareness of children's safety” and the “sense of community.” In this way, it became clear that natural surveillance was improved and that the activity also had a favorable influence on residents' awareness.

Compared with typical crime prevention patrol activities this activity places only a very small burden on participants. In fact, approximately 80% of respondents answered that they “enjoyed participating” and “found participation to be easier than participation in other crime prevention activities.” Also, many residents who had no prior experience of participation in crime prevention activities took part in this activity.

In many districts, patrols are taken as being the standard crime prevention activity, yet there must also be a need for the promotion of activities in which many residents can participate with little burden, as with the Mimamori flowerpot project. This project is carried out in Kobe and other cities now.



Fig.4 A flowerpot with label



Fig.5 Planting flowers



Fig.6 A flowerpot placed on a roadside

2.2 “Bouhan Machizukuri” stemming from neighborhood safety map (Kume District, Matsuyama City)

1) What is a neighborhood safety map?

No less than 90% of elementary schools in Japan are producing “neighborhood safety maps.” A typical neighborhood safety map is an initiative by which children who have been taught about environments where crime is likely to occur can walk through their local area to find crime prevention challenges and compile these in map form. “Crime maps” provided by the police indicate locations where crimes have been committed, but neighborhood safety maps are different in that they indicate “locations where crime *could* occur.”

It is hoped that this activity will boost elementary school students' abilities to avoid trouble. However, merely staying away from dangerous areas will not improve the local environment. Kume District in Matsuyama City is one district where an initiative is being taken aimed at improving local security, with not only children but also adults participating in this neighborhood safety map activity.

2) District outline

Kume District, on the outskirts of Matsuyama City, is an area with a population of around 30,000. There are four elementary schools and one junior high school in this district, and local children commute to these schools. Since the opening of a new national highway in 1979, roadside shops have lined up along the national highway and there has been vigorous development of residential land. The north side of this national highway is crowded with housing and shops and there are many areas where the road is narrow, while on the south side many fields remain. Compared with other local districts, the increase in population and numbers of households in Kume is remarkable.

Neighborhood safety maps were first made in Kume District in 2005, and since then these maps have been produced on an annual basis. Crime prevention issues discovered by children in the production of these maps are immediately addressed for improvement by local adults. For example, trees and plants in parks are pruned if there is poor visibility, street lights are extended to stretches of road that are dark at nighttime, and so on.

3) Features of activity

The following three points are features of the initiative in Kume District:

The first point is that the main agent carrying out the activity is the community itself. In many cases, neighborhood safety maps are done as school lessons, but in Kume District they are overseen by neighborhood associations. For this reason, there is a wide range of participants – not only children (pupils) and teaching staff, but also local residents, non-profit organizations and so on. Also, neighborhood safety maps are compiled to be portable for information sharing (Fig.9) through broad distribution to schools and local stakeholders. By cooperation between various agents and having common understanding of local issues, diverse countermeasures are possible in compliance with respective roles.

The second point is that the initiative is continuous. Although neighborhood safety maps have spread nation-wide, many of these initiatives are recognized as being one-off efforts that end after maps have been produced for the first time. In Kume District, neighborhood safety maps are produced annually and are updated in response to changes in the local environment. Also, a cycle is being produced whereby junior high school students who personally experienced the neighborhood safety map initiative at elementary school age become leaders of assembled elementary school students.

The third point is that the initiative adopts a comprehensive viewpoint. Typical neighborhood safety maps are made only from the perspective of crime prevention, hence proposed measures for improvement likewise tend to aim only for crime prevention. Other values can be damaged in the pursuit of crime prevention – for example, in the removal of greenery from parks for the sake of visibility. In Kume District the perspective is expanded to take in general child safety issues, such as traffic accidents and falling down, and is not limited to crime. Furthermore, not only are negative checks (searches for dangerous places) carried out, but also positive searches are made for popular places in the neighborhood as well as places that children want to save. These factors are connected to children's interest in and attachment to their neighborhood.



Fig.7 Walking around town



Fig.8 Creating a neighborhood safety map



Fig.9 Version of neighborhood safety map for distribution

3. Hardware initiatives

Software activities play a central role in the examples of activities introduced in the previous chapter. However, in this chapter I will introduce Japanese hardware initiatives from three scales: building parts, condos, and urban development.

3.1 Crime prevention building parts (CP parts)

In November 2002, the National Police Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry together with non-government organizations relating to building parts jointly established the “Public-Private Partnership concerning Development and Promotion of High-Performance Crime Prevention Building Parts” in order to deal with advances in the ingenuity of means of trespassing, such as lock picking (illegal unlocking). This partnership established crime prevention performance tests for building parts such as doors, windows and shutters, requiring at least five minutes entry delay before trespassing becomes possible, and parts that are appreciated as having a certain level of crime prevention performance are announced and published in a catalogue of “High-Performance Crime Prevention Building Parts” (commonly known as “CP parts”), the number of which has risen to approximately 3,200 items (Figs. 10, 11).

The installation of CP parts such as these in many buildings is extremely important for any decrease in burglary, but their diffusion has continued to make very slow progress due to the fact that these are more expensive than normal building parts. Recently, however, many opportunities for greater progress have been observed, including the adoption of these parts as standard specifications by major housing construction companies.



Fig.10 Common emblem attached to CP parts



Fig.11 Crime prevention performance testing



Fig.12 Registration plate posted in registered property

3.2 Osaka secure condominium registration system

1) Circumstances behind system

In 2001, the National Police Agency and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism decided on “A Guideline for Secure Condominiums” (revised in 2006) to indicate specific techniques when carrying out planning and design. After this guideline was introduced, a secure condominiums registration (or certification) system was initiated in each prefecture. I will now introduce the “Osaka secure condominium registration system,” which commenced in 2001, at which time Osaka was the third place to adopt such a system, after Hiroshima and Shizuoka, yet had the most registered properties anywhere in Japan.

