

# Transition of Buildings and Process of Area Regeneration in “Kagai”

## - A Case Study of Naka-cho in Hachioji City, Tokyo-

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### ***Abstract:***

In the past, traditional entertainment districts, known as Kagai, existed in almost every city in Japan. Kagai generally consists of three types of businesses: Ryoriya (traditional restaurants), Machiai (rental rooms), and the Okiya that house the Geisha, who are delivered to Ryoriya or Machiai. Collectively, Kagai and Geisha embody many aspects of traditional Japanese culture. Therefore, Kagai is a precious space.

Today, Kagai remain in Naka-cho, Hachioji City (located in central Hachioji), where they have been recently nurtured by cultural promotion and townscape improvement. To date, however, no study has investigated the building, landscape and revival of Kagai in Naka-cho.

This study consults the literature and conducts interviews with administrative officers, residents in Naka-cho, Hachioji's Geisha, and specialists. From the results, we identify the range of Naka-cho's Kagai, the transition of Kagai buildings, and process of regeneration. Moreover, the transition of Kagai buildings and the present landscape conditions are clarified from the investigation of buildings' design in Naka-cho's Kagai.

Hachioji was devastated by a conflagration in 1897. Hachioji contained 42 Kagai buildings in 1938, 45 in the mid-1960s, and just three in 2013. The number of Ryoriya in Naka-cho's Kagai was 10 in 1938, eight in the mid-1960s, and three in 2013. Following the great fire, Machiai and Okiya were concentrated in the Naka-cho district, whereas Ryoriya were scattered around the district. Such arrangement of the three kagai businesses is not seen in the Kagai of modern central Tokyo.

A private sector organization, which was comprised members of the chamber of commerce, was launched in Naka-cho in 1999. A second private sector organization, which focused on townscape improvement, was launched in 2007. The members of these organization were residents of Naka-cho and its surrounding areas. Since 2009, Naka-cho's Kagai have been embellished by stone paving and their exterior walls have been painted in the Kurobei style. This renovation is the first townscape improvement undertaken by Hachioji city on Naka-cho's Kagai. Consequent to this enterprise, residents have undertaken other townscape improvement activities. Another private sector organization (Formed by Naka-cho residents) aimed at townscape improvement was launched in 2010. This organization conducts information sessions, holds local public meetings, and creates townscape improvement plans. The next challenge is to gain consensus on townscape improvement in the area.

### ***Keywords:***

Kagai, Karyukai, Hachioji, regeneration, process, townscape improvement

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## 1. Introduction

### 1-1. Outline and Value of “Kagai”

Kagai is the Japanese term for traditional entertainment districts. This word is believed to derive from an ancient Chinese sentence “Kagai Ryuko”. Pronounced in Japanese way, it is also called “Hanamachi”. Host of Kagai enjoy banquets while being entertained by Geisha<sup>1)</sup> (also called Geigi or Geiko) who are trained in traditional dance, song, instruments, and even tea ceremonies and flower arrangement. Each Kagai presents a unique public performance of traditional dances and “Odori” (a type of play). It is a main event of Kagai as a successor of the national tradition. The origin of Kagai is Yukaku in the Edo period, such as Shimabara in Kyoto and Yoshiwara in Edo (present Tokyo), when prostitution was legalized by the government. After Japan’s modernization in the Meiji period, Kagai and its Geisha entertainers became separated from Yukaku, which employs Shogi (prostitutes).

Kagai architectures, often “Sukiya-zukuri”, are elaborately designed and constructed from expensive materials. Therefore, Kagai and Geisha collectively inherit many aspect of traditional Japanese culture, from architecture to music and cuisine, both tangible and intangible. Kagai are unique to Japan; moreover, similar place that have remained alive are scarce worldwide. Kagai, which once existed in almost every Japanese city, have largely disappeared under social and economic change. Even the highly renowned Yanagibashi was closed in 1996. However, some Kagai are preserved as historic districts, and several programs have been developed for Kagai management. A modernized Okiya system was erected in Niigata as a joint-stock corporation. A membership foundation was established to support five Kagai within the Kyoto City. Kagai generally include three types of business; Ryoriya, Chaya, and Okiya. Ryoriya or Ryotei is a traditional high-class restaurant, which is used for special occasions such as weddings and reunions. Machiai or Chaya (literally meaning tea-house) are building containing small rental rooms, where meals are delivered by a catering service. Okiya is a Geisha dormitory, where Geishas are delivered from Okiya to Ryoriya and Chaya. The three Kagai businesses are distinguished characteristic architectures. Ryoriya are usually surrounded by gardens, whereas Chaya facades in Kyoto and Kanazawa directly face the street. Some Kagai have main streets, whereas in others the atmosphere is enriched by narrow lanes.

