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1. The beginnings of the Gion Matsuri (Gion Festival)

As Kyoto grew as Japan’s capital and the population density increased, sanitary conditions began to worsen. Epidemics caused by water contamination were particularly rampant, especially during the summer. People at the time, believing the cause to be the anger of vengeful ghosts and curses, sought to pacify that supernatural anger, lift curses, and ward off evil spirits, and for this purpose the Gion Go-ryōe was begun (Gion was the name of an important shrine and Go-ryōe roughly translates as “ghost ritual”).

Although there are differing theories as to the year in which these rituals were begun, most modern scholars put the date at the 11th year of the Jōgan Era (869 C.E.). The original “festival” entailed erecting 66 halberds (Jpn: hoko) of over six meters in length each at Gion Shrine and sending portable shrines to the gardens of Shinsen’en, thought to be the springhead for the waters of Kyoto.

2. The mythological genealogy of the Gion Matsuri: beliefs underlying its origins

Gozu Tennō, the god enshrined at Gion Shrine, is of Indian origin, but in Japan was also thought to be identical to the Shinto god Susano-ō-no-mikoto, but in a different incarnation. According to Japanese mythology, this deity went on a journey seeking a bride. On his journey it became dark, and he sought lodging at the mansion of a wealthy man named Kotan Shōrai, but was refused. He was welcomed, however, by the impoverished brother of Kotan Shōrai, Somin Shōrai, and spent the night. He eventually finds a bride, with whom he has eight princes. As Gozu Tennō is on his journey back home with his wife and sons, he once again visits Somin Shōrai and renews his friendship. “I will now depart,” Gozu tells Somin, “with my eight sons to battle and destroy Kotan Shōrai.” “You and your clan,” he orders Somin, “shall therefore wear rings of reeds on your waists so that you can be distinguished from the enemy.” That night Gozu Tennō attacks Kotan Shōrai and his clan, killing all without the protective symbol. This legend figures prominently in the Gion Matsuri.
As one can see from the above, just as with Yahweh, gods in ancient Japan were prone to anger and jealousy, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that the ancient religion of Japan was one in which people struggled to live out their lives trying to avoid the anger and curses of these gods. From this likely arose the paradoxical practice of worshiping this god of pestilence in order to gain his favor. In that sense, the Gion Matsuri shares the same idea as Passover, one of the most important celebrations in Judaism commemorating the prayers for the angry and jealous Yahweh to skip or “pass over” houses whose gates have the blood of the Passover lamb. This suggests that the Gion Matsuri is an extremely old festival with roots shared in common with much of humankind.

3. The beginnings and subsequent history of the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko (float) processions: I. Up to the Ōnin War (1467)

The yearly ritual held by Gion Shrine of enshrining this god of pestilence on a portable shrine and parading among the masses in hopes of cleansing them of evil spirits came to be adopted by the masses themselves, who developed their own rituals in imitation of that of Gion Shrine.

In the very beginning, this practice consisted of merely carrying around halberds and decorations similar in appearance in order to gain favor of the gods, yet this procession gained a certain degree of fame beyond the capital, and as more and more people from throughout Japan came to see the event, aided by the fact that the Shogunate began to give its support, it became an increasingly colorful affair. For instance, the halberds were put on floats and made longer and larger, and draperies called *kesōhin* were used to decorate the floats, on top of which dancers and musicians performed. In addition, distinctive floats called *yama*, patterned after the float used in the Daijōe imperial accession ceremony (called *hyō-no-yama*) became regular features of the festival. The procession of people surrounding these *yamahoko* (“floats and halberds”; note that *yamahoko* refers not only to the artifacts themselves but also the organizations responsible for them) also took on a more extravagant appearance and grew in size.

The developments described above constitute the primitive beginnings of the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko procession seen today. Historical records indicate that there were as many as 58 *yama* and *hoko* just before the outbreak of the Ōnin War. The *yamahoko* procession, however, was devastated by the Ōnin War, during which the city of Kyoto was nearly reduced to ashes.

