



The Revival of Asakusa Entertainment Street and Social Conflicts Since Its Inceptive Point, the Post-war Time

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The humanistic perspective of developments and social conflicts in Asakusa and Times Square: Seung Oh, Satoshi Okada and Fabiola Chrisma Kirana Analisa

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Abstract: Today, religious organizations that have long existed alongside local people are being challenged by social changes in the districts they control. The influence of religious organizations is declining everywhere as locals seeking diversity and economic benefits become more interested in developing projects that attract investors and increase market value instead of opting for conservation. Religions whose moral and philosophical stance rejects materialism have a limited capacity to act as agents of local development in modern society. However, in Tokyo, the city's oldest temple, Senso-Ji played a vital role in the local development of Asakusa, as an entertainment district while nevertheless retaining the area's traditional character, despite almost complete destruction caused by the Tokyo air raids. The temple played a vigorous role as a mediator between the community and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government as a spokesman for common interests. This research, therefore, examines the social conflicts that Senso-Ji has confronted with regard to the pressures of development of Asakusa on the one hand, and the legitimacy of perpetuating its traditional religious and cultural role in local society on the other. First, this article examines Senso-Ji's place in society based on its location in the history of Japanese Buddhism, which existed to offer spiritual and practical help to the ordinary people, and to investigate its social legitimacy as a local stakeholder and historical institution. Second, this paper considers the impact of the social changes that Asakusa had undergone during the Meiji and Taisho eras, by examining the social conflicts and changes in the Asakusa entertainment district, taking the Tokyo Air Raids as the Inceptive Point (IP). Third, it reconsiders how Senso-Ji responded to today's growth-oriented local developments, as proposed by Tokyo's Metropolitan planning authorities along lines commonly seen in all cities. Studying the role of Senso-Ji in the development of Asakusa can serve as a case study to justify the involvement of religious institutions in local issues and as a useful and practical example of progressive development which nevertheless permitted conservation of traditional features, as a result of pressure from social groups in a way that may be useful for other places facing similar problems.

Key words: Development, Buddhism, Conservatism, Social Change, Social Conflict, Humanity AIDS

I. Introduction

Today's growth-oriented development may conflict with religion and its institutions, which have predicated the conservatism of a region. Asakusa (浅草) is Tokyo's well-known entertainment district, with commercial programs and Tokyo's oldest Buddhist temple, where people constantly flock for consumption and rituals. It strives to anchor its urban character by fostering local markets and preserving traditional streets with religious ties. Furthermore, Tokyo has become one of the most progressive cities in the world and is losing its distinctive hierarchy. The city was recognized for the diversity of residents' culture and for building skyscrapers to address density and profit-intense development. Since the Tokyo Air Raids in 1945, it admits that social conflicts occurred throughout the societal changes in Tokyo while the Senso-Ji (浅草寺) garnered the active institution yearning for the conservative character of Asakusa in a most progressive city. (Oh, 2023)

A sect of Pure Land Buddhism (浄土仏教、*jodo shinsyu*), Senso-Ji was first founded in 628 AD in a prominent land recorded the initiation of the temple by the aside of the Sumida River. (Kamimura, 1964) Buddhists has undergone resistance along the trend variations over the years; as Japanese Buddhism shifted its focus of worship from the Kannon to philosophy. (大竹憲治先生還暦記念論文集, 2011) The Pure Land sects also resisted feudal lords in arms to care for ordinary people, which was centered on their philosophy, during the Sengoku period (戦国時代). (Kim, 2019) During the Edo period, Senso-Ji was a thriving Buddhist temple and recreated Asakusa as a center of commerce and leisure that attracted people. During the Meiji era, the Asakusa precincts were influenced by Westernization and were partially reorganized under the directives of the government. (鈴木博之, 1990) Senso-Ji realized that the government had implemented controversial policies, and since the wartime, it has been a passionate social activist representing the Asakusa community.

Throughout human history, there is no doubt that religion has contributed to cultural heritage through tradition and divinity, and is still practiced in local settings today. Asian countries, in particular, make substantial contributions to the region's traditional way of being through existing places of worship, pilgrimage activities that continue to this day, philosophies, educational institutions, and more. (大久保秀子, 2008) Buddhists intended to set village's identity, by establishing the O-teras (寺, -ji), which integrated horizontal and vertical structures with main halls (金堂) and pagodas (塔), representing the faithful's spirits. Furthermore, Japanese Buddhism had the peculiarity of finding the Buddha in nature to build the temple; religious practice was related to the folk life of local people. Due to the activities of the walking Buddha, Hijiri (ヒジリ), people and sacred activities of Buddhists were usually in close proximity. (伊藤唯真, 1984) Therefore, local Buddhist authority came from activities based on history and Buddhist philosophy that centered on village activities to care for people. Religious institutions became increasingly vocal in their efforts to make their presence felt in communities and influence their adherents over time. Governments attempted to weaken religious influence and interfere with faithful to facilitate governance. The Senso-Ji in Asakusa became a religious place of worship and a social contributor to the community throughout the local history to share common benefits.

Since the Taisho (大正) era, people have flocked to urban centers as cities industrialized, government policies increased fluidity of currency, and wars continued. Postwar Japan pushed for macroeconomic development that transformed local neighborhoods through the development of railroads, and the 1950s spurred the development of the "Tokaido metropolis," which dispersed residents and connected major cities by railroads to increase urban sprawl. (Pernice, 2013) Following the success of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka (田中 角栄 1972-1974) also attempted to decentralize the population by developing transportation that allowed for "one-day connections" from Tokyo to anywhere, thus promoting balanced development throughout Japan. (田中 角栄, 2023) With the introduction of urban development to the west of Tokyo, including westward subway system, commercial and entertainment centers such as Nihonbashi, Shinjuku, and Shibuya have developed radically. In contrast, Asakusa, the most developed area in east Tokyo, earlier than westside, witnessed a creeping growth but spurred the restoration of destructed entities by air raids including the main hall and pagoda. While the rest parts of Tokyo conducted progressive development, Asakusa restored the Buddhist temple intact during the same period. It is an example of the polarization between urban progression by massive development projects in Tokyo and conservation in Asakusa by respecting social perceptions based on the historicity of Tokyo's oldest temple, Senso-Ji.

The presence of religious affiliations can be a hindrance to the economic development of the area and the diversity of the incoming population. Religious philosophies and the interests of modern society are hard to reconcile. However, Senso-Ji successfully exerts its influence in managing the Asakusa district to balance economic growth and preserve the established normality of the period. Despite the centralization of Buddhist activity as a philosophical practice over the years, the Asakusa Design Guidelines, which acknowledge Senso-Ji's religious affiliation, still regulate developers. Eventually, Japan's preservation of its traditions and historical sites has led to a tourism policy that capitalizes on its history. (Basic Law for Promotion Tourism Nation, Japan, 2007) Asakusa can serve as a model for all local developments where religious and historical organizations work with the local community to achieve successful development while respecting conservatism. In 1945, the bombing destroyed all of Asakusa, and instead of replanning the area, it was thoroughly restored. (Figure 1) The meaning of restoring the Asakusa precincts after the Inceptive Point (IP) is maximized by succeeding in finding common values between the community and Senso-ji Temple in one of the world's most progressively developed cities, Tokyo. By requiring preservation for development, Asakusa has achieved a progressive local economy and a vibrant society.

II. Research Methodology

This research aims to evaluate Asakusa's development by examining social conflicts centered on the Senso-Ji and Asakusa communities that emerged between the progressive society of Tokyo and local conservatism after wartime. For this purpose, it is important to identify today's Asakusa as a thriving entertainment district in Tokyo to distinguish the conflicts throughout history that contributed and reflected its success. Moreover, it is necessary to establish the temporality of the case study excerpts for the existential method of researching the factual history of the district in a limited period. Asakusa has overflowing social

matters that are intimidated by government and societal tides while passing the periods of history. Among the significant issues that provoked Senso-Ji's changes in its history, this research initiated an insight from the Inceptive Point (IP) that inductively revealed Asakusa's success by overcoming social struggles: the Tokyo Air Raids in 1945, which affirmed the maximized meaning of restoration intact from pounding Asakusa ground as totally destructed area. Therefore, the most significant part of this research methodology is to determine the scale of the necessitated research background: confining the research area of the historical site, extracting conflict cases reflect today's Asakusa, and temporality set along the history of Senso-Ji to evaluate Asakusa's conservative activities amid the progressive socio-environment in Tokyo since IP.