### 1-2. Overview of Japanese Kagai, and the importance of Hachioji Kagai

In the past, Kagai were ubiquitous throughout Japan. Approximately 500 kagai are believed to have existed in 1956. Today, the number of active Kagai has dwindled to 30-40. The locations of the 37 active Kagai surveyed to date are indicated in Figure 1. There are six Kagai in the Tokyo Metropolis, excluding Yoshicho, wherein only a single Ryotei remains (mentioned later). Kyoto has five Kagai, whereas Kanazawa has three. Additional Kagai are found in mid and western Japan. Kagai also remain in Sapporo, Morioka, Sakata, Shimizu, Shizuoka, Gifu, Nagasaki, and Niigata. Elsewhere, there are many Kagai remnants hosting one or two Ryoriya and a few aged Geisha. Kyoto, Kanazawa, and Niigata are nationally designated for preservation. Apart from the cities marked in Figure 1, the historic townscape was lost during the air raids in the Second World War and by modernization.

Among the Kagai in Figure 1, Hachioji Kagai is a region of increasing importance, having undergone significant cultural promotion and townscape improvement in recent years.

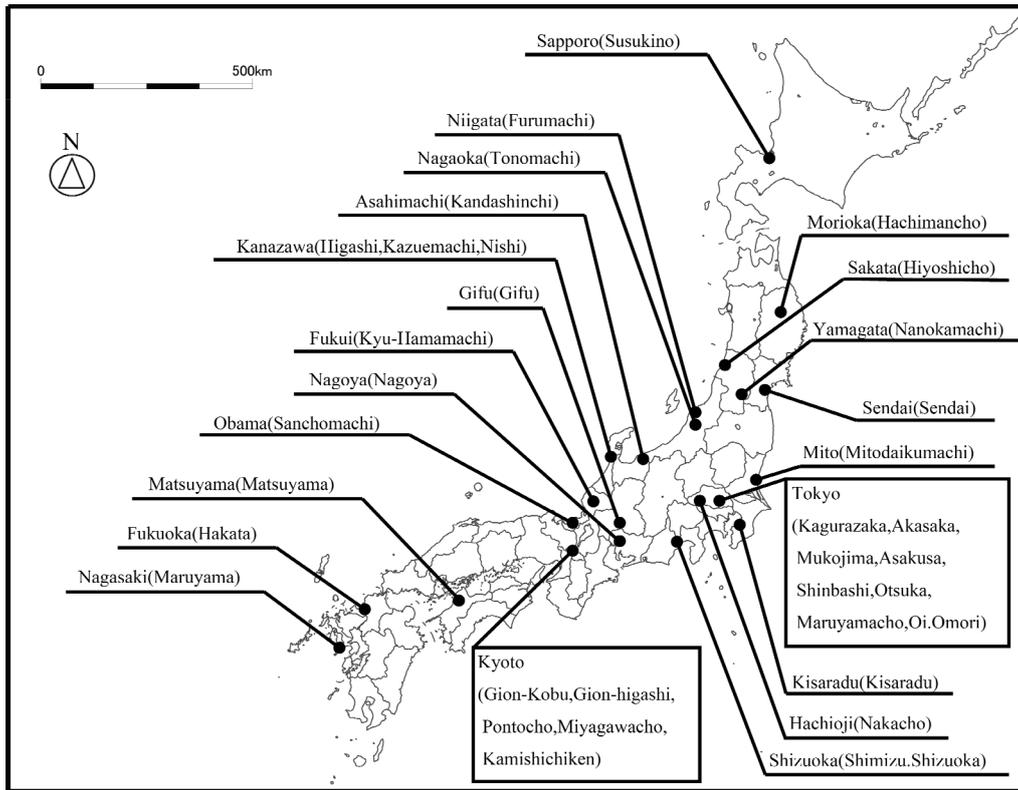


Figure 1 Location of Kagai around Japan

Hachioji Kagai is familiar to the residents of Naka-cho and its surrounding areas. The “Geigi” of Hachioji perform in several events such as ceremonial occasions, scattering parched beans, and local festivals. Hachioji Kagai have also been revitalized by the townscape improvement implemented by the private sector organization. Photo 1 shows the “Hachioji Geisha” performing the “Dance of Yoimiya” as part of the 2013 Hachioji festival. The “Dance of Yoimiya” is performed free of charge.