4. The beginnings and subsequent history of the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko (float) processions: II. From 1500 to the Meiji Restoration (1868)

In the year 1500, after the end of the Ōnin War, the *yamahoko* procession began again and recovered almost to its pre-war state. For nearly all of the estimated 36 *yamahoko* revived in 1500, there are surviving records indicating the ownership, i.e. which township it belonged to, decoration style and name of each, and except for a few variations and exceptions, these *yamahoko* can still be seen paraded today under the same ownership and with the same decoration styles and names. And aside from growing larger, their external appearances are not thought to have significantly changed since they were revived in 1500.

There are currently 35 *yamahoko* permitted to participate in the Gion Matsuri procession, including floats undergoing restoration, and based on the records mentioned above, their roots can be traced directly back to the year 1500.

5. The *chōjū*, the organizations historically responsible for *yamahoko* processions in the Gion Matsuri

Now we have come to the more modern portion of the history of *yamahoko* processions. In the previous section I used the word “township,” but more precisely these were organizations in Kyoto called *chōjū* that existed until 1898. As you may know, Kyoto is a planned city modeled after the ancient Chinese capital of Chang’an, and as such, the streets of its center are organized neatly in a grid. The “cells” of the grid span 60 ken, or 110 meters. The households lined up along each such length, together with the ones facing them
across the street, made up administrative units called chōjū (literally “town community”), and the people living in them called chōshū (“townspeople”).

As suggested above, the yamahoko of the Gion Matsuri were owned and managed by these chōjū. Furthermore, the residents of the chōjū, made up of followers of Gion Shrine spanning neighboring towns, were legally obligated to give assistance in the form of labor and money to these chōjū under what was called the yorichō system, established by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the daimyō who unified Japan after the Warring States period.

As organizations, these chōjū were responsible for substantial administrative duties at the time. They had authority over, for example, real estate ownership and transfer rights, residence relocation permits, the issuing of certificates of authenticity for seals, and many more official duties, making them what we might consider today administrative arms of government agencies.

I would like to briefly explore just what these powers meant. Let us say, for example, that a resident of a certain chōjū decided to relocate. The chōjū would first purchase the house from that person, and then select from among willing candidates whom they would either sell or lease the house to. If there were no one to occupy the house, the chōjū would keep the house indefinitely as a kind of escrow agent. A look at old maps reveals that some towns held several buildings in this matter at any given time. The authority to issue certificates of authenticity for seals, which were necessary when making transactions by draft or check, was particularly significant because it meant that without the approval of the chōjū one could not even conduct business.

In short, chōjū created groups or guilds of certain professions within their own community, exerted a certain amount of control over them, and exercised considerable rights of autonomy to hold the Gion Matsuri.

The chōjū used the houses and buildings under their administration (called chōie, or “town houses”) to hold meetings of various sorts. They also often stored the decorative drapes, wooden frames, wheels, and other articles used in the Gion Matsuri in the earthen storehouses attached to the houses. These houses served as a gallery to exhibit dolls and kesōhin for the festival, and in the case of yamahoko featuring musical performances, they also served as studios for performers to train and practice. These chōie were invaluable for yamahoko as bases for all aspects of the festival.

When one considers the facts that Kyoto served as the capital of Japan over which the Emperor ruled, and that the residents of the chōjū of Kyoto were exempt from taxes, it can be surmised that chōjū enjoyed a great deal of authority and wealth. (It should also be noted that they bore the burden of paying the salaries of rural bureaucrats and were obligated to give “donations” to cover necessary funds whenever there were emergencies, suggesting that their expenses were also quite considerable.)

### 6. The decline of the chōjū

In 1872, several years after the Meiji Restoration, the yorichō system was abolished, resulting in serious economic troubles for many yamahoko. Anywhere from several to 10 chōjū that had traditionally given support in the form of money or labor ceased to do so, and the chōjū with yamahoko were left without means to support themselves. Some halberds were pawned and for a time were in danger of being sold off. This marks the first crisis for chōjū in the modern era.

Fortunately, a donation collecting organization called Seiseikōsha was formed on the initiative of Gion Shrine, which had by this time been renamed Yasaka Shrine, and this mitigated the financial crisis. Seiseikōsha gathered donations from a broad base of shrine followers, which they then lent to the yamahoko that were in financial arrears.