Researching local history reveals the exclusive identity of the area that determines Asakusa as a thriving entertainment district, which distinguished from other districts. History is an important logical basis for establishing the research area of this thesis from the ontological perspective that communities respond to changes in government policy and relate to the social perspective of conservatism as presented by Senso-Ji. Asakusa precincts that the Meiji facilitated as the Asakusa Park with seven precincts included the Senso-Ji as the first precinct (Ikku, 一区), Nakamise-Dori (仲見世通り), the tribute path as the second (Nikku, 二区), Denboun Garden (伝法院庭園) as the third (Sanku, 三区), Hyotan pond (瓢箪池) area as the fourth (Yonku, 四区), Hanyashiki (花やしき) the amusement park area as the fifth (Goku, 五区), the theater street as the sixth (Rokku, ロック, 六区) and the area for residents aside of the Rokku as the seventh precinct (Nanaku, 七区). (Liotta, 2009) Asakusa seven precincts were selected for this research area boundary based on their historical significance derived from disputes over property rights between Senso-Ji's history and Meiji's State Shinto facilitation and Westernization, which influenced the traditional local condition of the precincts. The Taisho's industrialization and the wartime for the Showa government affected the local community of Asakusa in solidarity with Senso-Ji amid the abruptly progressive changes in society after IP.

What is Asakusa's unique value among other historical districts? As a Pure Land sect among Japanese Buddhist temples, Senso-Ji has a unique history since its founding, and in the midst of society, it has not been biased toward orthodox Buddhism, but rather has taken care of the ordinary people according to Buddhist philosophy, transforming its area into a leisure and commercial area to invite people in, and has historically opposed the government and leaned toward the general public. Rather than partially acknowledging these facts, it encompasses the entirety of historical facts drawn from Japanese Buddhism to determine Senso-Ji's unique identity. Obviously, the historical context of the district's case study is critical; in the case of Asakusa, the inherency of Asakusa is evidenced by its history before IP *See Discussion; Japanese Buddhism and its Sociality, Senso-Ji and Society*. Senso-Ji's sociality and legitimacy as a social mediator depends on how the people of Asakusa perceive Senso-Ji. The social influence of Senso-Ji Temple management since the IP has been supported by the Asakusa community, which is evidenced by the sociality of temples and monks for local community and their extraordinary efforts to balance local economic growth with the maintenance of the conservative character of the city.

The Inceptive Point (IP) is the moment of recognition of the researcher's insight into social science research and maximizes the practical context and deliberation. IP is established after the overall research for the subject area because it establishes a beginning point for research to gather historical clues that reflect the thriving consequences of the neighborhood. The researcher presents an evaluation of the subject area based on a factual history that shows social conflict and establishes the starting point of the history that led to the outcome. This is the procedure for presenting insights into this research. The IP of Asakusa for this case study is the Tokyo Air Raid in 1945. See *Inceptive Point (IP)*.

For this study, the scale of social conflict extracted from the entire history of Asakusa is the activity of socially pronounced debates and disagreements that were publicly presented for mediation and mitigation to render Asakusa a successful area. The Yomiuri Journal (読売新聞) is one of the most historical publications that has collected key social conflicts for this study. Asakusa's success can be attributed to the fact that the Asakusa Development Guidelines still regulate development in a way that respects the history and religiosity of Senso-Ji, and that it is an economic activity that respects the diversity that happens on the streets while adhering to a conservatism that contrasts with today's verticality-intense development.

III. Result

In architectural activities, the scale of the project, which limits such the work area, scope of work, and punch list, is the most essential dimension for architects to solve problems and develop different forms of design. The challenge of this study was to understand the scale and temporality of the issues that have been raised between religious organizations, residents, and governments in the region for centuries. The setting temporality for the relentlessly passed time allowed to find out the existential value of Senso-Ji and its influential region with its Buddhist history, because the region's uniqueness is found from its historicity. Moreover, the scale of the conflict shows the extent to which Senso-Ji's social activities were involved, especially in the postwar period. Today, the reaction of studying Asakusa's prosperity based on the social negativity found in local history has become a counterpoint to the conservative stance of Senso-Ji against the progressive social environment set by the government, which determined the scale of social change. It is the art of countervailing history with the negatives that have the progression. Despite Senso-Ji's stance against the General Headquarter (GHQ) and the Japanese government, the precincts of Senso-Ji and Asakusa were restored intact, with no replanning of the area. Restoring the neighborhood after the war, amidst the political turmoil of bombed-out areas, has given the community a reason to adhere to its conservative urban character.

IV. Discussion

Japanese Buddhism and its Sociality

Buddhism was introduced to Japan in 6th Century, earlier than the Nara (奈良) period. (Das, 2020) Among the various theories about the introduction of Buddhism to Japan, it is believed that Kannon statues were brought to northern Kyushu by nobles and monks as part of the overall exchange between Baekje and Japan; this is the most likely explanation that friendly traded each other during the Japanese Asuka (飛鳥)

period and the reign of King Muryeong of Baekje (LÁZÁR, 2021). Of course, Buddhism on the Baekje, the Korean peninsula was influenced by Chinese Buddhism, with these monks being sent to Japan to interact with Buddhist teachers and students of the Buddhist vows. By the Heian (平安) period, Heian-Kyo (平安京), now Kyoto, became the capital of country in tie between Buddhism and government of the Kammu Tenno (桓武天皇). (Britannica.com) The early Heian period has already witnessed the construction of numerous temples under Tenno's policies, including gateway and landmark temples designating the east and west sides of Heian-Kyo, To-Ji (東寺), and Sai-Ji (西寺). (Plutschow, 1979) Kyoto's famous temples, main halls, and pagodas, such as Todai-Ji (東大寺, 738) and Byodo-In (平等院, 1052), were built by aristocrats and monks during the same period. Initially, Buddhism was practiced by and centered on monks, local daimyos, and upper-class nobles. However, the faith spread among the people over time and influenced civilians in Japan. (Nishi and Hozumi, 1985)

Buddhist rituals began with worship centered around pagodas, sacred structures that housed the relics at the bottom of core pillar and symbolized ancient Buddhism. (Soper, 1940) The position of the Pagoda as a vertical representation of divinity and an object of Buddhist devotion changed over time. (小泉和子, 2019) The core pillar, the Shinbashira (心柱, Figure 2.1), connecting to the Sorin as the peak of the Pagoda, with perfect symmetry for all sides of the Pagoda, was the earlier Buddhist's structural concept to represent the grave of the Shakyamuni and his divinity. The Pagoda, where the image of Buddha or the relics was enshrined in the earlier periods, even invited people to worship closer instead of distancing people from the Buddha by the surrounding roof built later. The painting decoration and sculpture of Deity were articulating activities to express the Buddha's superiority and the monk's spirituality decorated inside of Pagoda. In Nara-era Buddhism, the interior space of a temple was not designed for people to enter, as the volume of space inside the hall was limited to the placement of Deities. (Figure 3.1) The Houryu-Ji (法隆寺), which was built in the Nara Period, was the first temple to be architecturally expressed with the main hall's significance leveled by the Pagoda (<https://www.horyuji.or.jp/en/garan/>, Inoue, 1985); the proportion of the main hall became almost square by placing the Deity of Buddha in the rear center for stronger symmetry of structure and to invite faithful under the structure. (Figure 4.2) As time passed, the object of worship shifted from the Pagoda to the doctrinal center, and in the case of Mahayana Buddhism in particular, to preach the six realms of Buddhist philosophy to the faithful. (大竹憲治, 2011) The shift from simple votive offerings in front of the Pagoda to philosophy-centered instruction has also led to skepticism about considering the Pagoda as an object of worship. In the case of Hongan-Ji (本願寺) in Kyoto, the size of the main hall overwhelmed both pagodas and ample space was created in the front center of the temple area so that the public could face the Buddha's Deity under the main hall structure. (Figure 4.1 小泉和子, 2019)

After the Heian period, the disruption of politics from Kamakura and Muromachi shogunates tensed out the nation, and the Daimyos turmoiled the nation with civil war during the Sengoku Period (1454? ~1605). Japan's politics were chaotically influenced by various religious sects of Buddhism, which derived disputes and disagreements among its denominations and Catholicism. The common people and local merchants, who had

become economically enriched by commercial activities, rebelled against the actual ruling class in solidarity with the monks of the Pure Land sect of Japanese Buddhism, which organized their arms in the Etchu and Kaga regions. These Ikko-itki (一向一揆, Buddhist Militants), who were closely informed and supported by the common people, were the most powerful force against the feudalistic government until Toyotomi Hideyoshi's occupation of Ishiyama Hongan-Ji, the mother base of Ikko-itki. Oda Nobunaga became friendly with Western-style Catholic priests to adapt the force against these Buddhist militants and engaged the monks of the Lotus sect (法華經) and the Pure Land sect in a doctrinal dispute in an attempt to thwart the Buddhist forces. This event, which ultimately led to the decline of the Lotus sect, is known as the Azuchi Sect Theory, 安土宗論. (Kim, 2019) This was a time in Japanese history when the conflict between the military force of Japanese lords and Buddhism was at its most intense, and Buddhism sided with the people.

