

A Shared Space in the Business Area of Tokyo : Neighborhood Organization (Chounaikai) in Japan

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Abstract 300words

This paper explains about grass roots common space in the modern Tokyo. Even today, many citizens lived in Tokyo still have been organized for Chounaikai. All the same Choukai/Chounaikai/Jichikai is a meaning of neighborhood organization. Chounaikai(rest is omitted afterward) being quite similar to the neighborhood association in America have normally their geographical territory. The territory of Chounaikai as a shared space contributes to enrichment of neighborhood's life. A well known example is Ujiko (Child of Clan) of the shrine that is specified in a kind of parish membership. Ujiko is defined by the place where residents settle in. Ujiko belongs to a parish and is given sanctuary of Ujigami(or Ubusunashin). A smaller level of Ujiko territory often overlaps with Chounaikai boundary. So that residents organize a rituals and command office of shrine's festival in each Chounaikai. Another example is that people patrol always within the territory of Jichikai/ Chounaikai and so on.

One case study mentioned here was researched by participant observation. The case's name is Shirakawa sanchoume choukai. Shirakawa-san(3)-choume Choukai(町会) is the neighborhood organization to which I am belonging now. The neighborhood has old history at least in document from the Greater Kanto Earthquake (1923). I have been living there since 2005. The neighborhood is so much prospering with population growth of 1000 households due to the construction of high-rise condominium in 2005.

Anyhow, Choukai/chounaikai is not legally authorized anywhere with Chihou-jichi-hou (Local Autonomy Act) like as Zaisanku. Nevertheless, Choukai/ Chounai-kai/Jichikai have been having a strong voice on the land use and seem to characterize by something commons.

This paper also shows many latest pictures concerning Choukai in Shirakawa sanchoume. I hope many readers would be able to understand that the grassroots in Tokyo have been growing urban commons in their Chounaikai's territory.

Key words

chounaikai, neighborhood, urban commons, Doujunkai, redevelopment, Tokyo

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1. Introduction

This paper explains about grass roots common space in the modern Tokyo. Even today, many citizens lived in Tokyo still have been organized for Chounaikai.

All the same Choukai/Chounaikai/Jichikai is a meaning of neighborhood organization. Choukai/Chounaikai/ (rest is omitted afterward) which are quite similar to the neighborhood association in America have normally their geographical territory. The territory of Choukai/Chounaikai as a shared space contributes to enrichment of neighborhood's life. A well known example is Ujiko 氏子(Child of Clan) of the shrine that is specified in a kind of parish membership. Ujiko is defined by the place where residents settle in. Ujiko belongs in their parish and is given sanctuary of Ujigami 氏神(or Ubusunashin 産土神). A smaller level of Ujiko territory often overlaps with Chounaikai boundary. So that residents organize a rituals and command office of shrine's festival in each Chounaikai. Another example is that people patrol always within the territory of Jichikai/ Chounaikai and so on.

Choukai gives a kind of membership qualification to residents just when they begin to live inside of choukai territory automatically. Thus, choukai is a kind of parish and not a kind of old American town by contract.

One case study will be mentioned here was researched by participant observation. The case's name is Shirakawa sanchoume choukai, in Kouto-ku, Tokyo. Shirakawa(白河)-san(3/三)-choume(丁目) Choukai(町会) is the neighborhood organization to which I am belonging now. The neighborhood has a very long history at least in document from the Greater Kanto Earthquake (1923). I have been living there since 2005. The neighborhood is so much prospering and growing to 1000 households due to the construction of high-rise condominium building in 2005.

Anyhow, Choukai/chounaikai is not legally authorized anywhere Japan with Chihou-jichi-hou (Local Autonomy Act) like as Zaisanku (property ward). Nevertheless, Choukai/ Chounai-kai/Jichikai have been having a strong voice on the land use and seem to characterize by something commons.

This paper also shows many latest pictures concerning Choukai in Shirakawa sanchoume. I hope many readers would be able to understand that the grassroots in Tokyo have been growing urban commons in their Chounaikai's territory.

