

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

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Received February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012; revised April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012; accepted May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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

## Introduction

Throughout history, ideas about communities have attracted continuous attention from sociologists (Tönnies, 1887; MacIver, 1924), who have studied various communities in the forms of local villages or cities, companies or schools, and even Internet groups (Delanty, 2003). In general, communities share the features of a reserve, in which members interact intimately and trust one another. Based on secure social relationships, members govern common property resources or manage social capital following the rules or norms of the community (Coleman, 1988; Ostrom, 1990). To maintain the beneficial functions of the community, members almost always reify their membership in some way and exclude outsiders (Cohen, 1985). Indeed, the idea of a community entails some degree of xenophobia. Only when community membership is fixed, do the members feel obliged and willing to obey the rules of the community despite the costs because they can gain benefits from its exclusivity (Olson, 1965). Because membership is fixed, members communicate with one another frequently. Only when the members know one another can they monitor and punish those who violate the rules of the community (Hechter, 1987). The members reify their membership to secure their relationships; such secure relationships, in turn, lead members to further reify their membership. Members continually construct social boundaries between themselves and outsiders to ensure the identity of the community (Lamont & Molnar, 2002).

To further concretize images of a community, I will examine the historically rural areas of Japan. Japanese rural areas were historically composed of hamlets or *shizen-son* (Suzuki, 1968), which had fixed memberships. Residents lived most of their lives in the hamlets, where they were assumed to share the same ancestors. Most residents were farmers and were involved in the collective work of agriculture, exchanging mutual help,

which was referred to as *yui* or *moyai*. They excluded outsiders from their shared resources. Local cultures were represented by, for example, dances, music, and marches, which often became common symbols by which members demonstrated their membership in the community. At times, residents sincerely welcomed certain outsiders before finally excluding them; these welcome/exclusion customs formed the basis of the local cultures in Japanese rural areas (Orikuchi, 2003).

Since the major industrial developments in Japan in the 1960s, the situation in rural areas has changed dramatically (Hosoya, 1998). Most residents are not fully involved in agriculture. Instead, they may have part-time jobs in agriculture. Collective agricultural jobs are disappearing because of greater mechanization, and local cultures are also disappearing because local residents hardly have time for festivals due to their new jobs. Fewer young residents are interested in local cultures, which appear outmoded to them. Many residents have left their home towns for major cities to pursue jobs, studies, or leisure activities. The few remaining residents can hardly sustain the former rural communities. Indeed, the communities in many rural areas are in danger of collapse.

Some Japanese rural areas now invite outsiders to activate or revive their communities. Outsiders consist of immigrants, volunteers, and tourists. Immigrants and volunteers actually revitalize rural areas by operating new businesses through networks that transcend the boundaries of the settled rural areas (Akitsu, 1998), by taking jobs that residents do not fill due to depopulation or aging (Yamamoto, 2003), and by participating in the local culture as new members (Hoshino, 2009). Immigrants and volunteers can really be regarded as new members of rural communities in the sense that they make friends with some residents and are concerned about the future of the community.

Compared with immigrants and volunteers who interact with

residents directly, tourists have fewer interactions with residents. As a consequence, misunderstandings are more likely to occur between residents and tourists. Previous studies have actually suggested that tourism had negative consequences on local societies (Smith, 1989); for example, tourists may cause residents to abandon the practices that constitute part of their local culture, steal sacred statues, provide few direct benefits to residents, lead local residents to become engaged in the practices of the local culture for monetary gain, and contribute to negative stereotypes due to limited opportunities for direct contact.

Some tourists, however, contribute to the revitalization of rural communities, and local residents have improved their relationships with one another through communication with tourists (Nash, 1996). To attract tourists, rural residents may revive their traditional festivals as part of managing their rural communities (Moon, 1989). Indeed, residents may consciously construct the community imagined by the tourists after welcoming the latter from outside their borders to earn cash income (Yamashita, 2003). Local cultures, which were originally created as commodities to entertain tourists, have often become the basis of the local identity of the residents (Cohen, 1988). These consequences, however, are only by-products of the impact of tourism on local societies. As long as tourists rarely interact intimately with residents, they cannot be regarded as *members* of the communities, a role that the immigrants and volunteers adopt legitimately.