Since ancient times, Buddhist places of worship have been found in nature, such as rivers and mountains, where statues of Kannon have been found, indicating the shaman who built the temples. (Yasumoto, 1962) The story depicts the building of Kannon statues and temples, the system of which is more friendly and in line with the ordinary people of the village, as opposed to the steady spread of Buddhism in Japan by the aristocracy as a ruling strategy. By looking at the interaction of Buddhism and ordinary village life, it is possible to understand how close Buddhist monks were to the people. In the case of Senso-Ji, the monks were scattered in villages outside the temple, living in close to the temple. (光井 渉, 2001, Figure 8) Monks and people shared beliefs and information at close range. The monks' devotion was inseparable from village life, and it's clear that monks and their followers tended to live in close proximity to one another. (鹿児島経済大学、1984) In addition, Hijiri's activities, which centered on Buddhism and approached the common people to serve as walking Buddha, broke down the boundaries between spiritual and secular, noble and commoner, and created a harmonious faith in the village. (伊藤唯真, 1984) Japanese Buddhism carried the spirituality based on Buddhist philosophy for caring for people in the turmoil of social implementation throughout periods since the Buddhist settlement in Japan, and common people rated Buddhism as the most likable religion in history.

Senso - Ji and Society

The beginning of Senso-Ji is well-known to have been a folk activity based on existential Buddhism. The local setting, the Sumida River, flows a side of Senso-Ji to the east, and the activities and buildings on both sides of the river have been described by many writers and artists since the Edo period. The Kannon, the statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva that fishermen caught and brought from the Sumida River and their reverence for it became the beginning of Senso-Ji, the center of Asakusa's religious and commercial district. (推古天皇 36 年 628, <https://www.senso-ji.jp/>) Unlike the conventional history of Buddhism in authority, which was spread through monks and aristocrats around the Heian-Kyo beginning in the Nara periods, Senso-Ji's beginnings are grounded in the locality of everyday life aforementioned the image of Buddha found by ordinates from the nature.

Essential objects of worship in Japanese Buddhism are represented architecturally: the pagoda, where monks store the relics left behind when their bodies are incinerated after death, and the image of Buddha from the earlier periods, and the main hall, which enshrines the original image of Kannon for later Buddhism and people's rituals. (Kamimura, 1964) Senso-Ji has these two essential structures to represent the divinity of Pure Land Buddhists and is occupied with demonstrating its monasteries and inviting faithful. Actually, the towers of temples, visible from afar, represented the center of civilian life and the urban hierarchy and symbolized the town before modernization in Japan. (西田雅嗣, 2013) An important change in temple architecture occurred in the main hall, as the Buddhist doctrine preached to them became more critical than structures representing divinity. The main hall proportionally enlarged the frontage and rear side and, in almost 1:1 proportion, placed the Deity statue in the center, and the faithful and tourists occupied the interior for respect. (Figure 4.2) In this way, temple architecture incorporated with philosophy-oriented Buddhism has reconfigured the temple space as a religious significance; eclecticism has been applied to incorporate the divinity and the trends of the times.

Nakamise-Dori, the straight path from Kaminari-mon (雷門) built in 927 A.D. to the main hall of Senso-Ji Temple is called Tribute Road (工良路), and it was the way for worshippers to reach Kannon in the main hall (観音の本堂). Imbued with religious significance, many people walked to the main hall for dedication, and as a believer, it was a way to walk to the gods while refining their appearance and mind. (能地克宜, 2017) In the Christian faith, the road to God is often analogized to the life of a believer, and spirituality and secularity are interpreted to be separate, leading to the prohibition of commercial activities near church parishes. (Grierson, 1958) In contrast, in post-medieval Japanese Buddhism, the tribute path to Senso-Ji have been transformed for commercial and leisure use. Nakamise-dori and the Rokku was a path that expected commercial activities by flowing movement to the main hall instead of stagnant activity like plazas. Even in the medieval streets of Europe, stagnant movement was formed at the plaza as the intersection of paths, and the role of the plaza was a public space where meetings and leisure activities took place. (Kurokawa, 1991) The plaza's role was vital, as it opened to view activities from streets at the plaza where the streets intersected. From the Edo period onward, Hyotan Pond in Asakusa was an open space where religious activities leading up to Senso-Ji and the activities of Rokku and Hanayashiki could be seen at a glance. (Figure 5.3) As such, Asakusa's precincts were areas where straightly aligned street programs and park spaces were harmonized even before its modernization.

Since its initial establishment, the Asakusa with Senso-Ji has suffered extensive destruction through four wars and a series of disasters, with the Tokyo Air Raid of 1945 causing damage throughout all precincts of Asakusa Park. (能地克宜, 2017) Although the Japanese government had the right to redesign the city devastated by the bombing, the entire Asakusa Park around Senso-Ji was restored intact. By the Shinto Directive, 神道指令, the GHQ took an execution with the Showa government to eradicate the military and nationalism-politics from the Shinto; This worked for returning the ownership of Asakusa Park to Senso-Ji. (Ikehata, 2013) The authority of Senso-Ji, which had transcended community politics and upheld historical conservatism, was not derived solely from doctrine or philosophy. People's reverence centered on the history of Senso-Ji and sociality representing community is the source of its authority. It is therefore essential to study the influence of Senso-Ji

in Asakusa in the context of today's rapid development, with its growing political role and frictions to preserve conservatism in religious history.

Asakusa, Tokyo Metropolitan, Japan

Japan's government system had long been the Shogunate feudalism, with one commander in charge of governance serving the Tenno (天皇) and people before the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Around the 7th century (the Yayoi 弥生 era), Shinto was witnessed as the religion for serving their God, 神, mostly found in nature. The Shinto ritual site was developed throughout Japan and allowed people to serve Shintoism as their religion from that era. Nature organically resembled the architecture to build the Jinja, which was the language to express the beauty of its existence and god's notion. (Teeuwen, 2007) Since Meiji proclaimed the State Shinto of Japan, it led to the separation between Shinto and Buddhism 神仏分離. It confiscated all public properties, including the Buddhist temple's precinct areas, for being Japan under the Tenno-centered government. (Hotta, 2012) Moreover, it had also applied to all religious establishments with their properties until the Shinto directives by the end of the war.

During the Westernization, European architects participated in remodeling the city by visiting cities in Japan. They criticized the obscurity of building lines for distinguishing the interior and exterior, the difficulty of securing the private area, and shutting down the outdoor mechanism. (Hein, 2010) In response to the criticism, the city abruptly began to change the streets by building institutional buildings and cultural landmarks in Tokyo, with heavier materials than the Japanese long-time preferred indigenous architectural materials. These buildings were erected with bricks-veneer, stones, and vertical conveying technology for higher floors. In Asakusa, there had been western style entertainment buildings and institutions were built and changed the city scape. (藤森照信, 1999, Figure 5.2) Before the Meiji era, primary social programs and architectural entities that dominated the heights of human activity were castles 城 built for military and political purposes during the Sengoku period and Buddhist pagodas 塔. These expressed the authority of the ruler or religion, were objects of worship, and also represented the characteristic of the town and the objects of people's attention. A notable change in Westernization was the transformation of hierarchy in the city center: once, there were only Buddhist symbol spires, the Sorin of pagoda against the sky. Post-Meiji Tokyo has been forced to embrace the diversity of traditional and Western verticality. (鈴木博之, 1990) Commercial residents of Nakamise-dori were forced to move out in order to westernize the exterior with brick facades. Yoshiwara, a red-light district, was expelled from its long-occupied area to the northwest of Asakusa by government order to liquidate substandard businesses and implement some social westernization exercises. (読売新聞, 1875, 1948) Japanese society and its corresponding commerce and recreation activities had strived even before Westernization; the city activities were placed by the long-time occupants of the area based on their habitual interests. These streets were occupied by houses, stores, and religious institutions, destroyed by disasters and wartimes, and persistently restored. Also, the Senso-Ji in Asakusa existed after restorations over times of many natural disasters and wars to occupy with neighbors and the faithful. The vernacular materials for the Japanese traditional architecture, which had built Shinto Jinjas, Buddhist temples, and habitable units, intended the advantage of today's Japanese

light constructions in the rapid restorations of the destructions during its geo-political matters over the periods. The urban development by Westernization should have riveted with logic to persuade the occupants instead of the abrupt conduct of government.

In 1894, the Bank of Japan was established with the purpose of resetting the national economic systems after activating the new currency, the Japanese Yen (New Currency Act of Japan, 1871), and supporting the municipal government by overthrowing pre-existed government infrastructure 廃藩置県, to the prefectural municipalities which contained the adjustment of currency liquidity for finance and of market prices under the central government supervision. (Shizumi, 2017) The infrastructure projects incurred in the interior of the Honshu area were developed to transport the war supply along its directions. They implemented local public transportation to invite regional customers to Asakusa. (東京人, 2008) The Japanese war policy led to a consequence of financial and socio-economic changes and influenced private enterprises. (Noguchi, 1998) During Japan's war, the policy of forcibly relocating civilians was implemented, 強制疎開 in 1944, to select densely populated areas to avoid intensive bombardment. At this time, the Mitomo-Kan (三友館, Figure 5.1), located in the Rokku, Asakusa, was forced to close. (越澤 明, 1991) After the war, the France-za (フランス座), a cultural theater, opened on the same site. Definitely, the Japanese wars at the beginning of the 1900s influenced the private businesses in Asakusa and Japan. During wartime since westernization, the Japanese government exercised the political power to control the community and also affected the Asakusa entertainment district.