1.1 Recent Chounaikai as a neighborhood organization

One of my purposes of this paper concerning workshop session is to know you a concept of Choukai/Chounaikai/Jichikai which seems to be the substructure of urban commons in Japan.

We are able to see the Choukai/Chounaiaki anywhere in Tokyo, also all over Japan. Japanese neighborhood organizations have been existed long time and given abundant experiences or miserable experiences. Those experiences varied across the ages and

places. Japanese scholars have accumulated a number of reports and academic books concerning Choukai/chounaikai/Jichikai since 1900s (1). This paper explains chounaikai experiences in Tokyo, especially an experience just on Shirakawa-sanchoume Choukai in Kouto-ward, Tokyo briefly.

Choukai (町会) is spelled by Chinese character which means town meeting. Choukai doesn't have original vocabulary in Chinese. This is a modern Japanese word.

- 町会 → Chou and Kai
- 町 → Chou means town
- 会 → Kai means meeting or association

Thus 町会 Chou Kai is town meeting.

It's a shame that Choukai/chounaikai/jichikai doesn't serve as a town meeting today. They recognize and say chounaikai as a subcontract of a city hall.

Choukai is holding commonly geographical territory divided by boundary of official address name and number. Choukai membership is given by dwelling inside the territory. The connection with membership to official address is a feature of neighborhood organization in modern Japan. That system is very convenience for a partnership with the municipal administration and Choukais, though all residents could have been controlled by city hall.

Shirakawa-sanchoume expresses streets level address name and address number which has been used largely after Great Kanto Earthquake. The Teito Fockou Project made land readjustment with widening main lines according to the metropolitan urban planning. The Great Kanto Earthquake and the afterward redevelopment have changed many address. The neighborhood organizations in afterward Great Kanto Earthquake in Tokyo are seemed to discontinuity with Edo-period neighborhood organization.

1.2 Main function of Choukai/Chounaikai/Jichikai

Next points are function of Choukai popularly practiced anywhere in modern Japan.

1. Enhancing friendship for neighborhood
2. Neighborhood watch
3. Prevention and preparation for fire and disaster
4. Recycling the home garbage
5. Children Club
6. Various traditional festivals (Matsuri)
7. Supporting a city hall publication

In a special case, positive activities for improvement of neighborhood's environment or elder care services take place. Shirakawa sanchoume choukai is acting also in 1 to 7.

2. After the Great Kanto Earthquake

2.1 A Case Study on Shirakawa sanchoume choukai.

Shirakawa sanchoume (白河三丁目) neighborhood traced back historically to 1920s. The name of Shirakawa –sanchoume Choukai is adopted after the War 1945. At that time initial name was not choukai but club for the sake of measure against GHQ. This choukai is located in Kouto-ward of Tokyo being near to enormous complication of business zone Nihonbashi/Ootemachi. Shitamachi Neighborhoods in both sides of the Sumida River have very old history from Edo-Period (1602-1867). Our neighborhood is in the east side of river.

Shirakawa-Sanchoume area has been hit by holocaust two times that are the Great Kanto Earthquake & the Great Tokyo Air Raids.



江東区町丁目別地図 出典: 江東さざんか web

2013 http://www.sazanka.k-net.koto.tokyo.jp/sazanka/sazanka_search/index.html

2.2 The Dojunkai Apartment and the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923

On September 1, 1923 (Taishou12Nen), the Great Kanto Earthquake hit Kanto area. Downtown (Shitamachi) of Tokyo, especially Honjo, Fukagawa (Kouto) ward had suffered catastrophic damage by the fire. 142,800 peoples had dead on aggregate in Kanto. Many

people were burned to death. Many of victims at Honjo hifukusho were dead from lack of oxygen (picture 1).



