Urban Planning and Urban Development in the High-growth Period: Reorganization and Communality of House Space as Seen in “Machiya Tour of Dolls” in Murakami City, Niigata Prefecture

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Since the high-growth period, a modernization policy has been promoted in the small and medium retailing industries. The principal objective is to promote not only businesses but also urban development through the reconstruction of shopping districts and modernization of the whole town. This policy is supported by the logic that the efficiency and rationality of commerce should be increased. The commercial policy in Murakami City, Niigata Prefecture was also along such lines and its modernization projects were deeply linked with the street projects. In anticipation of an automotive society, expectations were placed on the modernization of shopping districts through widening of roads. In these circumstances, things have recently moved toward realization of an urban planned road running through the shopping district in the central area of the city. The widening of roads, however, meant destruction of many machiyas (old town houses) along the roads. Therefore, it was claimed that urban development using machiyas should be promoted without widening the roads. To this end, an event to show the attraction of machiyas, “Machiya Tour of Dolls,” was established. The insides of shops are open to visitors and the purpose of the event is to show many dolls and tools displayed in the living rooms of the machiyas. A major feature of the event is that a lot of dolls and tools are fully displayed in the rooms. In the exhibition, importance is placed on the aesthetic, and the spectacle of the event and the sense of playfulness through the sight can be enjoyed. In this respect, it has a value different from an efficiency-oriented value. There is a large difference between the living rooms in which dolls are displayed and the surrounding dirt floor of the past and those of the present. Different from past living rooms with their surrounding dirt floors, the current living rooms and dirt floors are used as a place for communication and exchange with various out-of-town visitors. With the character of being an intermediate space between the public and the private, it has been used as a more open space. The Machiya Tour of Dolls has been functioning as a circuit toward a new communality. The logic of urban development toward reconstruction of a community, which is different from the logic of the high-growth period, can be seen here.

Key words: machiya, housing space, urban development, communality, urban planning