

Land Management and Cadastral Mapping in Japan: A Case Study of Miyake Island

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SUMMARY

In Japan, the Land Tax Reform Ordinance was issued in 1873, starting the cadastral system. This ordinance was mainly for tax purposes, but it also allowed private land ownership.

The registration of land ownership is managed by the Legal Affairs Bureau, which is a local agency of the Ministry of Justice. The cadastral maps made at that time have been kept at the Legal Affairs Bureau and are used as maps under Article 14 of the Real Property Registration Act to verify land locations.

Nowadays, besides the Article 14 map creation projects by the Legal Affairs Bureau under the Real Property Registration Act, cadastral maps made under the National Land Survey Act, planned by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, are also sent to the Legal Affairs Bureau and treated as Article 14 maps. However, many of these maps cannot be treated as Article 14 maps due to not satisfying the required accuracy.

These maps are handled as supplementary maps and only indicate rough land locations. They do not show boundary points, so we practitioners need to collect various maps from different agencies to restore land boundaries numerically. This task requires a lot of effort, as well as deep legal knowledge and experience.

In 2024, the Article 14 map data under the Real Property Registration Act was published in XML format by the Legal Affairs Bureau. This allows boundary points to be known by coordinates.

In areas like central Tokyo with various legal regulations, there are many different types of survey plans.

However, in remote areas, there are few supporting survey plans showing boundaries, making restoration even more difficult.

This report discusses the exploration of boundary markers using GNSS surveying on Miyake Island, a remote place in Tokyo with many neglected lands due to unregistered inheritances.

We conducted this work with the aim of applying the newly established Procedures for Approval of Vesting of Land Ownership Acquired through Inheritance or Bequest in the National Treasury.