Picture1 本所被服廠跡 44000people dead in fire

出典: 国立科学博物館地震資料室 <http://research.kahaku.go.jp/rikou/namazu/index.html>



Picture2 Air photo in the direction of Honjo 本所方面

出典: 国立科学博物館地震資料室 <http://research.kahaku.go.jp/rikou/namazu/index.html>

There were none. Crowded towns (Chounai) made by wood, paper and straw (tatami) in both side of the Sumida River had disappeared in black ashes (Picture 2).

After the disaster, fireproof housing plans had been made as a reconstruction project named Doujinkai Apartment (同潤会アパート) with Teito Fuckou Project 帝都復興事業.

One of the Doujunkai Apartments named Kiyosunadouri (清砂通り) Apartment had completed in the ruins in 1927(昭和 2 年)(picture 3).



Picture 3 Kiyosunadouri Apartment 1-gokan

出典: 白河三丁目地区市街地再開発組合『心紡ぐ街』

Photo was one of Doujunkai Apartments. This was called Ichi-gokan (House number 1). Constructions were completed in 16 apartment buildings in Shirakawa area.

Doujunkai was the first national housing corporation. The Department of Interior had set up the Doujunkai that had given the affordable housing to the earthquake victims. Doujunkai had set up for the relief works for victims. I think they had the idea of community building. Next points are the idea of community building. The first victim's community was formed in this time at Shirakawa area.

2.3 Cooperative philosophy of Doujunkai

Some staffs of Doujunkai have been learned from the most advanced planning of apartment housing by continental manner (2).

The room plan has two types which were for the single and for the family. Utilities (residential gas, water and sewage, electric distribution) were equipped in advance. Many common facilities were designed and installed in every apartment house which were almost all opened to the surrounding neighborhoods.

For example, Kiyosunadouri apartment had some common facilities like as, Dining room, Clinic, Amusement hall with ping-pong table, play lot in the courtyard, public restroom, and nursery school.

Shop tenants in the ground floor are like as Milkhall, Gas stand, Rice dealer, Liquor shop, and pharmacy etc. Vocational aid was provided to victims by Dojunkai.

3. After the war

3.1 Air Raids in 1945

On March 10, 1945, B29 Attack Forces have flown over Tokyo and dropped many fire bombs. More than hundreds of thousands had burned to death in Tokyo mainly Shitamachi. Shirakawa neighborhood had also suffered catastrophic damage. There were none again. Crowded towns (Chounai) made by wood, paper and straw (tatami) in both side of the Sumida River lay in black ashes again (Picture 4). The Kiyosunadouri apartments and a primary school (元加賀小学校) nearby had burned and just their walls and flames remained.



Picture 4 Air photo in the direction of Tokyo Bay over the Sumida ward

石川 光陽 撮影 <http://www.kmine.sakura.ne.jp/kusyu/kuusyu.html>

3.2 The Defeat

On August 15, 1945, Japan defeated World War II. Few original neighbor inhabitants came back to ruins and have set up newly Choukai together with peoples lived in Doyujunkai Apartment in 1946. Though they have scrambled for organizing Choukai for self-help for distribution of foods, water, fuel and sanitation, GHQ prohibited organizing “Chounaikai” in 1947. Therefore, neighbors organized neighborhood association named Shirakawa sanchoume **Club** (American style name) at that time.

3.3 Change of Occupiers and Tenants

Apartments have been used for war industry company's housing during the war from the time when the Juhtaku Eidan 住宅営団 had absorbed the Doujunkai in 1941. Companies housing used for like as Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industry, Hitachi, Fujikura Densen, Nihon Soda etc. These children generation still continue to live in the new high rise condominiums now.

After the end of the war, the victims have sought refuge in these apartments and then tenants were considerably changed. De facto squatter have appeared.

The Jutaku Eidan has closed due to public purge and then the surplus of Doujunkai Apartment was conducted.

Association of tenants of Doujunkai was formed in 1947. The surplus to the tenants had begun under the management of Tokyo metropolitan government in 1950. Mr. Inajiro Assanuma, General Secretary of Socialist party of Japan has approached to government with the suggestion of a six years loan which protected the original tenants (squatters). All loans have been paid up in 1957. The ownership of apartment was changed to a aggregation of individual owner occupied apartment.