Inceptive Point (IP)

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan fought and won international expeditionary wars during Western expansion to the East (against the Qing Empire and Russia). From 1942 onward, the Pacific War directly hit Japan's mainland, and the country suffered heavy losses. In order to facilitate the transportation of war supplies, railroads and transportation in the Honshu region were developed, and reorganizing finance and businesses was made as the government's intention to finance the war budget and industrial development. (Noguchi, 1998) The attack on Pearl Harbor marked the entry of the United States into the war, directly hitting Japan's largest cities and destroying 40% of the country. The U.S. B-29s used incendiary palm bombs to attack Japan, a strategy of fire attack that targeted Japan's wooden construction. It swept the bombed area entirely. On the other hand, it took advantage of rebuilding the destroyed area quickly based on Japanese light construction and financial support from the government.

The controversial governance of Japan caused social conflicts with Senso-Ji of Asakusa. The Showa 昭和 government was criticized for dual rule by forming the GHQ in solidarity with the Americans who were bombing the country. The government established the brothels to fulfill the demands of American soldiers throughout Japan; ironically, it was ever ordered to purge the Yoshiwara from its area. Taxation increased after the war to pay for subway and housing construction with infrastructure rehabilitation. It caused inflation for prices to rise. (Shavell, 1948) However, the government's failed provision of sufficient housing and subsidizing

daily necessities delayed the restoration of people's lives after the air raids, so massive housing was constructed by the private sector. (Ono, 2017) These contradictory government policies amid postwar restoration prompted Senso-Ji to protest against the Japanese government, which committed spoiled leadership in solidarity with the GHQ.

The bombing of Tokyo becomes the IP for Asakusa's local stance towards conservatism after the war. For the people who flocked to Asakusa in search of work, the tramps who lost their livelihoods, and the street vendors, these social problems and the government's response became pressing issues. Cultural businesses such as movies, Eros, and Strip Shows replaced traditional theaters in Asakusa and sought to capitalize on profits as the cultural trends changed, leading to Rokku Street's change. (読売新聞, 1946) The government's rationing of necessities, which needed to be funded by a modest tax increase, was supported by Machikai (町会) to help the community. (読売新聞, 1946) The war-destroyed Senso-Ji Temple was left unrestored for six years. However, the Senso-Ji exercised social influence against the government; it supported monks' resistance against the pro-American government and protected the interests of street vendors who flocked to Asakusa for their initial life support. The development of media and diversifying people's interests led Asakusa to introduce new cultural projects for Hyotan Pond. Senso-Ji and Pagoda, destroyed by the bombing in 1945, were reconstructed gradually after the Shinto directives, during 1951 until 1973. As such, the post-war restoration of Asakusa succeeded in gaining the attention of the private sector as a religious institution in defiance of the government; this was not simply due to religious sentiment or tradition.

The reconstruction of cities entirely destroyed by war, the IP, has justified government intervention to bring in new infrastructure and to people's lives in social matters. Since no city was perfect, replanning for new social development after a war or significant fire, where the previous condition was reconsidered and shortcomings were made up for, had been practiced throughout the ages. (Diefendorf, 2009) As mentioned earlier, all of Asakusa Park's precincts, owned by the government at the time of IP, were restored by respecting their pre-existing programs, even though the central government and the Metropolitan of Tokyo had the justification to replan for new neighborhoods and to take down the role of Senso-Ji. The reconstruction of the pre-existing Asakusa after the war, designated as the IP in 1945, maximized its significance by restoring the authority of tradition and religion beyond the role of big government.

Turmoiled Society After the IP

Right after the war, Senso-Ji monks collided with the Japanese government by protesting against the American-established General Headquarters (GHQ, 連合国軍最高司令部) for the occupation alliance, the formal opponent of the war that enraged the area with the massacre through air raids. (讀賣新聞, 1945) It was apparently rioted against the Japanese government that neglected to count Japanese victims and turned the stance to be dependent on the Americans. Before the modernized media broadcasted news, people relied upon the radio and the news flyers (チラシ) flowed on the street, but if the anti-America papers were found, they enforced the law a penalty. The Japanese government and the GHQ co-joined to exercise post-war governance

with unilateral stance. Instead, Senso-Ji criticized the Japanese government for valuing its ties with the United States more than supporting its people. After the IP, the government's role in subsidizing local governments' massive budgets to support people in emergencies grew. However, the significance of Senso-Ji's protest during a period of American policy aimed at influencing the defeated nation of Japan was maximized because it occurred in the midst of people's total reliance on the government to help them cope with life after the war. Moreover, the ownership of Asakusa Park still belonged to the government, and Senso-Ji struggled to expand its affection to people who primarily relied upon governmental support. Nevertheless, Senso-Ji had a straight attitude to check the Japanese government allied with GHQ for the people of Asakusa, and it was still in charge on their behalf as the religious institution.

In 1946, the Yomiuri media raised the dispute over the origin of the Kannon and whether it still existed and was enshrined in Senso-Ji of Asakusa; aforementioned, the dispute between the Lotus and Pure Land Buddhism, which Oda Nobunaga opened in similarity. (*See Discussion: Japanese Buddhism and its Sociality*) As the area of Asakusa had been disruptively demolished by the series of unfortunate events such as the Great Fire, earthquake, and Air Raid over its history, the dispute held by the several leading monks from Shinjuku Senso-Ji, Asakusa Senso-Ji, and historians raising the question if the Kannon of the Asakusa Senso-Ji was the original statue that the Senso-Ji had carried over 1,000 years.

Obviously, the divinity of ritual ceremony in Senso-Ji relied on this Kannon's origin. Three parties rose to dispute their idea about the origin of the Kannon in the Asakusa, Senso-Ji in Shinjuku, Senso-Ji of Asakusa, and a chief monk who represented the Imado campus. Initially, the Kannon was built as a gold statue of about 4 square centimeters, and its principal image has been preserved in Chosho-Ji in Imado Cho since the Nara period. However, a big fire about 200 years ago blew away the temples where the Kannon enshrined, and a monk transported the image of Kannon from the Rokugo clan of Akita Prefecture, which was rebuilt in 1930; Mr. Ichimaru Danjo (市丸団治) to represent the Shinjuku campus of Senso-Ji insisted. However, The Chief of Chosho-Ji, Imado's campus insisted that the Kannon in the Asakusa was the original Kannon, which was intact without any disturbance. The original Asakusa Temple (本家浅草寺) claimed the origin of the Kannon statue was found in a wood-carved statue from the Beckjae dynasty, and during the fire, this original statue disappeared. Senso-Ji is a temple practicing traditional Buddhist rituals and is recognized for its religious and historical significance. The provenance of Kannon can be a sensitive issue for Senso-Ji. The orthodoxy of Senso-Ji Buddhism is based on the fact that Senso-Ji Temple in Asakusa is the oldest Buddhist temple in Tokyo, and has hosted Buddhists for over 1,000 years, emphasizing tradition and faith, and if the origins of Kannon are fabricated, the orthodoxy of Kannon will be devalued.

With advice from the GHQ, the Japanese government set an urgent policy for rebuilding three hundred thousand apartment units per year after the war but failed to provide sufficient numbered units. Even since the government armed the politics for recovery by lowering the interests to release the capital fluidity, the recovery had not satisfied reconditioning the ruins in budgets. So, private sectors took advantage of lower

interest rates to provide numerous housing units for war recovery. The provision of daily necessities in emergencies failed until the recovery of logistic-infrastructure conditions after the war. The civic organizations called "Machikai, 町会" were actively performing social support to the civilians after the war to support them with the daily necessities and food that the National government could not fulfill the outnumbered demands. (読売新聞, 1946) The civic support on behalf of the Asakusa was pronounced with such organizations, the Women's Organization (浅草おかみさん会), which social networks for sharing ideas for raising their children and the social requests and reports for their husbands doing business in Asakusa's precinct area. (読売新聞, 1946, 1972) Also, the Asakusa organization (浅草会) attempted to elongate the Ginza subway Line (銀座線) to the Asakusa Station for more intensity in the Asakusa area. (読売新聞, 1973) The businesses of Asakusa began relying on the delocalized customers reached by the subways since the Ginza line, which connects Asakusa and Tokyo station, was established in 1927. (東京人, 2008) Even though these organizations' purposes were not entirely bound with what the Senso-Ji acclaimed for the opposition against the government, the civic organizations, Machikai, established their goodness as the purpose, found out the social grips, and garnered activities with the involvement of the local traditional festivals (お祭り), social networks of business and children education, and the urban planning reviews.