The second and more perilous crisis befell several decades later. In 1898, Kyoto gained rights of self-government with an independent city administration, meaning that the administrative rights and duties...
that had been relegated to the chojū up to that point were now in the hands of the Kyoto city government. Kyoto City gained these administrative powers, and heavy taxes to maintain its now bloated bureaucratic structure were levied on residents of the former chojū.

In short, chojū were sacrificed in the illustrious name of the modernization of Japan. They nearly completely lost their status as legal entities, and their residents were targeted for taxation.

The chojū, having been reduced to informal “residents associations,” did not just lose their legal authority over residents. Since they even lost the rights to buy, own and sell property, they no longer had the qualifications to own the choie (the “town houses” in indefinite escrow mentioned above).

In sum, they lost: (1) the right to mobilize residents to carry out the Gion Matsuri; (2) their bases of operations, i.e. the choie; and (3) consequently, the right to legally own yamahoko.

Regarding the first problem, since residents had not suddenly lost their belief system surrounding the shrine and its religious implications, the festival was continued through community efforts despite the new city government and dissolution of the chojū.

The second issue above proved to be more problematic. The members of the defunct chojū rushed to reregister the choie at the legal affairs bureau (land/property office) in the names of one or more powerful members of the community. This was most likely at the urging of the authorities. As you can imagine, many problems were to latter ensue as a result of this re registering of property from what had been “corporate” ownership to personal ownership, because this meant that property that in substance constituted public assets was now at the mercy of individual discretion.

As for the third problem, the renown of the Gion Festival seems to have prevented individuals from appropriating and selling off yamahoko themselves, although it is thought that there were some incidents of theft of parts. The problem was that because the chojū had lost their status as legal entities, the issue of legal ownership was fraught with ambiguity, so pressing charges was a difficult matter. There is a document dating back to 1913, over 95 years ago, stating, “Since it is unclear who the owner of the yamahoko is, in the event that they are once villainously, recklessly and illegitimately sold or hidden away, legally speaking, to whom are [we] able to mete out punishment?”

This modern crisis in the modern era threatened the very survival of the Gion Matsuri, and its effects are still apparent in various forms and still felt by those of us involved today.

The third crisis was brought about by World War II and Japan’s defeat (1945). The chaos ensuing after the war was not just economic and political, but affected radical changes in conventional Japanese value systems.

To begin with, inflation, asset taxes, inheritance taxes, and many other factors led to the selling off of several choie, which as I mentioned above had since changed hands to private ownership. This resulted in several communities losing a center for their activities. Even among the 32 preservation associations active today, almost ten of them do not own choie.

During the turmoil both during and after the war, many residents moved out of the communities, replaced by large waves of new residents who were completely foreign to the traditions of Kyoto and to Gion religious beliefs and rituals. What is more, since the “residents associations” had neither the legal authority nor power of compulsion over residents, needless to say they could not force residents to help with the festival. Naturally, the organizational power vital to keeping the festival alive began to wane.

7. Efforts to revive and preserve the Gion Matsuri yamahoko processions: the foundation of the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Rengo-kai Federation.

A variety of efforts were made early on to respond to the difficult challenges faced in the modern era. One of
the first steps taken was the establishment of the project mentioned in Section 6 above to lend funds to *yamahoko* in financial trouble by Seiseikōsha of Yasaka Shrine.

The next measure most worthy of mention was the campaign initiated in the Taisho Era (1912-1926) to elevate the legal status of the preservation associations to that of charitable corporations or foundations in order to regain ownership of the *yamahoko* and *chōie*. Spurred on by an initial success in 1923 (Hōkaboko), this movement continued before and after the war, and of the 32 *yamahoko* extant today, 23 of them are managed by incorporated foundations.

Government bodies also began to lend assistance. For example, in 1923 the City of Kyoto instituted a restoration aid program, and in 1939 it began an assistance program under the category of “grants for private festivals.”

Although means of liaising between different preservation associations responsible for the different *yamahoko* had existed as early as the Edo Period, given the developments following modernization efforts in Japan, it was only natural that a more organized system of coordination would be called for.