3.4 The Community of War Victims

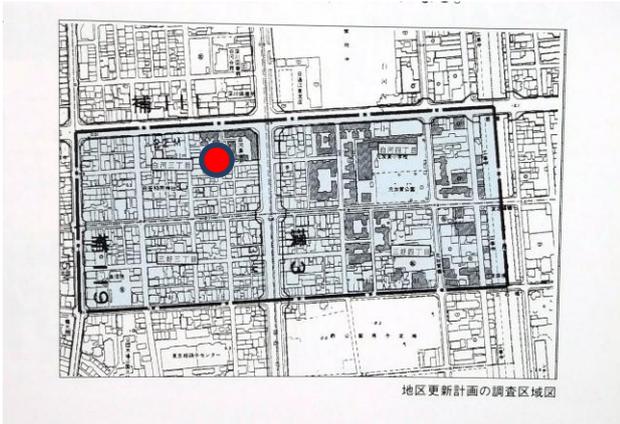
Consumer cooperative was organized already by May 1945 in Kiyosunsdouri Apartment. It seems that Mr. Inajirou Asanuma had involved in co-op movement and had organized co-op in the Apart Jichikai already during the war (『心紡ぐ街』 39). Inajiro Assanuma, the lower house member, the General Secretary of Socialist party of Japan had been living in somewhere room in 6-15 house at one time.

Due to after war confusion, there was absent from building janitor. Apartment has been factually on a self- management by squatters from 1946 to 1950 years. Shared kitchen has been made in ground floor and Henhouse has been made in courtyard. Co-op has restored adjacent Tsurunoyu-sento (public bathhouse). Coop has collected donations from neighbors and restored public bath and then has transferred ownership to original owner of Tsurunoyu. After paying up of housing loan, each owner built extensions without asking anyone. In an anarchy on building cord, community never been plunged into an anarchy.

4. Redevelopment of Doujunkai Apartment

4.1 Suggestion on Redevelopment

Some owners suggest on redevelopment of Doujunkai Kiyosunadouri Apartments and began study circle in 1988. The Urban Development Project which is Japanese unique way of redevelopment has been applied to the whole Kiyosuna douri Apartments. It takes more than seventeen years long for a project term from the first agenda to wrap up.



Picture 5 (left) Redevelopment area

Picture 6 (right) Layout of old 1-4 Doujunkai Apartment

出典: 『心紡ぐ街』、模型は濱中忠雄(元再開発組合理事)氏所有

A layout of the doujunkai Kiyosunadouri Apartments of No.1 to No.16 had an extension from Shirakawa sanchoume, Shirakawa yonchoume to Miyoshi sanchoume. Before the first demolition in 2002 layout and development area map are designated according to two above picture5.and picture6. Red point in the redevelopment area map is location of the Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai kaikan. Chounaikai ordinary has own community /meeting office by tradition in Japan.