Photo 1 "Hachioji Geisha"

### 1-3. Methods and Objectives

With a few exceptions<sup>2)3)4)</sup>, Kagai studies have focused on general historic architectures and their conservation. To date, no study has investigated the building, landscape and area regeneration of the Kagai in Naka-cho. This study aims to clarify the transition of Kagai buildings<sup>(1)</sup>, the regeneration process and the present landscape condition. The study conducts field work, a literature search<sup>(2)</sup>, and interviews with various personnel; administrative officers, Naka-cho residents, Hachioji’s Geisha, and specialists. We then identify the range of Naka-cho’s Kagai, the transition of the Kagai buildings, and the regeneration process. We also clarify the transition of Kagai buildings and the present urban landscape conditions by investigating the design of Naka-cho’s Kagai buildings.

## 2. Outline of Hachioji and Naka-cho

Naka-cho is located in the center of Hachioji, the largest city in the Tama area occupying the west side of the special wards of Tokyo (Figure 2). The gross area of Hachioji is approximately 186 km<sup>2</sup> and its population in 2014 is approximately 580000. Hachioji's predecessor, "Hachioji zyuku," was established in 1593 by "Sennindosin," one of the offices in the Edo shogunate, and was home to garrisons, a fire brigade, and construction workers. Hachioji was known as "Soto" which means a textile industry city. The Edo shogunate also constructed the Koshu Highway to promote the formation and development of the city. Misaki-cho is now an entertainment district in Hachioji, and the main road (the west radiation Yuroad) has become a shopping street. The "Hachioji festival," the most impressive annual festival in Hachioji, also presents the "Dance of Yoimiya" at Naka-cho Park (Figure 3).

Since the conflagration that burned down Hachioji in 1897, Okiya conglomerated in present Naka-cho to form the Naka-cho Kagai. On this occasion, Yukaku was moved to Ta-machi. The remains of the "Tamachi Yukaku" buildings can still be found at the north side of Naka-cho Kagai. Kagai businesses in Naka-cho, Hachioji City, are currently being revived by cultural promotion and townscape improvement. Figure 3 shows the location of Naka-cho Kagai and Ryoriya in 2013. The regions occupied by Naka-cho Kagai from 1938 to 2013 are determined by the locations of its Okiya and Machiai which have dominated the Naka-cho kagai since the formative period. Therefore, the majority of the Ryoriya are scattered outside of the Naka-cho Kagai area (Figure 3). Only the "Suzuka" Ryoriya lies within the Naka-cho Kagai area. The "Suzuka" in Naka-cho Kagai is photographed in Photo 2.

