

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

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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.

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