No sign showed that Asakusa had a chance of rebuilding all seven precincts in its jurisdiction in prior condition until the subway was restored. Transit laborers sparked the labor minimum wage increase through a series of strikes and cut the visitors in Asakusa; as in the similar case of disasters and depression in the United States in 1929, the laborers that organized their social power demonstrated benefits by social protest and overwhelmed the political grips manifested in their society. However, the union's protest to ease out for the approval as their requests sent to politicians had not been supported by the local business occupants and the Senso-Ji because it affected the business when they cut the area for their protests. The labor union activities leaned on politics, which had shown less interest to local people who struggled with their business and commuting. The labor unions' strike insisted on their favor, like raising the minimum wages, which had to move politics and intimidated Asakusa's local economy by cutting the subways' visiting customers. The subway laborers union's interests completely opposed the Asakusa communities and lost their support.

Around the Yoshiwara, a traditional red-light district, the Senso-Ji garnered policy that was possibly contrary to their belief in religion for accepting Yoshiwara at the northwest side of the Asakusa area; it left the area, which occupied for hundreds of years in the Edo period, due to the big fire in 1875. (読売新聞, 1875) The sincerity of Buddhism might challenge Tokyo's most prominent Buddhist institution, inviting substandard occupants to a side of it from a religious perspective and how the Buddhists would treat the red-light district. However, based on the philosophy, the six realms of Buddhism 六派哲學, which had turned to become the most teachable theory in Mahayana Buddhism 大勝仏教 to dominant faiths as passing the periods, the compassion among the principles dealt with people experiencing poverty and victims of hard times and accepted them in care. American soldiers became the demands of the sexual businesses in Rokku, including Asakusa, where a series of strip performances took place. As aforementioned, the Japanese government ironically

established official brothels for sexuality distribution to American Soldiers after purging Yoshiwara. (Kramm, 2017) During the war, the lost businesses around Asakusa had no choice but to invite customers in, even if they were sub-standard businesses like Eros and Strips, which occupied the Rokku until it was replaced after the Shinto directives, and these businesses faced no opposition in Senso-Ji.

While the Japanese government's role in war reconstruction was growing, Senso-Ji's role was to accommodate businesses as much as possible on its grounds without exclusion; that also helped to finance Senso-Ji. Even though it challenged the orthodoxy of Senso-Ji as the religious center for Buddhism, the favor of Asakusa speculated the respect to Senso-Ji that conducted its social activities on behalf of people rather than its Buddhist sincerity on faith. Buddhism's emphasis on divine philosophy over religious ritual and practical civic activities ensured it could win the people's support amidst the post-war government's policy of controversy and unilaterality. The people's passion for Asakusa's development was articulated through the activities of residents' organizations, as shown in pushing forward the extension of the Ginza subway line to Asakusa. As such, Asakusa has been able to maintain its commercial and cultural intensity due to its respect for Senso-Ji Temple and the involvement of residents in social programs for the development of the area.

Senso-Ji and Business during the Modernization

Based on the six-fold philosophy, Buddhist activity practiced compassion, sympathy for ordinary people in hardship, and non-attachment to the wealthy greed. (Yeelsai, 2019) Supporting the faith through various activities in care and rituals and protesting against the government was the foundation of Japanese Buddhism for centuries, especially in disaster and war. (*See Discussion: Japanese Buddhism and its Sociality*) Therefore, it was not doctrinally easy for Buddhist institutions to engage directly in business or local development for profit. After the Shinto directive, ownership of the Asakusa Park was returned to Senso-Ji. (Breen, 2010) It came up with selling the partial property of Asakusa Park to a local developer, whom the brokerage invited, expected to cover the budget for recovering the destructed Senso-Ji's religious entities in Asakusa by the Air Raid, to calculate local progression as an intensified area for business and to receive offerings in return of the business operator. However, Senso-Ji experienced friction in selling his partial property, Hyotan pond (瓢箪池), and exposed weaknesses in participating in actual business.

In 1951, Senso-Ji finally decided to sell the partial area of Hyotan Pond, which had a direct view of the Rokku intensified by people enjoying cultural and commercial programs. (Figure 5.3) When Senso-Ji decided to sell this partial property, there was a conflict in the temple organization; 日比野繁雄 Hibino Shigeo San, who took charge of selling the partial property, caused trouble in the brokerage. The deal that caused the problem was that Senso-Ji sold the property to Shigeo San, known as a special faithful of Senso-Ji, for 300 million yen, and he took the procedure of hiring the real estate broker to deal with the development company for 450 million yen in differentiating the value of the deal. The Senso-Ji refused to yield the title of the subject area to the development company and accused Shigeo San of being inappropriate in making the business out of the divine property. (読売新聞, 1951) Because, Senso-Ji realized that these two parties, Shigeo San and the development

company, were turning the temple's property into a business for private profit. Still, the Senso-Ji real estate selling case was closed by handing the title to the development company after the local court's legal settlement procedure. (読売新聞, 1951) A recreation center called The New World (新世界, Figure 6) was proposed in the subject area in 1959. This recreation center was expected to bring new economic revival and cultural vitality to Asakusa, which was stagnating as even Eros and Strip shows had lost popularity. However, surprisingly, The New World failed to gain popularity in a short period of operating its business, too. This groundbreaking project allowed people to enjoy various recreational activities and dining in a seven-story building. Unfortunately, the New World Recreation Center was socially defamed in the media for losing intensity and as the place where a few people committed suicide. According to the opinion, the spread of television led to the failure of the entertainment business. The penetration rate of television in the 1960s and 70s skyrocketed (85% in 1965, Keiko, 2003), letting people enjoy their channels at home instead of visiting the cultural entertainment center. A new building for the Japan Racing Association (JRA, Figure 6) was built where the New World was demolished; it literally retreated to the government association for its program. An attempt to implement Senso-Ji Asakusa through newly proposed cultural projects such as the New World was unsuccessful due to a misreading of media trends.

Additionally, media developments, as televisions and movies, were diagnosed as the cause of Asakusa's Rokku district, the Theater District, losing its influence and subverting the character and intensity typical of its longtime cultural clientele. Starting in 1950, Japan's theatrical theaters were already experiencing a deficit. People diversified their interests in cultures that were becoming increasingly prominent internationally, as the war and postwar restoration caused inflation in various items, resulting in expensive theater tickets that were taxed. (読売新聞, 1957) In the five to six years after the war ended in 1945, Japan's entertainment business ever reached such a peak that Tokyo was called the city of theaters. Theatrical theaters developed programs that suited people's tastes, abandoning traditional plays such as Engeki and performing Western-style plays such as opera. After the war, Asakusa, which was managed by a religious institution representing Tokyo, was already experiencing the decadence of its theaters and caused a religious contradiction by allowing an Eros-Strip Show through business-oriented women for American soldiers. With the activation of Shinto directives, the theater district traded properties to commercial developers to transform the street of Rokku into a modern mixed-use street.

Tokyo's oldest amusement park, Hanayashiki 花やしき, was built in 1853, and since then a series of private companies have been invited to manage the park, with Sudacho Shokudo (須田町食堂) taking over in 1939. Due to the war and the government's evacuation 強制疎開 in 1944, the amusement park was not in a proper state to function and attract tourists. Hanayashiki is a state-owned park, and due to ownership of government, the site was designated as an occupied site without permission. (Historical chronology, hanayashiki.net) To reorganize the socio-economic setting in Japan, the GHQ and Japanese government called out the dissolution of the Japanese financial business to reorganize the Japanese enterprises and investments; businesses and the Bank of Japan were tied tighter than pre-war, management and ownership tended to be

separated and unionizing the laborers preferred. (Haghirian, 2016) At the time of the war, all vacant lots and parks were owned by the prefectural government, but Hanayashiki partnered with private companies to restore them. Following BANPRESTO's business reorganization, the Bandai Namco, an entertainment company, has been in charge of restoration and management since 2008. (bandainamco.co.jp) Senso-Ji, which owns the land, charges the company a certain amount of contributions each month.

The controversy and irony happened to the Asakusa area in a turbulent socio-environment after IP when Senso-Ji collided with the government in profit marketing and ownership trading. As mentioned, the Sensō-Ji protested to GHQ, basically turning against America, their enemy in the war. However, the GHQ has proposed the Shinto directives that would ultimately transfer ownership of Asakusa Park to the inherent owner, Senso-Ji. On the other hand, the fifth precinct area, Hyotan Pond, was eventually reoccupied by the government association, the JRA, by failing the business of the recreational center after the Shinto directives. After the IP, Japan encountered typical changes in cultural trends, industries, and customer favoritism, but the business community witnessed the changes more keenly than Senso-Ji, which housed a wide range of companies in precincts from holding companies to substandard business. Therefore, the religious institution's role for Asakusa was to invite the local businesses in its precinct area, let them work at their discretion, and collect the dedication instead of conducting the actual business.