It remains unclear whether tourists can work with residents to cooperatively create and maintain a shared community in rural areas as do immigrants and volunteers; that is, the ability of tourists to be members of their target communities is uncertain. To revive rural communities, some portion of the tourists should be sufficiently embedded in their target communities to become members. Projects involving "alternative tourism" (Smith & Eadington, 1992) are expected to revitalize rural communities, perhaps by enticing some tourists to become members of the communities. It is necessary to accumulate case studies to address these issues because individual situations differ greatly from one another. This paper introduces my fieldwork as one examination of the possibility of community creation via the cooperation of residents and tourists.

### Takachiho *kagura*

Takachiho is located in Miyazaki prefecture in Japan. Although the central part of Takachiho contains many shops, restaurants, and hotels, most areas of Takachiho consist of paddy or vegetable fields, cattle sheds, and mountains with coniferous trees.

Takachiho is famous as a sacred place in Japanese mythology and as the birthplace of *kagura*<sup>1</sup>, a traditional dance that

was transmitted to many areas in Japan. Kotegawa (1976) stated that Takachiho *kagura* probably originated in the Nara era (710-794). According to Yamaguchi (2000), the present style of Takachiho *kagura* dates from the Kamakura era (1192-1333). In Takachiho, residents have performed *kagura* every year, including during World War II (1939-1945). During the 1970s, the number of dancers decreased because of depopulation and aging in the area. During those times, Takachiho *kagura* was selected as an intangible cultural asset by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan, and some residents were officially invited to perform *kagura* in several European countries. Because of these events, which made Takachiho *kagura* famous, many residents started to participate in *kagura* after the 1970s. Despite the continued depopulation and aging of the area, *kagura* is still practiced in 19 areas in Takachiho in 2010<sup>2</sup>.

In Takachiho, the *kagura* season begins in November and lasts until the February of the following year. It usually starts during the evening of a festival day and involves the continuous performance of 33 dances, including formal dances in which audiences welcome local spirits (the dancers), amusing dances in which dancers interact pleasantly with the audience, storytelling dances in which dancers act out stories from mythology, and climactic dances in which audiences say farewell to the spirits that then return to the mountains. The finale occurs the next morning. *Kagura* is both a prayer to the spirits by the residents and a festival event in which residents interacted intimately with one another, ensuring comradeship within the community. All dancers are traditionally restricted to males.

Residents traditionally selected private homes as *kagurayado*, places for performing *kagura*<sup>3</sup>. Historically, private homes in Takachiho had been large because home owners had worked in agriculture and owned cattle. Tradition is important for understanding Takachiho *kagura* in that the home owners of *kagurayado* were proud of being selected and having their homes welcome the spirits. Furthermore, dancers and audiences stayed in the same rooms at the private homes. At midnight, dancers and audiences interacted intimately amid great excitement. At times, quarrels occurred among audience members who had had too much to drink. At the end of *kagura*, audience members were given sacred ornaments used in this tradition. Audiences were largely restricted to the residents of Takachiho, although a few tourists visited from distant areas. Thus, intimate interaction between dancers and audience members was easy, allowing the residents to reinforce their sense of community.