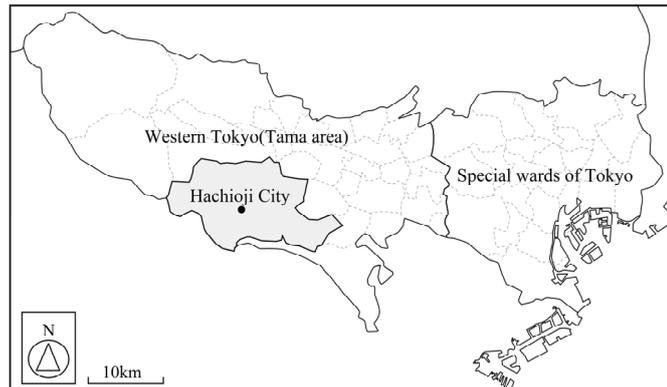


Figure 2 Location of Hachioji in Tokyo Metropolitan Government

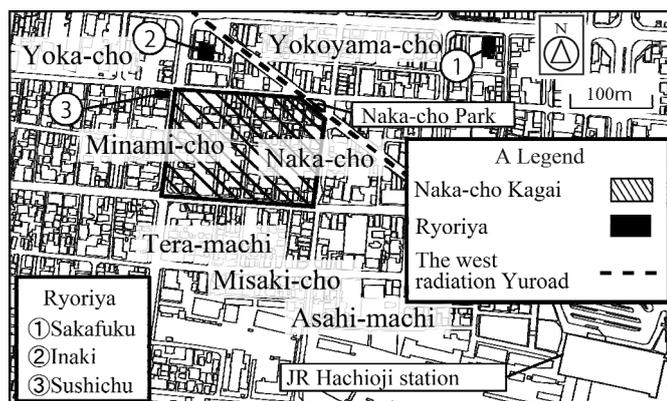


Figure 3 Location of Naka-cho Kagai



Photo 2 The external appearance of "Suzuka" Ryoriya

### 3. Process of Area Regeneration in Kagai

Table 1 summarizes the major events involving Naka-cho's Kagai. The first private sector organization for revitalization Naka-cho Kagai was launched in 1999. The organization members were residents of Naka-cho's surrounding areas. Once this organization was established, it triggered the support and public awareness of Naka-cho's Kagai by other residents. In January 2004, the "Dance of early spring" was performed for the first time, and was followed by the first performance of the "Dance of Yoimiya" in August 2004. The private sector organizations supporting Naka-cho Kagai activities and dedicated to townscape improvement were launched in 2005 and January 2007, respectively. The latest organization membered by residents of Naka-cho and its surrounds. A public hearing that disseminated townscape improvement information to the Naka-cho residents was held in March 2008. The second private sector organization focused on townscape improvement was launched in April 2008, and improvement began in November 2009. This was the first attempt to improve the townscapes of the Naka-cho Kagai in Hachioji City. The enterprise inspired other residents to undertake townscape improvement activities. The stone pavement was lengthened to the Kenban in 2010. A third private sector organization aimed at townscape improvement, which comprised Naka-cho residents, was launched in December 2010. In February 2012, a public meeting between residents and specialists was held in the Naka-cho area. A fence imitating the Kurobei was constructed in September 2012. In November 2013, the third private sector organization formulated a plan for townscape improvement in the naka-cho area. These efforts culminated in the first "Hachioji Odori" (dance performance) by Hachioji Geisha in March 2014.

Table 1 uses a date from an interviewing with Hachioji's administrative officers, Kagai-interested residents in the Naka-cho area, and Hachioji's Geisha.

Table 1 Major events involving Kagai

Time	Event	Central Organization*	Stage
June,1999	The first private sector organization which revitalization Naka-cho Kagai was lanched.	P	The early stage of activity by residents
January,2004	"Dance of early spring" was performed for the first time.	K	
August,2004	"Dance of Yoimiya" was performed for the first time.	K	
2005	The private sector organization which support Naka-cho Kagai activities was launched.	P	
January,2007	The first private sector organization which tackles the townscape improvement was launched.	P	The active stage of activity by residents
March,2008	The public hearing which is information transmission about townscape improvement for residents in Naka-cho area was held.	G	
April,2008	The second private sector organization which tackles the townscape improvement was launched.	P	
November,2009	The townscape improvement (the paving by stone, painting exterior wall of a building as Kurobei style, establishment of streetlamp as Andon and tree planting of willow) was started.	G	
2010	The stone pavement was lengthened to the Kenban.	G	
December,2010	The third private sector organization which tackles the townscape improvement was launched.	P	
February,2012	The public meeting which discuss between residents and specialists in Naka-cho area was held.	p	
September,2012	The fence which imitate Kurobei was established.	P	The expansion stage of residents concerning activity
November,2013	The plan of townscape improvement in Naka-cho area was created by the third private sector organization.	p	
March,2014	"Hachioji Odori" (dance performance) was performed by Hachioji Geisha for the first time.	K	

\*P=private sector organization, G=government, K=Karyukai

#### 4. Transition of Buildings

Naka-cho's Kagai buildings have undergone three transitions; in 1938, in mid-1960s, and in 2013. In 1938, Kagai buildings comprised eight Okiya, 24 Machiai, one Ryoriya, and nine building for Kagai-related uses (Figure 4). In mid-1960s, there were 15 Okiya, 25 Machiai, no Ryoriya, and five building for Kagai-related uses (Figure 5). In 2013, numbers had dwindled to one Okiya, no Machiai, one Ryoriya, and one building for Kagai-related uses (Figure 6). Kagai buildings

numbered 42 and 45 in 1938 and mid-1960s respectively, but only three in 2013. The number of Ryoriya surrounding Naka-cho was 10 in 1938, eight in mid-1960s, and three in 2013. Therefore, whereas Machiai and Okiya were concentrated in the Naka-cho kagai area, the Ryoriya were scattered in the wider area (Figure 3). Such arrangement of the three kagai businesses is not seen in the Kagai of modern central Tokyo.

