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Community Creation by Residents and Tourists via Takachiho *kagura* in Japanese Rural Area

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Author(s)
Shiro Horiuchi

ABSTRACT

Rural communities are disappearing in Japan due to aging, depopulation, and changes in lifestyles. Recently, outsiders such as immigrants, volunteers, and tourists cooperate with residents to revive and maintain rural communities. This paper uses my fieldwork in the rural areas of Takachiho, where the Japanese traditional dance *kagura* is well-known, to consider the possibility that residents and tourists cooperatively create shared communities. Actually, an increasing number of tourists visit Takachiho to see *kagura*. Consequently, some dancers miss "classical" *kagura*, which involved almost exclusively local residents in intimate interactions. Nonetheless, many dancers welcome the influx of tourists and its stimulation of community festivals. Some tourists are attracted to *kagura* at community festivals, and some dancers and tourists have tried to forge bridges between their groups to create a shared community. The existence of *kagura* becomes an important common symbol that connects members of local communities.

KEYWORDS

Community Boundary; Local Culture; Outsiders

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