Today, Takachiho residents can barely fit performances of *kagura* into private homes. Recently built houses are typically small because the owners do not own cattle or work in agriculture. As a consequence, *kagura* is often performed in public buildings. In 2009 and 2010, respectively, nine and 10 of the 19 areas conducted *kagura* in public buildings. The change in venue from private homes to public buildings represents the change in *kagura* itself as it moved from traditional to modern. Furthermore, the number of tourists from outside of Takachiho

<sup>1</sup>The myth tells about the sun spirit, *Amaterasu*, who had hidden herself in a cave formed by rocks, referred to as *Amanoiwato*, located in Takachiho. When the sun then disappeared from the earth, many spirits tried to remove the rocks to liberate the sun, but this plan failed because the rocks were too heavy to move. *Uzume*, a spirit related to the arts and joy, danced in front of the rocks. Because her dance was entertaining, all the spirits gathered to watch it. *Amaterasu* heard the laughter of the spirits from her position behind the rocks. This piqued her interest, and she opened the rocks slightly. Then, the powerful spirit, *Tajikarao*, inserted his arms into the crack and cleared the rocks. The sun then returned to the earth. *Uzume's* dance is regarded as the origin of *kagura*.

<sup>2</sup>Since the *kagura* revived in an area, it was practiced in 20 areas in 2011.

<sup>3</sup>This tradition includes Takachiho *kagura*, although *kagura* from areas other than Takachiho are often performed in public buildings, in the areas surrounding shrines, in prefabricated structures, or in theaters outside residential areas rather than in private homes.

has increased considerably during recent years<sup>4</sup>.

I attended 11 *kagura* during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 seasons. Information on the 11 areas is presented in **Table 1**. I counted the number of audience members in and around the *kagurayado* at the start of each dance. Because the audience members were not uniformly distributed within the *kagurayado* during performances, it was impossible to ascertain the exact number of attendees. Thus, I approximated the number of audience members, which was sufficient to reflect trends. **Figure 1** shows two typical examples of the number of audience members during *kagura* performed at a private home and a public building, respectively. The audience peaked earlier in the public buildings than in the private homes. In the public buildings, the audience decreased to almost to its nadir by the finale of *kagura*. In contrast, the number recovered to almost its peak by the finale of performances at private homes. The minimal audiences at midnight and at the finale of *kagura* performed in public buildings compared with those performed in private homes reflects the loss of the traditional meaning of *kagura* as a festival event. Indeed, even those performances of *kagura* that occurred at private homes included many tourists in the audiences. Nowadays, residents cannot realistically ensure the stability of their community through *kagura*.

Thus far, this paper has introduced three dichotomous categories of people in Takachiho: community members versus outsiders, residents versus tourists, and dancers versus audiences<sup>5</sup>. Dancers are virtually necessarily residents, whereas

audiences include residents and tourists. Thus, we can classify people into dancers, residents in the audience, and tourists. The issue in this regard is where to locate the boundary between community members and outsiders. **Figure 2** presents four hypotheses: 1) Community members are restricted to dancers, whereas all audience members are outsiders. This hypothesis is rejected because *kagura* is supported by many residents (Fukushima, 2003); 2) All residents are community members, and all tourists are outsiders. This hypothesis sounds naïve now because some residents originated from outside the rural communities; 3) Dancers and some of the residents in the audience are community members, whereas the other residents in the audience and all tourists are outsiders. This hypothesis may be correct because some residents are not motivated to be embedded in the rural communities, as implied in hypothesis 2; 4) Community members include dancers, some residents in the audience, and some tourists. This hypothesis may also be correct if tourism associated with Takachiho *kagura* welcomed some tourists as community members. If this hypothesis were supported, the creation of communities by residents and tourists may be possible.

### Experienced Dancers

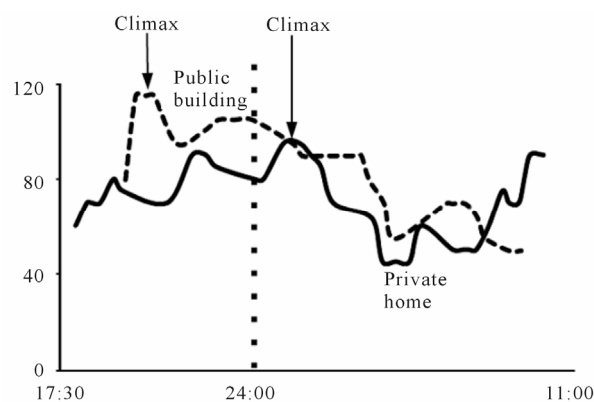
In 2010, I interviewed 11 experienced dancers who served as the leader in their respective areas (**Table 1**). All were patri-archs. This section discusses the experienced dancers' understandings of *kagura*. Hereafter, I will refer to each dancer in