Figure 4 was created from a 1938 fire insurance map. Figure 5 was created from a map of replotted land in 1960 and a Kagai map based on a 1965 housing map. Figure 5 also uses date from an inquiring conducted on Kagai-interested residents in the Naka-cho area<sup>2)</sup>. Figure 6 was created from the same survey, and also from a base map in 2013. Figure 4 differs from Figure 5 and Figure 6 in terms of the building site and road layouts, which reflect the replotting of Naka-cho by the Hachioji City government after the Second World War.

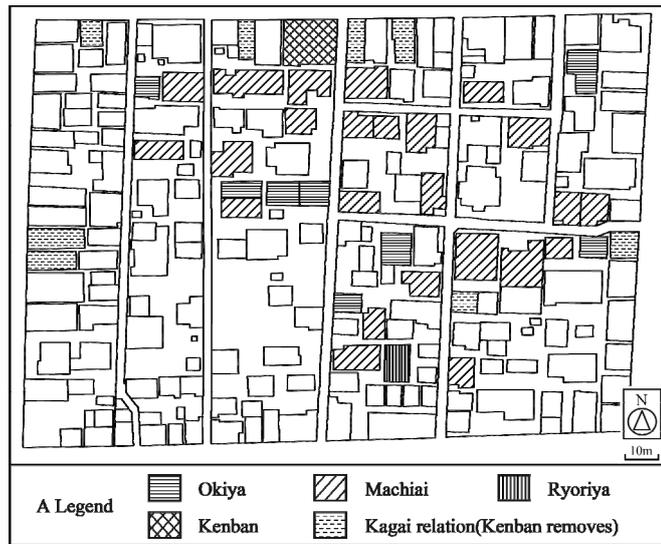


Figure 4 Distribution of Kagai buildings in 1938

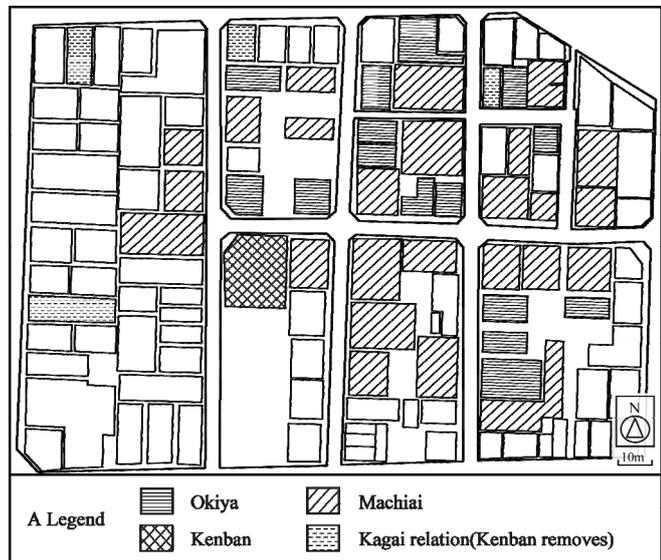


Figure 5 Distribution of Kagai buildings in mid-1960s<sup>(3)</sup>

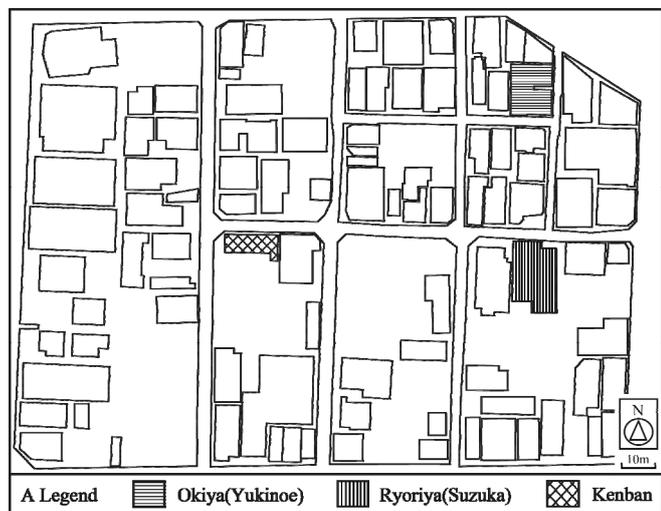


Figure 6 Distribution of Kagai buildings in 2013

## 5. Present urban landscape

### 5-1. Building heights, Kurobei, and stone pavements

The urban landscape in Naka-cho Kagai has been advanced by townscape improvement. However, the distributions of building heights, Kurobei and stone pavements in 2013 present an aesthetic problem (Figure 7).