Picture7 (left) Ichi-gokan building just before demolition in 2003

Picture8 (right) 1-4gokan building just after completion in 2005

写真出典: 白河三丁目地区市街地再開発組合 2005 『心紡ぐ街』

4.2 Change of Ownership: The Right Conversion System

The Urban Redevelopment Projects(市街地再開発事業) conducts the Right Conversion System(権利変換). The ownership of house was changed during the project term of urban redevelopment project which takes years of ten and twenty. The Right Conversion System (権利変換) is the most unique method of urban redevelopment in Japan. That is so patient system. All stakeholders could agree to change each right concerning habitation in this arrangement time. Shirakawa-sanchoume choukai had also a tenure right which arises from the ground of Choukai Kaikan (community center) in the area of redevelopment. Two kind rights of Choukai were the tenure of a piece of land and a building. Shirakawa-sanchoume choukai became the right holder. In the result, the president of the Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai became the president of the partnership of Shirakawa sanchoume Redevelopment(再開発組合) Project. Same time, Choukai was approved a legal status of Ninka-Chiendantai: **Authorized territorial bond group** (認可地縁団体 This English name is translated originally by Tazuko Ouchi). In midstream of project, one Redevelopment Project of Kiyosunadouri Apartment was separated to two projects because scale of operation has been too large. The 1 between 4 buildings became the Shirakawa-sanchoume area Redevelopment. The 5 between 16 buildings became the Shirakawa/ Miyoshi area Redevelopment. After Redevelopment 2005, various rights holders were counted 187 just in the Shirakawa-sanchoume Redevelopment. They accomplished 100% all agreement of stakeholders. This process was also a process of rebuilding community and formation the new commons.

5 Physical Assets as a Choukai-Commons

We can conclude here the points about common properties of the Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai. The Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai have next properties today in 2013.

- A Choukai Kaikan in the redeveloping building
- The tenure of Inari Shrine's ground
- Some ritual equipment like as Mikoshi, Taiko, Dashi, and Mikoshi storage.
- The sanctuary which is relating to the shrine parish of Tomioka-Hachimangu is the same as Choukai territory.

Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai Kaikan is now in the ground floor of the high-rise condominium which was installed by redevelopment of the Doujunkai Apartment. Former land tenure of Choukai Kaikan was moved up to the Kubun Shoyuiken (sectional ownership) of the high-rise. Physical asset especially the land price increased value by population growth unlike in the theory of commons tragedy.

6 A Soul Asset of Sharing Spirit

Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai has had Inari and Jizou in their territory before anyone knows. We can guess that Jizou and Inari adjustment appeared since the Great Kanto Earthquake. The Kosodate Jizou has been said that it placed before the war. The Shirazasa Inari shrine has been placed also before the war. Yashiro of shrine and Torii have built newly in 1960's. Inari seems to continue historically from Edo period. The origin of Inari shrine was said as a site guardian god of landowner KIZU clan tracing back to Edo-era. KIZU family had rent a ground of Shirakawa-sanchoume Chounai Kaikan till 2002 redevelopment. KIZU family is one of the sectional owners of the redevelopment building even today.

Shirakawa sanchoume choukai and KIZU family became both Kubun-shoyuusha 区分所有者(Sectional owner of condominium) of high-rise condominium building. It means that collective property and individual property have grown up together to modernized ownership. The name of new high-rise building is East Commons Kiyosumi Shirakawa Front Tower.

Two time holocaust have burnt down all of things and have changed neighborhoods boundaries and neighborhoods people. But small shrine and small temple were continuing and gradually equipped with economical growth of neighborhood after war. Torii was set in 1963. Because of two time disaster, Jizou and Inari often reconstructed and changed their site. I think that just community's symbol at least have been continuing until today. Thus I think that Jizou and Inari are the material proof of the sharing spirit and prayer.



Picture 9 Shirazasa Inari and Kosodate Jizou as common space
Photo by Tazuko Ouchi Feb. 9, 2013 Hatsuuma Matsuri

New high-rise condominium has some common facilities like as in the case of the

Doujunkai apartment. The sky view lounge in the top floor (32F) is opened to the neighborhood's resident. The conference rooms in the fourth floor are also opened to neighborhood's residents besides the Choukai kaikan. Two public facilities (health-care-center and home-care-support center) moved newly into the third floor. There are a surgery and some clinics in the second floor. Liquor shop in the first floor has been opened since opening of the Kiyosunadouri Apartment before the War. Owner of Matsumoto kiyoshi pharmacy is a resident of old neighborhood and also the owner of the luncher (bento stand) in the first floor of high-rise too.

7 The Transition of Neighborhood Organizations

There are some changes in Choukai structure during ninety years mainly caused by two time disaster and redevelopment.

The first name of the later Doujunkai Kiyosunadouri Apartment had been Fukagawa Daikumachi Apart. Original purchasing group named Doujun Koubai Kumiai (有限責任同潤購買組合) was organized by Doujunkai already in 1931.