**Table 1.**  
Kagurayado, experienced and young dancers by area.

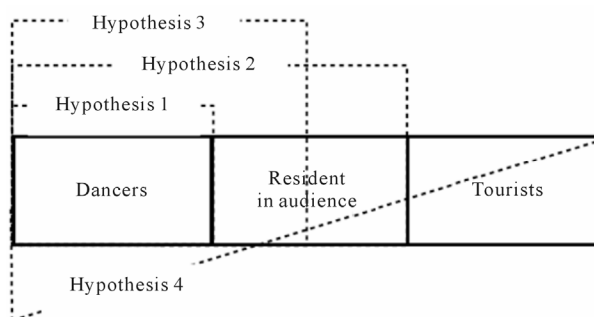
	Kagurayado		Experienced		Young	
	2009-2010	2010-2011	Present age	Start age	Present age	Start age
A	Private	Private	58	18	37	33
B	Private	Private	76	17	30	23
C	Private	Private	60	18	34	11
D	Private	Private	57	20	20	8
E	Private	Private	57	17	23	11
F	Public	Private	71	18	27	11
G	Public	Public	61	17	18	3
H	Public	Public	58	20	26	23
I	Public	Public	54	30	32	24
J	Public	Public	56	14	22	19
K	Private	Public	72	30	37	35

<sup>4</sup>The two most famous magazines for domestic tourists, *Rurubu* (JTB cooperation) and *Mappuru* (Shoubun-sha cooperation), cover Takachiho *kagura* every year. *Rurubu* initially covered not only Takachiho *kagura* but also other *kaguras* performed in Miyazaki prefecture. Since 2002, the magazine has devoted the most space to Takachiho *kagura*, and since 2007, the magazine has included only Takachiho *kagura*. *Mappuru* also initially covered many *kaguras* in the prefecture. Since 2004, however, it has primarily covered Takachiho *kagura*, and since 2008, it has covered Takachiho *kagura* exclusively.

<sup>5</sup>This paper intentionally avoided the use of notions related to hosts and guests (Smith, 1989). Although these ideas are important in the sociology of tourism, they may obscure the topic of this paper.



**Figure 1.**  
The numbers of audience members in a private home (solid curve: area A, the 2010-2011 season) and in a public building (dashed curve: area J, the 2009-2010 season). The dotted line indicates 24:00.



**Figure 2.**  
Four hypotheses about the boundaries of community members.

terms of the area of his *kagura* group.

Many experienced dancers reported that *kagura* was not a show for an audience but rather a prayer to the spirits. In this sense, they were sorry about the change in venue from private homes to public buildings because the relationship between residents and spirits changed accordingly. Dancer G told me that the owners of *kagurayado* had assumed important roles, including receiving gifts from the spirits (dancers). *Kagura* performed in public buildings involved no such owners, and spirits (dancers) had to select audience members to receive gifts as part of the ceremony for the sake of convenience. Many experienced dancers missed the intimate interactions among the residents at old-style *kagura* performances.

Dancers in areas in which *kagura* could continue to be performed in private homes took pride in their traditional *kagura*. Dancer B proudly told me that their *kagura* was famous because they had defended their traditional styles by performing *kagura* in private homes each year. He also shared his deeply felt attitudes about local traditions, as represented by *kagura*. Indeed, Dancer B thought that the traditions had made him a man. Dancer C also told me that they would not stop performing *kagura* at private homes, and that they would continue to pray for local spirits even if they could not perform *kagura* due to depopulation and aging.