Naka-cho contained 98 buildings in 2013. These comprised 58 low-rise (two-story), 32 mid-height (3-5 story) buildings, and eight high-rise buildings (six stories).

Kurobei locations and stone pavements are represented by dotted lines in Figure 7. There are six types of Kurobei; black-painted wooden fences, concrete block walls with black-painted wooden boards attached, black-painted concrete block walls, outer walls with black-painted wooden boards attached, and black-painted outer walls, and fences that imitate Kurobei. A stone pavement was installed by Hachioji City and a private sector organization in 2009-2010.

Figure 7 was created from a base map in 2013 and field work. Figure 7 also uses a date from an interviewing with Hachioji's administrative officers.

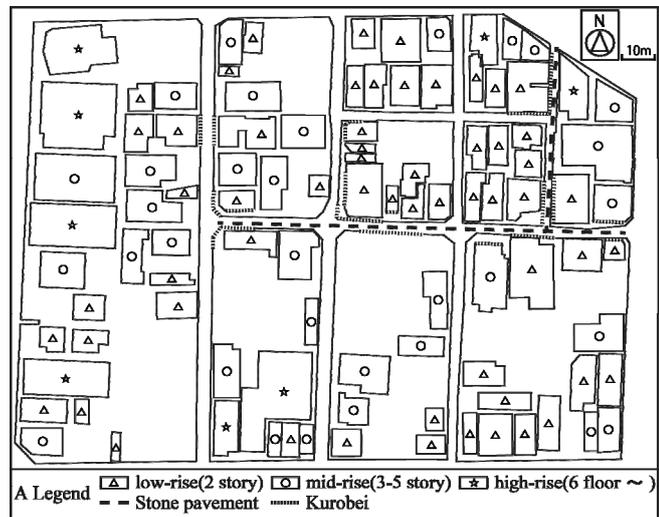


Figure 7 Distribution of building heights, Kurobei, and stone pavements in 2013

### 5-2. Former Kagai buildings

Kagai buildings numbered 42 in 1938 and 45 in the mid-1960s, but had reduced to just three in 2013. However, while the number of Kagai buildings is decreasing, nine former Kagai buildings remain. These include two former Okiya and seven former Machiai (Figure 8).

Former Kagai buildings are characterized by traditional architecture with sophisticated designs and expensive construction. Therefore, the urban landscape in Naka-cho can be improved by preserving the former Kagai buildings.

Figure 8 was created from a base map in 2013 and a Kagai map based on a 1965 housing map. Figure 8 also uses a date from an interviewing with Kagai-interested residents in the Naka-cho area and Hachioji's Geisha.



Figure 8 Distribution of former Kagai buildings in 2013

## 6. Conclusion

The community development of Naka-cho's Kagai began with cultural promotion by Karyukai and a private sector organization. Future development will be largely guided by the opinions of local residents regarding scene maintenance.

The number of Kagai buildings in Naka-cho remained relatively constant from 1938 to the mid-1960s. Most of these Kagai buildings were Machiai. However, only three Kagai buildings remained in 2013, none of which were Machiai. Machiai and Okiya were concentrated in Naka-cho, whereas the Ryoriya were scattered over a wider area. We found that machiai tended to follow Okiya in the 1960s. A different distribution and constitution of the three businesses is observed in the Kagai of the special wards of Tokyo.

Townscape improvement (installing Kurobei and stone pavements) was executed by Hachioji City and a private sector organization in Naka-cho. Among the nine remaining traditional Kagai buildings, two are Okiya and seven are Machiai. Naka-cho's urban landscape will continue to improve by continuing townscape improvement and the preservation of former Kagai buildings.

Notes:

- (1) Kagai buildings are Ryoriya, Machiai, Okiya, and buildings used for Kagai-related purposes.
- (2) Literatures are various maps (base map, housing map, and map of replotted) and reports (about history, management, and life) of Hachioji's Kagai district.
- (3) Figure 5 based on a map of replotted land map, to simplify the external form of buildings.

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