2) System outline

Condos that have more than three stories can apply to this system in Osaka Prefecture, and can be for sale or rent, new or existing constructions. Inspection fees vary according to floor space, but buildings of less than 3,000 square meters incur fees of 100,000 yen.

Applications are directed to the Osaka Crime Prevention Association, and inspections are conducted based on standards for judgment by one member of the five first-class registered architects and one member of the six certified security system experts designated by the Association. Inspections are split into two stages, with applications successful at the documentary inspection stage receiving “documentary proof of inspection compatibility” and being allowed to display “now applying for registration in Osaka secure condominium registration system” in advertisements. Thereafter, a “registration plate” (Fig.12) is issued upon completion passing through on-site inspections and discussion of the review board.

3) Registration status

As of April 2011, there were 886 applications and 833 enrollments, an overwhelmingly high number in comparison with other prefectures. There should be almost no crime occurring in the registered properties, but there have been cases of trespassing due to apertures being left unlocked, hence it cannot be said that these properties are entirely free of damage. Together with physical countermeasures, there is of course a need to boost residents' awareness. There was also a case where a group of burglars was arrested thanks to images taken by a security camera located in the entranceway of a registered building.

A trial calculation of the data from Housing Starts Statistics (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) shows that approximately half of new condominiums constructed in the Osaka metropolitan area end up being registered as secure condos (calculation based on numbers of households). There are also anecdotes of a condo that was not selling initially but which immediately sold after applying to be registered in this system. In this way, condos with crime prevention characteristics are spreading throughout Osaka, with further diffusion anticipated in other prefectures as well.

3.3 Urban development with concern for crime prevention from the development stage (Narashino City)

I would now like to introduce a “Bouhan Machizukuri” initiative from a land readjustment project in the South Entrance District of JR Tsudanuma Station (hereinafter, “Tsudanuma Station South Entrance District”), with which I am personally involved in as a specialist.

1) District outline

Tsudanuma Station South Entrance District cover approximately 35ha within a range of 300m to 1km from the South Entrance of JR Tsudanuma Station, and a land readjustment project executed by a landowners union is now in progress (2007-2014; planned population: 7,000). Construction of infrastructure has already begun, and together with that progress there are also advances being made with the sequential construction of housing, commercial facilities, parks.

With highly convenient transport making a journey to the central Tokyo just 30 minutes by train, the North Entrance of the station accumulated commercial facilities forming a downtown, yet the South Entrance District was mostly left as carrot fields in spite of being directly in front of the station. Then, after various studies by landowners, this project started with a city planning decision in 2007 and is scheduled to run until 2014.

2) Three-phase “Bouhan Machizukuri”

The South Entrance District of Tsudanuma is aiming for three-phase “Bouhan Machizukuri” based on theories such as CPTED.

The first phase is the “construction of infrastructure with concern for crime prevention” in public spaces. Countermeasures to be taken include the installation of security cameras at main intersections and “image humps” for access roads to residential areas. A pedestrian path 16m wide and approximately 170m long will go through the middle of the project area, connecting the local park with Tsudanuma Station, effectively ensuring the safety of pedestrians and each residence by means of human eyes. The main theme of this project will be the detailed design of the pedestrian path and local park.

The second phase is the creation of “Design Guidelines for Secure Buildings,” directed towards individual buildings on privately-owned land. This will endorse countermeasures for the improvement of crime prevention characteristics (for everyone's sake) of public spaces by each site and building, in addition to crime prevention countermeasures for one's own sake, such as the enhancement of building parts. For example, there have been ideas raised such as that of having windows of rooms that are frequently occupied facing parks and green roads. Once the design guidelines have been drawn up, the challenge will be to see to what degree their implementation can be guaranteed. Some countermeasures are converted into rules by statutory district plans, but the rest will require the understanding and cooperation of landowners and purchasers.

The third phase is the study of crime prevention activities in software supporting the above. There are plans to decide on a “Bouhan Machizukuri Action Plan,” compiling visions and policies along with specific details of activities and calls for the participation of new residents.

3) Turning towards the future of “Bouhan Machizukuri”

A better understanding of “Bouhan Machizukuri” has been cultivated through lectures by specialists among landowners unions. In February 2010, a “Section Meeting for the Promotion of Bouhan Machizukuri” was established in the union as an organization to draw up the above-mentioned “Action Plan” and consider implementation policies, This Section Meeting comprises union officials, private

24 hours a day, 365 days a year, dealing with the beauty of the area in front of Adachi Station, tackling the issue of illegally parked bicycles and carrying out crime prevention patrols and other activities.; implementation of “crime prevention audits” to discover local crime prevention issues together with local residents and study countermeasures (Fig.16).

4.3 Current conditions and future initiatives

These various initiatives are proving to be effective, with the number of recorded crimes in Adachi Ward in 2010 declining by 7% compared with the previous year, and Adachi Ward currently no longer has the worst figures in the Tokyo metropolitan area.

In April 2011, Adachi Ward published a guideline for the design of roads, parks, parking lots and urban developments which consider crime prevention and the promotion of urban planning based on theories such as CPTED and opportunity-based crime prevention. There is a plan to certify secure housing developments to make full use of this guideline.



Fig.15 The mascot for Adachi Ward's "Beautiful Windows" exercise



Fig.16 Crime prevention audits in action