A Glimpse at Modern Kanda Festival

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Kanda has been the center of recent land price raising fervor by real estate agencies who competed to buy land in the area. Sudacho 1-chome area which was the subject of our research this time was not an exception, and actually in the last ten years a rapid increase in the number of buildings and a rapid decrease in the number of residents took place. As a result, the households that numbered over 250 in the early 1980's decreased to 76, or less than one-third in 1989. In the middle of the 1980's, men in the area numbered too few to carry the palanquin of God for the festival. Then a turnabout in the minds of the people took place and the women in the area came in focus instead of the men to carry the festival palanquin. Due to this turnabout, the town festival is on its way to regeneration.

This research is the study of modern life in a capital observed through townspeople's activities that reflect both the degenerating and regenerating aspects of their town.

The Townspeople's assembly in Sudacho 1-chome B area succeeded in involving the energy of hitherto on-lookers into the festival and consequently in reactivating the town by inventing a female-carried palanquin. The Townspeople's assembly learned from their experience how to reactivate their festival and tried to apply the pattern of their success to regeneration of their town. People in the town realized that regeneration were made possible by liberating themselves from their own prejudices concerning their households and style of living. They are now trying to enlarge the concept of their assembly and include in it the "people who commute to the area," "people who live in condominiums," and "companies in the area." It is also important to note that the women in the town began to find themselves positive participants in collective activities in the town. Positive changes symbolized by the female-carried palanquin of God by the townspeople in Kanda have been taking place in the center of Tokyo in the 1990's.