In contrast, some dancers expressed neutral or even positive impressions of the change in *kagurayado*. Although they tentatively told me the size of the audience for *kagura* did not matter, they also eagerly welcomed large audiences. The audience capacity is usually larger at public buildings than at private homes. Indeed, public buildings also have more space for parking, rendering *kagura* more accessible to tourists who travel long distances by car. Dancer J told me that the influx of tourists contributed to the beautiful dances in their *kagura* and noted that the dancers in his group worked hard during training. In areas F and K, residents performed *kagura* in both private homes and public buildings. Leaders in both areas told me that the atmosphere of *kagura* performed in private homes did not differ from that performed in public buildings.

Some dancers created unique *kagura* based on interactions with tourists. In area D, children younger than 18 played central roles in *kagura*. The leader told me he started *kagura* that involved primarily children after he assumed his position. He hoped their *kagura* would become famous among the areas of Takachiho by performing such unique *kagura*. Some years ago, a woman was accidentally invited into the sacred place of *kagura* in area H, a practice that was strictly forbidden in all other areas of Takachiho. The woman married a man who was also invited to the sacred place. The leader told me that the dancers interpreted the consequence as the will of the spirits. Welcoming women into *kagura* has now become part of a new local culture in that area.

Dancer A told me they once changed their *kagura* so that audiences would be more likely to enjoy the performance. They were proud that their *kagura* attracted large audiences at theaters and prepared new costumes for *kagura* to impress audiences. After the experience of presenting *kagura* in shows, they also recognized the value of the traditional *kagura* and recently returned to a traditional form. They currently use clothes that were worn more than 200 years ago and have found that such traditional *kagura* also attracted large audiences who sought authentic culture.

## Young Dancers

I asked each experienced dancer to introduce me to a young dancer who was active in his group, and I also interviewed these young dancers (Table 1). All were males.

It has often been assumed that young people leave rural areas to go to cities to pursue jobs, studies, and leisure activities. Thus, I asked the young dancers whether they wanted to leave their rural areas and live in cities. Contrary to my expectations, no respondent reported hoping to live in a city. Some had already left their hometowns and lived in cities, but they became tired of city life and returned.

Dancer G lived together with their parents, and his father was also a dancer in the *kagura* group. He told me that he had been trying to find jobs in Takachiho since he was a child to enable him to continue *kagura* and that he had been successful in these efforts. In response to my asking why his desire to continue *kagura* was so strong, he told me that performing *kagura* had been fun during his childhood because it allowed him to earn money. At present, he loved *kagura* as a sophisticated dance and tried hard to perform his *kagura* with beauty. His father told me that his son remained a novice because *kagura* was a sacred matter involving the spirits. Nevertheless, he noted that his son's *kagura* was sophisticated and that he was proud of him. Dancers in all areas and from different generations engaged in many discussions pertinent to this research. Many young dancers told me that they were pleased because *kagura* had enabled them to develop friendships with local residents from different generations.

Young dancers welcomed tourists from distant areas. Dancer D made friends with a tourist who had taken a photo of his *kagura* and had won a prize for it. Dancer H told me that he tried hard to amuse tourists who had come to their *kagura* from distant areas. All young dancers reported being happy about the possibility of many tourists visiting their area to see *kagura* because their area would be more likely become the site of a large festival after such exposure. They wanted to continue the tradition of these festivals for their own enjoyment as well as for the enjoyment of residents and tourists. They seemed to believe more strongly than did the experienced dancers in the power of *kagura* to revitalize their areas.

Dancer A had lived in a city area outside of his home area for more than 10 years before returning and working at the office of tourism in Takachiho. His father was the leader of in the *kagura* group I interviewed. Based on his experience of living in a city for many years, he appreciated the value of *kagura*. He told me that residents did not lose their identity because they were naturally motivated to perform *kagura*. He also noted that such local traditions in rural areas should be preserved not only for the sake of residents but also for the sake of tourists. He hoped that tourists would invest in each area, thereby enabling additional residents to settle in these sites. He viewed this process as a kind of eco-tourism, and he insisted on the importance of having a mediator between residents and tourists to promote such eco-tourism.