- Fukagawa-Shirakawachou Chounaikai (1932)

First neighbor's name of this place had been Fukagawa Higashi Daikumachi which means east carpenter town. After 1923 Earthquake, new address was made with Teito Fuckou redevelopment. Just after disaster there were none. All had burned down in fire. So that completion of the Doujunkai building had drawn many immigrant people. Doujunkai tenants built neighborhood association named Apart Jichikai in the territory of the Shirakawachou. After that all buildings and wide road were completed in 1932(昭和 7), address were changed to Shirakawa-chou.

Initial name of neighborhood association's was the Apart Jichikai until 1938 (1932~1938). Under the wartime regime in 1938, the National General Mobilization Act(国家総動員法) had reorganized chounaikai all over Japan in 1938. Neighborhood organization was changed the name next bellow by merging with other some Chounaikais.

- Fukagawaku-Shirakawachou –Apart Choukai (under the National Mobilization Act)

In the end of the War (1945), Choukai name had changed again. One merged choukai separated some Choukais in social confusion under the GHQ regime. Because of the prohibition of Chounaikai and similar entities by GHQ, government has released control of the neighborhood organizations. Reorganizing process having heard from some elders is next.

Just after the war, there were none. All had burned down in fire again. Few original coming back people and newly emigrated people have reorganized Chounaikais on their own way. My neighborhood name appeared at last in this time. The people coming back to 1-4 houses has made Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai together with surrounding neighbors in the territory of Shirakawa sanchoume.

- Shirakawasanchoume Choukai (1-4)(1946~)
- Kiyosuna Jichikai (5-16) (1946~)

Kiyosuna Jichikai has built only for the residents of apartment (house number 5-16) in the territory of Shirakawa yonchoume Choukai and Miyoshi sanchoume Choukai. These names and change of organization are defined by the information from hearing and documents.

8 Neighborhood today

New high-rise condominium is holding 450 households now. New comer families (about 250 households) are joined almost automatically with Shirakawa- Sanchoume Choukai. The choukai neighborhood is still there same as ever today and they even increased members by 1,100 households in total. There are many small factory and family-run business which are for example the bagging and processing of foods business or the printing business in the territory of Shirakawa sanchoume Choukai. Main reason of the growth of population is location of high-rise condominiums. The case of Shirakawa-sanchoume choukai is one of rare success case on sharing space of the urban territorial bond group (Choukai) accompany with population growth.



Picture 10 Tomioka Hachiman Matsuri
: Children of new comer families enjoy in the traditional festival
Photo by Tazuko Ouchi , Aug. 14, 2006



Picture 11 Reconstructed High-rise and neighbor's small building
Photo by Tazuko Ouchi , Aug. 14, 2006



Picture 12 OMIKOSHI : Portable Shrine for Children and Adult. Preparation Completion!
Photo by Tazuko Ouchi , Aug. 14, 2012



Picture 13 At the façade of the Shirakawa Sanchoume Choukai Kaikan by Ouchi 2006



Picture 14 Shirakawa sanchoume Donation List of Festival



Picture 15 People wearing the given costume is whoever eligible for participating parade



Picture 16 All participating parade get baptized tremendously.



Picture 17 The Chuo-Ku Shinkawa Ichichoume Choukai is involved in the Ujiko area of Tomioka Hachimangu. They'll show you the spirit of true-born Tokyoite. They aren't defeated by financial capitalism. Neighborhoods are surviving also in business-area of Nihonbashi.



Picture 18 Parade in Alliance Crossing the Sumida River on the Eitai-Bridge

the neighborhood as the Choukai kaikan, Inari shrine, etc. have been continued to exist. The unique way of the Urban Redevelopment Project (the established law system) updated the rights of each resident to upper grade and therefore reinforced the neighborhood. The case of Shirakawa-sanchoume choukai is one of rare success case on the urban commons in which people created more common facilities with the urban territorial bond group (Choukai) accompany with population growth.

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