There was the necessity of having a legitimate entity to be entrusted with public financial assistance, the advent of electricity in Kyoto, power lines over streets, train lines running in the city and other such issues accompanying the modernization of an urban area. It was also necessary to deal with the “pre-event festivities” (*yoityama*) that were added to the Gion Matsuri as it grew as a tourist attraction, and traffic had to be coordinated during parades. In order to discuss these and numerous other issues that could not be resolved by *yamahoko* groups working independently and to facilitate communication among the *yamahoko*, in 1923 the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Rengo-kai, the predecessor of the current Federation (incorporated in 1992) which I chair, was established, marking the birth of a federation of *yamahoko* associations.

The mission, roles and responsibilities of this subsequently organization grew in importance, and today, it responds to nearly all questions and issues concerning the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko* and their processions. The importance and weight of responsibility of the Federation increased significantly when, in 1979, “Yamahoko procession in the Gion Matsuri of Kyoto” was designated by the national government as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property and the Federation was entrusted with its administration.

Of the three problems introduced in Section 6, the solutions to the second and third, i.e., the problems of ownership of real estate (*chōie*) and *yamahoko*, are now within sight.

Solving the first problem, i.e., the problem of securing human resources to carry out *yamahoko*-related events in the Gion Matsuri, is not as simple. It involves not only the fates of Gion religious beliefs, the spirit of self-government and independence, which had long been fostered in the people through the *chōjū* system and which are essential elements of the festival, but also the spiritual lives of modern Japanese; in that sense it is a very serious issue, and not something that can be resolved by simply manipulating in imposed system.

Drawing on several real examples, I would like to briefly illustrate the problem of the preserving and passing on both the tangible and intangible folk cultural properties with which the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Federation is directly involved.

8. Preserving and passing on the tangible folk cultural properties of the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko* processions

The *yama*, *hoko*, and *yatai* floats paraded around during festivals throughout Japan are composites of art reflecting the entirety of crafts and skills seen in each particular community. It has long been thought that the *yamahoko* of the Gion Matsuri are one of the oldest known examples in Japan of such floats forming the impetus and core of this type of event, that as such they served as models for similar festivals throughout the country, and that they have reached the highest level of perfection in terms of artistry.

Given this reputation, in 1962 the national government designated 29 Gion Matsuri *yamahoko* floats as
Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. In addition to preserving all yamahoko structures themselves, this designation mandated that a truly broad range of items be preserved and passed on to future generations. These included woodworks, textiles, paintings, lacquers, crafted metal objects, dolls, musical instruments, meeting halls (kaisho) used for display, decorative draperies, storehouses for yamahoko parts and components, and even articles made of paper, such as paper crowns and ritual paper streamers. Today I have chosen to present samples of woodwork, tapestry and painting together with visual aids.

The first example is of the repair and restoration of the “turret” section of the Tsukihoko float. Years of use had resulted in cracks that were not only problematic for pulling the float around but also potentially dangerous. It was rebuilt in 2003 for the purpose of restoration (photo).

The next example is of the repair of the wheels of the Iwatoyama float. The old wheels had been used since the Edo Period, so it was decided that they would be repaired and restored (photo). When you use new materials to repair designated cultural properties, regulations require that you always use the same type of wood as the original, and this applies to turrets as well. The trees must also be grown in Japan. There are 10 yamahoko in the Gion Matsuri like the Iwatoyama float that ride on large wheels. Red oak has traditionally been used for the wheel ruts, so red oak must be used in the future as well. However, there are very few sources of domestic red oak. It is thought that they are only left in parts of the Kirishima Mountains in Kagoshima, Kyushu, and since the preservation of nature is an issue common to all of humankind, it is necessary to consider the appropriateness of cutting down a rare and old tree for this purpose. We are in fact coming to a turning point regarding the problem of preserving wooden artifacts designated as tangible cultural properties in the Gion Matsuri.

The next item is a dyed textile (photo). It is called a miokuri, which is basically a large drapery used to decorate the back of a yamahoko, in this case the Niwatoriboko float. This miokuri, an import that was made in the latter half of the 16th century in Brabant, Brussels, has been designated as an important cultural property by the government. It has not stood up well to years of use, and so it was recreated with a method called “restoration by reconstruction” (photo).