Dancer K lived about 130 km from Takachiho and visited Takachiho every week to perform *kagura*. Although he was accepted by the leader as a dancer, many other dancers initially distrusted him. However, after much training, he now said he was accepted by the other dancers. He told me he would not move to Takachiho. Instead, he wanted to remain an outsider to advertise the *kagura* that was performed not only in area K but

also the *kagura* that was performed in all areas of Takachiho. Indeed, he wanted to advertise *kagura* to all people around the world as the Sarutahiko spirit, who mediated between the spirits of heaven and those of earth according to mythology.

### Audiences

I also interviewed audience members during *kagura* performances. Because we spoke during *kagura*, each interview was short. In total, I interviewed more than 100 audience members, almost equally divided between males and females. The interviewees ranged from children and elementary school students to seniors who were older than 70. I did not sample audiences systematically. In the following section, I will present several typical audience members.

Some audience members were residents of Takachiho. For them, *kagura* was a part of their everyday lives. To attend a *kagura* festival was a duty of living in their area. Some had lived in Takachiho many years ago. To see *kagura* was an opportunity for them to visit their homeland. Some were friends or relatives of the dancers. They were invited by dancers to *kagura* festivals. In response to my question about which elements of *kagura* appealed to them, they noted elements such as the music, dances, and atmosphere. However, they sometimes needed a longer time to respond, perhaps because *kagura* was so natural to them, and they were not usually conscious of the elements of *kagura* that held a particular fascination to them.

Some audience members were tourists seeing *kagura* for the first time. They came from outside Takachiho, including from Miyazaki (90 km), Fukuoka (130 km), and even Tokyo (850 km). I asked them about which elements of *kagura* appealed to them. Almost all noted that Takachiho was famous for *kagura* and that they had been interested in *kagura* or Japanese tradition for a long time, wanting to see *kagura* at least once. Some had seen *kagura* in other areas. They presented detailed explanations about the various features of *kagura* that they found to be fascinating. These elements included not only the music, dances, and stories, but also the local tradition that transmitted *kagura* for multiple generations as well as the friendly interactions between dancers and audiences.

Some tourists found *kagura* through a community festival, and a male tourist around 40 had performed *kagura* in another area. His *kagura* was about to disappear due to depopulation, aging, and changes in lifestyle, and he sought to identify the factors that enabled *kagura* to be active in each area and to attract many tourists. One woman around 30 worked in the field of performing arts and was interested in the *kagura* stage, noting that it was very polished, possibly because of its use by multiple generations. Another woman around 30 drew pictures to depict the intimate relationships between the people and the spirits that appeared in *kagura* because she was fascinated by the *kagura* festival.

Some tourists were repeat visitors with strong motivation to continue to see *kagura*. One male well-known researcher of *kagura* around 60 told me that he had continually attended *kagura* festivals to study the evolution of masks. Some dancers of Takachiho *kagura* wear masks to model the spirits, a practice that informed him about how the masks had been used in ancient times. A female tourist around 40 produced Japanese haiku poems and was interested in Japanese religious traditions, particularly those transmitted in rural areas. To deepen her knowledge of rural religions and her haikus, she attended *ka-*

*gura* on a regular basis. A male tourist around 50 continually visited Takachiho to take photos of *kagura*. He told me about his efforts to capture the fascinating features of *kagura* in his photos; these efforts were unsuccessful because photos could hardly grasp the intimate atmosphere or the spirits at *kagura* festivals. These people had intimate friendships with some of the residents. Indeed, some residents welcomed the repeat visitors into their drinking groups during *kagura*.