Asakusa along the Modern Trends

The decision to preserve local traditions and the orthodoxy of a particular religion, rather than pushing new programs and revamped urban design in existing urban areas, has resulted in neighborhoods that are distinctly different in character from those that have developed more homogeneously in recent years. The scale of value gains through preservation by the homage it entails to the existing community and requires persuading new residents to have the patience to withhold the progressivity. Preservation also shows that an area has dedicated itself to preserving at least some of the character that has manifested throughout its development history before evaluating the economic and political consequences. Mobilizing investment to construct new buildings or market new businesses is at the discretion, outcome, and competence of the developer, whereas preservation is about protecting existing communities and their historic fabric, rather than transforming it, and is not easily assessed by the economic growth of the area. In the case of Asakusa, however, the results of the preservation of the conservative character that Senso-Ji inherited from the Edo period were publicly announced through various media to attract tourists, and the increased density of the area for economic benefit was socially mediated by local government and religious institutions.

Pony Tower (ポニータワー, completed in 1967), a vertical structure built to attract tourists in Asakusa to the observation deck, became another failed venture following the twelve-story, Ryouunkaku. In the area, it was difficult to find a sufficient space for a parking lot accessible to tour buses, and legal action was taken against the developer for protruding the structure beyond the lot line. Eventually, it was demolished at the same time when Senso-Ji's pagoda was restored in 1973. (讀賣新聞、1973) The Pony Tower was located on the

precincts of Asakusa, and despite significant investment from private companies, including Fujifilm, it was a commercial failure. (president.jp, 2018) The other criticism was that the structure, incompatible with Asakusa's inherent character, led to unbearable awkwardness and failed to attract customers despite the city's numerous subway lines. Businesses that involved innovation with vertical structure in the Asakusa precincts, such as the Ryouunkaku, The New World, and Poni Tower, mainly were unsuccessful.

In 1973, the bombing-torn pagoda of Asakusa Senso-Ji was completely restored. During restoration, controversy arose over using aluminum for the peak (Sorin) on top of the five-storied pagoda. (読売新聞、1973) The previous three and five pagodas used mainly bronze for the Sorin, an essential part of purifying the monks' minds and symbolizing heaven for Buddhists. Of course, a temple might be able to find the best materials that resemble traditional temple techniques but are also waterproof or lightning-proof with advanced materials in budget. However, it was concerned about using aluminum for Senso-Ji, Tokyo's oldest temple. Aluminum is known for being an inexpensive and malleable metal that can be severely weathered, unlike bronze, the metal traditionally used for the most Buddhist significant parts of Senso-Ji's pagoda. (読売新聞、1973)

The goal of preserving Asakusa Rokku is to restore the Art Deco style popularly featured in characterizing modernism by Westernization when the street was most populated. Over time, Asakusa pushed for the revival of Asakusa with each new project, but most of them succeeded, except for Rokku and Nakamise-dori in the Asakusa precincts. The current shopping malls at Rokku do not represent the cultural uniqueness of Asakusa; they merely exist as a commercial means to gain consumers on crowded streets. The early 1900s was a time of prosperity for Asakusa, when the commercial and cultural districts of Rokku were crowded with people who preferred its inherent characters and programs, and the city's architectural value is rooted in that era. In recent years, the direction of Rokku's preservation has been set toward reviving its most prosperous period, with a stringency on developer discretion under the Asakusa Design Guidelines. (浅草ロッキ地区、台東区、2019) Memories of Rokku's prosperous days helped create the preservative regulation that developers can refer to when reviving nostalgic characters from the pre-war era.

Recent regional developments have prioritized economic growth and a culturally changing society, and Tokyo and its surrounding neighborhoods, in particular, have partially facilitated attempts to change Asakusa's adherence to preservation, regardless of its size. However, Asakusa is changing to keep pace with modern development trends, rather than relying solely on tradition. The changes mainly take place at the ground level. Commercial districts on the Kaminarimon-dori are attempting outdoor cafes. Moreover, Orange Street is reminiscent of Portugal's Pink Street (Rua Nova do Carvalho, Portugal). However, the fact that cars drive on roads painted orange reduces the practicality of the color design. Orange Street also has lighted bays to encourage nighttime activity, but unlike other parts of the Asakusa area, the retail shops mostly occupied on Orange Street close earlier than restaurants because they merchandise the goods, not restaurants. In the 1960s, Asakusa's cultural businesses failed as TV became more popular and cultural adaptation programs increased, but nowadays, comedy shows from Asakusa's France-za (フランス座) have begun to be broadcast on TV and

social media. (Figure 7) Therefore, Asakusa has proven that no matter how preferred the spatial environment is for commerce, if business owners cannot adapt to the new commerce or are unprepared for change, they will fail. Asakusa's Senso-Ji Temple and the streets have promoted intense commerce and traditional culture to the Asakusa area as a value. Therefore, the decision to preserve the traditional commercial streets after the war, based on the opinions and concerns of the people's civic organizations, by an institution with a historical and religious authority, was a value that resulted in the actual progression of the area.

Senso-Ji with Today's Issues of City.

Modernization changed people's commercial and cultural tastes in Asakusa, and the market became as profit-oriented as any city. Religion, which had influenced people's consciousness and behavior for much longer than modern ideology and philosophical values, came into conflict with the modernization of this region. In particular, pre-Reformation Christianity rejected commerce as an unholy act and regarded private profit accumulation. However, Buddhism is said to have flourished in countries and regions that valued commerce, and the conversion of Nakamise-dori to commerce after the Edo period is a practical application of Buddhist philosophy that emphasized the importance of people's lives and compassion for the less fortunate. (島村美由紀, 2002) In the Asakusa precincts, including Nakamise-dori, merchants contribute a certain amount of money to Senso-Ji, which also serves as a contribution to Senso-Ji's economic strength. As such, the Senso-Ji is expected to protest and intervene in government policies that affect local merchants. The Senso-Ji's authority derives from the respect it earns from its attention to the merchants in the precincts and its mediation with the city government, as well as the economic power by the local merchants contributes. The authority of the Senso-Ji was used to regulate conflicts with larger political forces and modern trends, and to coerce conservatism on the precincts for the benefit of the workers.

After the 2010 Fukushima earthquake, the number of international tourists to Japan plummeted. This issue was also discussed in Asakusa. With fewer foreign tourists in Asakusa, some merchants on Nakamise-dori went out of business, and shops selling souvenirs started selling rice to make ends meet. People tend to rely on the government or existing social agency when natural disasters strike. This is because, in the aftermath of a disaster, there are often no professionals outside of government departments who can provide specialized solutions to life-and-death issues for residents. Senso-Ji Temple, on the other hand, housed evacuees who were unable to return to their homes after the earthquake on its precincts, and local merchants in Nakamise-dori Street made their efforts to cope by installing translation dials and communication devices for foreign tourists. (読売新聞, 2011) Foreign tourists have become one of the most essential sources of income for the business communities of Asakusa, which boasts a traditional townscape built over 400 years ago since the beginning of the Edo Shogunate. When the worldwide lockdown for the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, dependency on the government increased due to the economic depression caused by the regulation for containing people's outdoor activities. Nonetheless, the Senso-Ji kept on the religious ceremony of lightning the Kaminari-mon, which had begun since the restoration of Kaminari-mon in 1968, for lightening by delivering the lights from Kyoto for its rituals during the lockdown. (読売新聞, 2011)

In response to modern trends in sustainable development, Senso-Ji's roof material has also changed: it is made of titanium. The 930 kilograms of earth and sand covering the entire main hall has been reduced to 180 kilograms. (読売新聞, 2011) While the faith of the Senso-Ji, which has withstood the test of time, is debatable, the development of the region and the nature of its religious authority has remained unchanged amidst modern trends. Architecturally, the authority of the temple was assured by the scale of the tiled roofs. Examples of the post-medieval design of the nave, which sheltered the vestry and the faithful together under one roof, were mentioned earlier. (*Discussion, Senso - Ji and Society*) Another example is the use of aluminum, a modern building material, for the Pagoda's Sorin. It has been argued that the religious significance implied by the Sorin and essentially the materials used is related to the orthodoxy of the faith. Nevertheless, the fifty-three meters height of the Pagoda from the ground level where the Sorin ends is currently established as the height regulation for new buildings in the current Asakusa Design Guidelines. (city.taito.lg.jp) In the Tokyo Metropolitan area, large-scale construction with total floor area of more than 10,000 square meters must be supervised by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's construction department, which issues construction permits. (東京都都市整備局市街地建築部建築指導課) Suppose these conflicts with the Asakusa Guidelines, which Taito City recognizes. In that case, Tokyo may be able to solidify with the developer that the latter's regulations are more flexible than the guidelines that limit the height of religious symbols at Senso-Ji. The Asakusa Mansion Tower, which was planned to be built outside the Senso-Ji Temple precincts, to the west of Asakusa, has been met with legal action by Senso-Ji and residents' organizations. (読売新聞, 2011) Eventually, after the Tokyo High Court arbitration, the tower which proposed 36th floors with 693 residential units was completed in 2012. Another skyscraper called Asakusa Residence (住友 マンション), proposed by the Sumitomo Development, is currently under construction in the southwestern part of the sharp outer Asakusa precincts. These two high-rise projects claim that the high-rise development introduces modern design and recognizes the excellence of the Asakusa's inheritance. (asakusa-tower.premium-mansion-selection.com/, sumitomo-rd-mansion.jp) However, the initiative of Senso-Ji Temple and residents' organizations favored development that acknowledged Asakusa's long-standing conservatism.

The current Asakusa precincts continue to adhere to the stance of low-height architecture. Even though Asakusa had not poled the high-rise developments, for its periods, its local economy with hospitality had benefited the conventional community allied with Senso-Ji because it satisfied them that the streets of Asakusa filled with the tourists who preferred the traditional scape in Tokyo. But it's important to look forward to vertical development that will allow you to see Tokyo's top landmarks and commute to Asakusa's public transportation. Whenever there is a clash between current developing trends and the existing society, residents' organizations offer cross-sharing opinions and countermeasures to ongoing local projects. Two organizations that contribute to the character of the Asakusa area are Senso-Ji and residents' organizations, and they have been active since the postwar period, the Inceptive Point, with the slogan of revitalizing Asakusa. Even amid the coronavirus pandemic, Asakusa has been holding the Kaminari-mon lighting ceremony, which has been going on since before the Meiji era, and is carrying out various activities to revive Asakusa's former glory. This regional development

of Asakusa differs from today's, which relies on new construction and government-funded infrastructure. Senso-Ji's activities with residents' organizations confront the situation to welcome or contain the changes in the neighborhood's transformation.

V. Conclusion

Senso-Ji is a successful religious organization as the primary stakeholder of Asakusa district that leads the conservative development and provides economic benefits to the community. Religious organizations are perhaps the most undesirable presence in urban development today, which is gradually transforming cities into a concept of economic growth. Developing projects for modern, progressive societies requires embracing the diversity of newly developed cities and the humanitarian acceptance of migrants as they challenge existing communities. Moreover, challenges stemming from regional progressivity and conservatism are faced when implementing regional policies especially for development. Examining the role of Senso-Ji in Asakusa provides a solution that encompasses both progressive and cultural policies and conservative value in neighborhoods. For the region's conservative Senso-Ji, Japanese Buddhist culture and historically guaranteed sociality have led to a positive perception of Senso-Ji by Asakusa residents. The more Tokyo maximized progressive development after the IP, the greater the role of Senso-Ji in preserving the conservative character of the region. Whenever the government's local policies were contradictory or cultural trends changed, Senso-Ji stood up for the local community. Thus, the local religious institution found that its historicity and fair sociality could win the support of the people and increase its social influence. Studying the process by which Senso-Ji achieved its popularity while maintaining the conservatism evoked by a progressive politics of Tokyo Metropolitans over time helps to resolve the conflict between progressivity and conservatism in development. The humanity derived from Asakusa's development can be read as the maintenance of conservative common goals with the overwhelming support of the local community, a result of Senso-Ji's religious orthodoxy as a historical entity recognized by the people and its social activities on behalf of the people.

Figure



Figure 1: Tokyo Street Map in 1956 (left) and in 1907 (right) From 田中 聡、東京遺産

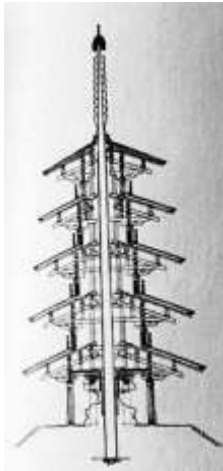


Figure 2.1: 心柱 Shinbashira, the Core Structure of Pagoda, 法隆寺 (Left)

Figure 2.2 興福寺南円堂、Nan'en-dou of Koufuku-Ji (Right) People began worship under structure.

From Inoue, Mitsuo, Space in Japanese Architecture

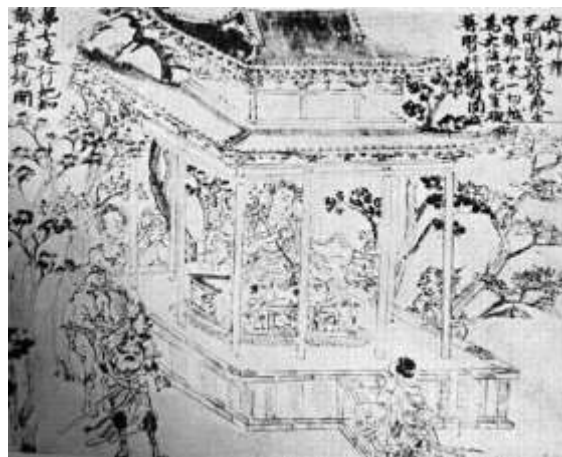
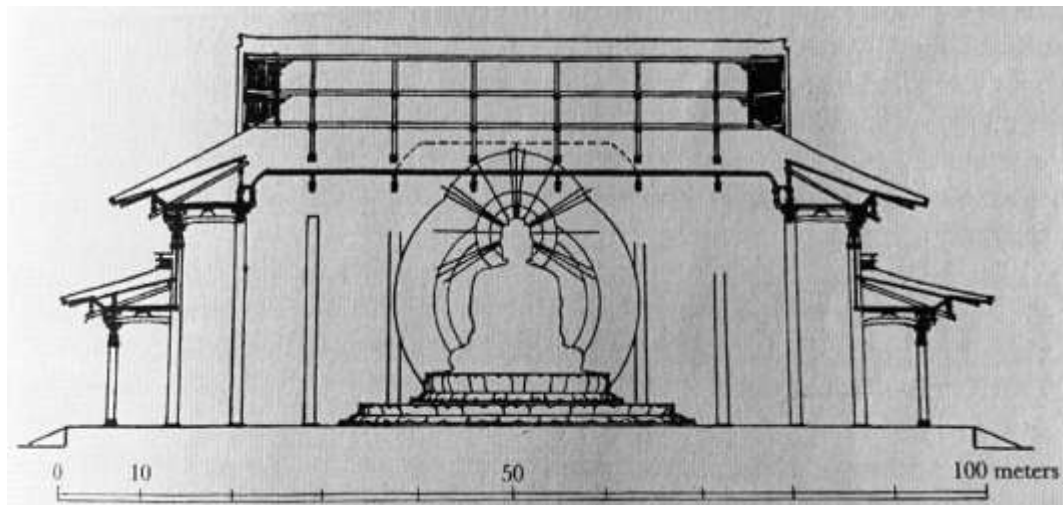


Figure 3.1: The Enshrined Deity related to the Size of Main Hall (Top)

Figure 3.2 唐招提寺、奈良 (Bottom Left)

Figure 3.3 Faithful worshipped Buddha by enshrining the Deity (Bottom Right)

From Inoue, Mitsuo, Space in Japanese Architecture



Figure 4.1: 東本願寺、京都 Higashi Honganji, Kyoto

From Author & The illuminating Engineering Institute of Japan

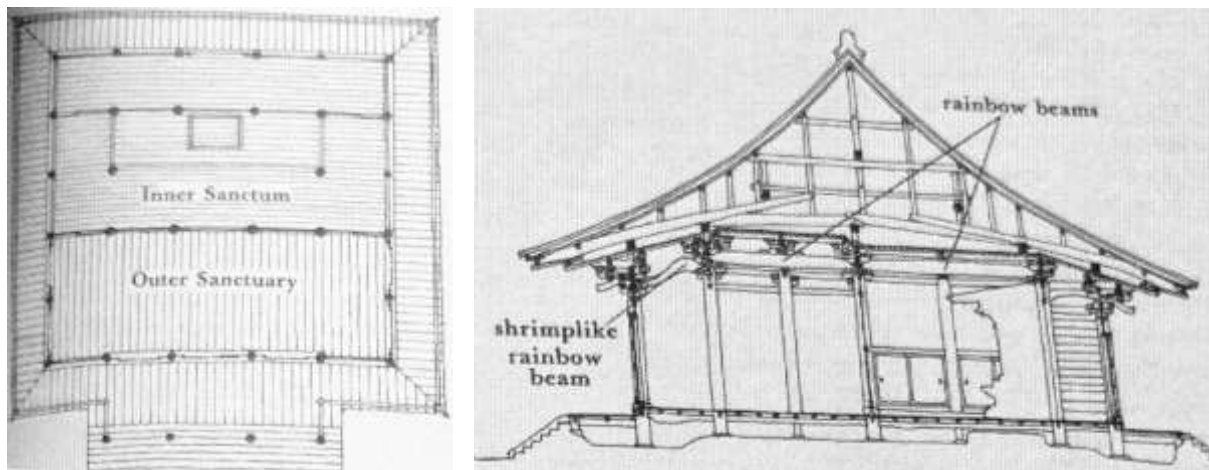


Figure 4.2: 長寿寺, Plan View of Choujyu-Ji (Left) & 鶴林寺 Kakurin-Ji (Right)

Main Halls to Bring People Inside the Main Hall for Celebration

From Kazuo Nishi, What is Japanese Architecture.

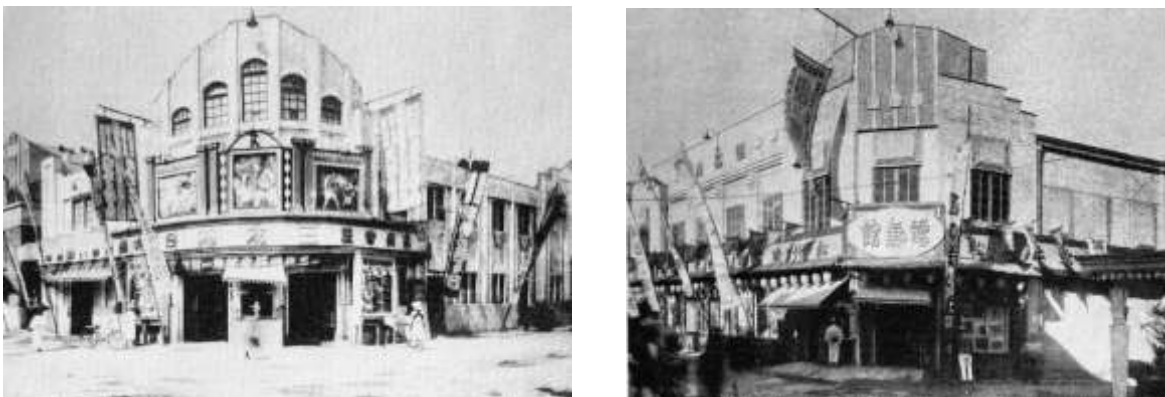


Figure 5.1: Theaters at Rokku (ロック、浅草) 三友館、San'yu Kan, Old France-za (フランス座)

Before the Evacuation Order from Government in 1944 (Left)

電気館 Denki-kan (Right) From 鈴木博之, 都市建築の明治

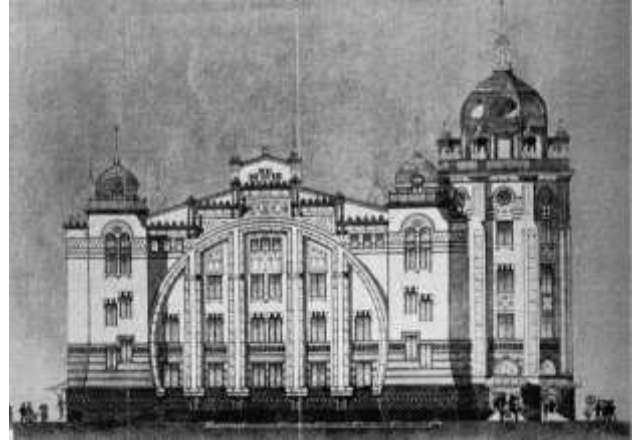
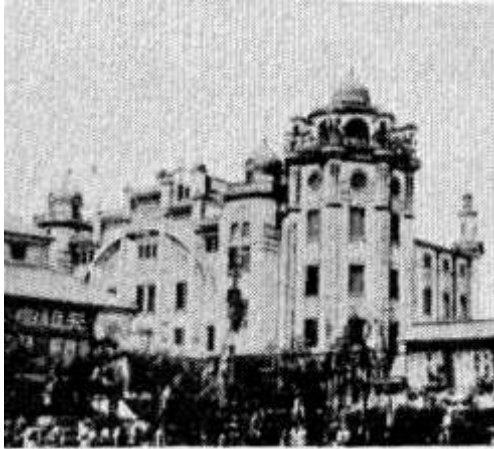


Figure 5.2: Westernized Verticality

Sumo Arena (ロック、浅草) From 鈴木博之, 都市建築の明治



Figure 5.3: Rokko Street ロック、浅草 viewed from Hyotan Pond (瓢箪池)

From 浅草公園町会

Figure 6: The New World Recreation Center 新世界、浅草 (Left) From 読売新聞
& The Japan Racing Association JRA (Right) From Author



Figure 7: Chiba-TV-浅草お茶の間寄席

A Current Show Airs the Shows in France-za (フランス座) on TV

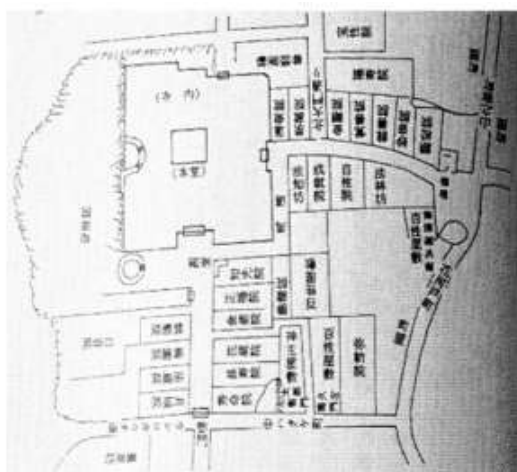
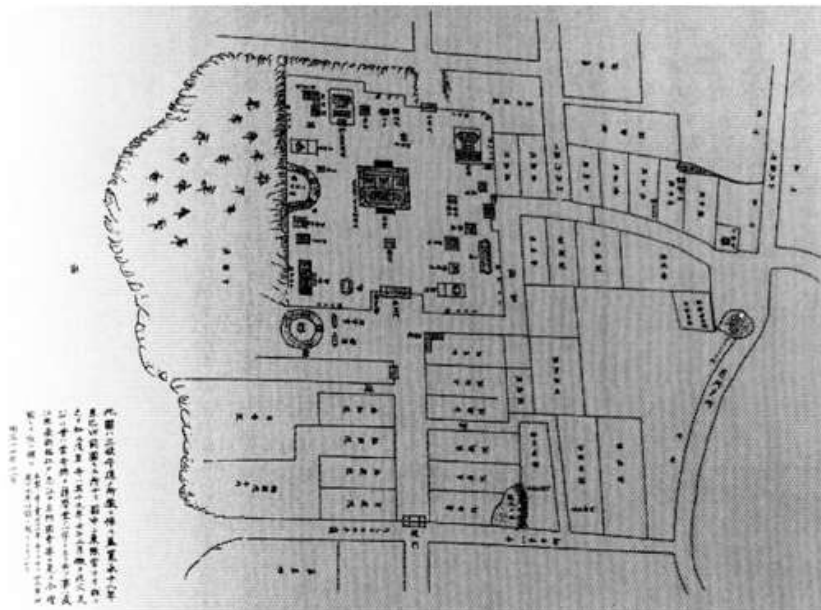


Figure 8: Asakusa Precincts before the Meiji

From 光井 渉、近世寺社境内とその建築

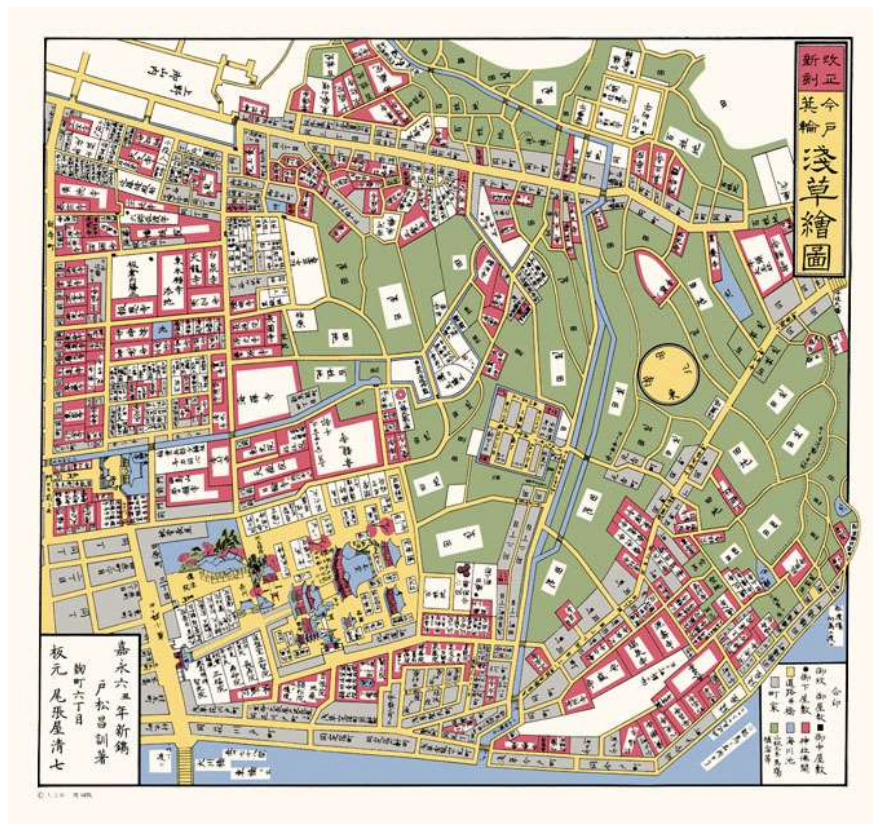


Figure 9 Senso-Ji and Asakusa Park Precinct area before & after the Meiji (1858, 1907)

From 浅草絵図（古地図ライブラリ）、写真の中の明治 大正

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