This process of “restoration by reconstruction,” which basically entails creating a replica, probably needs some explanation. Normally, if an important cultural property has been damaged, it will be restored by repairing it; one is not usually made anew. However, having gone through three major crises since the Meiji Restoration, many of the textiles used in the Gion Matsuri have either not been restored for over a century, or they have been repaired improperly in an ad hoc manner by the different preservation associations, and the degree of damage is often so great that repair efforts can no longer restored them to their original state. Because of this problem, a method called “restoration by reconstruction” is allowed as a means to preserve the value of the original as a cultural property for the modern age. This method entails using materials as close to the original as possible and using the same fabrication techniques to create a replica that is virtually identical to the original.

Here is another example of an item that has been “restored by reconstruction” (photo). It is the miokuri of the Kuronushiyama float, a float that is carried rather than pulled on wheels. The miokuri was made in China in the middle of the 17th century.

The last example is of repairs done to a painting (photo). This painting goes under the eaves of the Nagitanahoko float. It was painted by Matsumura Keibun (1779-1843), a late Edo-era artist. Repairs were done because the picture itself was no longer recognizable.

9. Preserving and passing on the intangible folk cultural properties of the Gion Matsuri yamahoko processions

As I previously stated, the yamahoko procession of the Kyoto Gion Matsuri was designated by the national government as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1979. The term yamahoko procession, however, encompasses a wide variety of diverse elements. It includes all events and rituals that take place
before, during, and after the procession, not to mention the manner of the procession on the day of the festival itself. To name a few major examples, it encompasses all events held on the day before the festival, such as the ceremonies held by the various preservation associations to mark the start of the festival (kippu-iri), the traditional drawing of lots to determine which floats go in what order (kujitori-shiki), and the ritual prayer for good weather on the day of the festival (hiyori-kagura), in addition to all events surrounding children participating in the festival (chigo and kamuro), and the duties and ritual etiquette of musicians, float leaders, carpenters, workers to assemble and disassemble the floats, rhythm keepers, people who stand on the float roofs, float pullers and carriers, and people that walk along with the floats.

In fact, the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Rengo-kai Federation spends more energy working to preserve and pass on intangible cultural folk properties than it does for tangible ones. Ideally speaking, if the national government, scholars, and technical experts provide enough direction, the preservation of tangible properties is achievable, but as for intangible cultural properties, it is entirely up to us as residents and the Federation acting on our behalf.

There are innumerable problems, but today I would like to point out two in particular that I think are both typical and symbolic: the problem of obtaining materials for the gong beaters that musicians use, and the problem of recruiting pullers and carriers for the yamahoko.

First I shall address the issue of the gong beaters. The three musical instruments used by the musicians in the Gion Matsuri are the gong, flute, and drum, and of those, the gong is most central for creating the overall rhythm. The beater used to strike the gongs is called a kane-suri, or literally “gong beater” (kane-suri and photo).

Traditionally, the handle of the beater had to be made with the baleen plates of fin whales and the head with dear horn. After Japan ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) of 1975, commercial whaling was restricted, and it became nearly impossible to obtain the raw materials. For over 30 years, kane-suri used in the Gion Matsuri have been made of plastic.

However, when the Federation received in 2000 a grant for the promotion of community cultural activities from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Agency directed that six million yen of the money be used to fashion kane-suri out of whale baleen. The reason was twofold: the Agency for Cultural Affairs insisted that traditional materials should be used, and fortunately, a stock of whale baleen from whaling done before CITES was discovered.

The Federation had 360 whale baleen kane-suri made, and 30 each were distributed to the 12 yamahoko that used them. However, the following problems occurred. First, they broke one after another, either because the baleen used had degraded with age, the proper traditional techniques used to craft them had been lost, or the players grown so accustomed to plastic kane-suri that they treated the softer baleen beaters too roughly. Second, when the Federation ordered on its own initiative an additional 100 kane-suri, the price had increased to 6,825 yen per unit, which is three times what the plastic ones cost. Third, it was determined that it would be difficult to obtain whale baleen indefinitely and on a sustained basis. And finally, there were difficulties coordinating the methods for playing gongs with baleen kane-suri and plastic kane-suri. For these and related reasons, plans for using only baleen kane-suri for the Gion Matsuri have been shelved for the time being.