Some tourists visited Takachiho frequently not only to see *kagura* but also to support the community. A woman around 50 had visited an area of Takachiho 7 years earlier for the first time and had continued to visit the area since that time. During the past 4 years, she had guided dozens of tourists to the area every year. By inviting many tourists and encouraging them to invest in the area, she was trying to support the local dancers both financially and emotionally. A man around 40 had once visited Takachiho as a tourist and later moved to Takachiho. This individual was often asked to guide tourists, playing a role as a mediator between residents and tourists. He told me he wanted to educate tourists about the significance of *kagura* from an objective perspective, a task that was difficult for more established residents because they could hardly be expected to grasp *kagura* from the standpoint of a tourist. Thus, he tried to provide a bridge between residents and tourists.

### Discussion

Audiences for traditional Takachiho *kagura* were almost always limited to local residents. Relationships between dancers and audiences were close, which was a feature of classical *kagura* festivals. Interactions between dancers and audience members served to stimulate the community. In contrast, the influx of tourists from outside of Takachiho is a feature of contemporary Takachiho *kagura*. The cooperative formation of communities by dancers and audiences appears less likely now because contemporary audiences include many tourists. Dancers and audience members can hardly be expected to engage in intimate interactions given the reservations held about one another. Many experienced dancers miss traditional *kagura*, in which dancers and audience members interacted intimately in private homes.

Nevertheless, this study showed that residents could create a community by cooperating with tourists. Tourists encouraged residents to continue *kagura* and to reinforce their local identity. Indeed, some experienced dancers approved of the changes in *kagurayado* because the use of public buildings allowed more tourists to attend performances. Some experienced dancers recreated their traditions in response to tourist demand. Some young dancers tried to stimulate their rural communities by welcoming tourists to their *kagura* festivals. Some tourists harbored particular motivations to attend *kagura* festivals and to stimulate rural communities. Thus, residents and tourists can construct *kagura* in cooperation with each other. Through communication between residents and tourists, *kagura* is continually reformed; *kagura* thus becomes a symbol of the community shared by residents and tourists.

It is often assumed that globalization or the influx of outsiders to an area likely leads to the disappearance of local communities and their cultures. However, globalization does not always destroy or ruin local culture; rather, globalization can sometimes promote the revival of local culture through the influx of welcome and helpful outsiders. After freeing them-

selves from unwanted social constraints, many people are eager to be embedded in a community (Beck et al., 1994) in which they find commonalities with other members. People often create such communities with the aid of tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Takachiho *kagura* has a long history that may date to more than 1000 years ago. The content of *kagura* has changed continually since its inception, and this process of change continues. Although the content of *kagura* may change, its authenticity must remain intact because residents establish their identity through this tradition. Indeed, contemporary *kagura* brings great meaning to residents.

Tourists often have strong effects on local societies, whereas residents scarcely influence tourists. This asymmetrical relationship between residents and tourists is often a barrier to intimate interactions between the two groups (Smith, 1989). However, in Takachiho, some tourists have been strongly influenced by *kagura*, even creating new identities by attending their performance. In a critical response to the image that tourists seek only superficial experiences (Boorstin, 1962), MacCannell (1973) defined pilgrimage tourists as those who try to find authentic culture. Pilgrimage tourists are expected to communicate well with residents and may also create communities with residents.

This study suggested that some dancers, immigrants, and tourists adopted important roles as mediators to bridge the gap between residents and tourists. Horiuchi (2008) discussed the role of mediators in decreasing the stress experienced by groups who are separated by distinctions of some sort. In contexts in which people differ significantly from one another, outsiders who have moved between or among groups are often expected to take on the role of mediators (Horiuchi, 2011). Kito (1998) discussed the importance of outsiders in environmental movements. Freed from any connection within the area, outsiders can objectively understand local values and thus act as mediators. Of all the participants in this study, outsiders were most conscious of the maintenance of the community. They therefore tried to act as bridges between residents and tourists.

If mediators bridge differences between peoples, bridging should count as social capital. Granovetter (1973) showed that people benefited from weak ties with people of different groups in the sense that they could use these connections to find good jobs; weak ties may also contribute to the development of whole communities. