Experiment in Life in Tama New Town

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Tama New Town, which was developed on the Tama Hills straddling Inagi, Tama, Hachioji, and Machida Cities in the western suburbs of Tokyo, is the Japan's largest-scale town having a development area of about 3,000 ha and stretching over 14 km east to west and 2 to 4 km north to south. The town plan was determined in 1965 and the first move-in started in 1971. Since the planning stage, it has always been claimed that Tama New Town is associated with an "experiment" because of its huge scale and novelty.

In this article, with attention focused on the term "experiment," which has always been associated with Tama New Town, three "main bodies" having different phases were set for the following experiments: (1) "Experiment in town planning" by the developers, constructors, and town planners who devise the basic policy for the town plan and prepare the master plan and the development plan of town facilities (houses, housing developments, roads, parks, schools, etc.), (2) more specifically, "Experiment in housing" by architects who take charge of the design of town facilities such as the houses and parks that make up the New Town, and (3) "Experiment in life" by the residents who live in the New Town and are the main body of the built community. The "experiments" by these main bodies were then studied.

Among them, the "Experiment in life" by the New Town residents who adapted to the new housing environment and built community relationships in the New Town was the focus, and the footsteps of their trial-and-error activities and practices for attaining a comfortable environment for them to live in were followed. As a result, it was clearly shown that the residents did not obediently follow the environment that was carefully planned and given by the town planners and architects, but rather, beyond the speculation of the town planners and architects, they took the initiative in changing the given environment to their own environment.

Key words: New town, housing development, house, experiment, town planning