In sum, the task of trying to use whale baleen for traditional kane-suri is, from the noble perspective of preserving and passing on intangible cultural property, without doubt a legitimate one, but the issue of how to strike a smooth and sustainable balance with the use of plastic kane-suri, which has become the norm, cannot be solved with ideas that look sound only on paper.

Next I would like to address the problem of recruiting pullers and carriers. From its inception, the Gion Matsuri was never a festival based on voluntary participation, but rather a “contracted” festival, in which one or a few people in each community served as sponsors and hired people to help. That fact remains true today.
Traditionally, pullers and carriers hired every year by the *yamahoko* were contracted by specific agricultural regions or specific occupational guilds undertaking the hiring. However, with the dramatic social and economic changes after Japan’s defeat in World War II, agricultural communities around Kyoto continued to diminish, people’s mindsets changed, religious convictions associated with Gion began to waver, and it became impossible to sustain this traditional system of hiring. Initially, the practice of hiring college students part-time became common. But college students are by nature a fluid population, so this did not result in the formation of reliable organizations. In 1983, to respond to this challenge, a campaign was begun to organize pullers and carriers on a volunteer basis. In the beginning the organization was only able to take care of eight *yamahoko* floats, but by 2007, this organization, called Kyoto Gionmatsuri Volunteer 21, was responsible for all of 21 of the 32 *yamahoko* paraded during the festival. Of the remaining floats, seven use hired college students and the other four are paraded by the groups traditionally involved.

In short, even if one wishes to preserve the traditions in terms of the composition of the groups that were once the driving force behind *yamahoko*, the reality is that broader social factors have hollowed these groups out, and they must be revitalized by a new movement, namely the spirit of volunteerism. In other words, efforts must be made to continually create new traditions in order to preserve and pass on intangible culture. I feel that this volunteer work is functioning as the *yorichō* system for the 21st century. I hold it in high regard, and I greatly benefit from it.

10. Conclusion

Lastly, I would like to outline the basic stance that we take as we try to preserve and pass on the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko* procession as an intangible cultural heritage. First, I would like to quote a somewhat lengthy passage from a book by National Diet member Atsuo Nakamura:

> Japan has been a country controlled by the government since the Edo Period. In the Edo Period, however, that government was not the central government, but that of the feudal lords of the fiefdoms (*han*). And within those fiefdoms, countless communal entities lived and breathed with a certain amount of independence. There remained a certain level of desire to be independent when it came to the everyday affairs of the people in these communities. The loss of this communal independence occurred after the Meiji Restoration. Japan was in such a rush to modernize that it chose an authoritative and nationalistic path. In order to further advance the centralization of authority, [the state] obliterated all vestiges of individual or community independence and self-reliance. The people, though they could not clearly define it, were terrified by a state ---the new government--- that exercised such a tremendous degree of authority, and [consequently] rapidly gave up their independence and rights of self-determination. For this reason the people neither feel responsibility for wars started by the government nor think about their propriety. The abandonment of independence brought about a suspension of the thought process, a situation which continues to this day. (Informally translated from *Kodomo-tachi no 8-gatsu 15-nichi*, “The children’s August 15th”, *The children’s August 15th*, Iwanami Shinsho series, Iwanami Shoten Publishers)

In Kyoto as well, the modernization of the Japanese state and the centralization of power “obliterated all vestiges of individual or community independence and self-reliance” on the part of the residents of central Kyoto, people who had once produced an energetic civic community. But despite that, when one considers the developments outlined in the passage I have just quoted, the fact that only the traditions of the *yamahoko* procession were left to the people virtually unscathed takes on an important symbolic significance. By this I mean that it is the Gion Matsuri *yamahoko* procession that: first, makes citizens of Kyoto recall that they once possessed all sorts of administrative rights and that they once lived with a self-reliant spirit based on rights of independence and self-determination; second, assures the residents of Kyoto that even today they possess that latent talent; and third, gives them hope that they can one day manifest that talent on social and political fronts. And it is this popular event symbolizing these three aspects that has been entrusted to us.

These elements are precisely what drive the sense of responsibility and mission of the Gion Matsuri Yamahoko Rengo-kai Federation in its efforts to preserve and pass on the *yamahoko* processions of the Gion.
Matsuri as cultural property of the Japanese people.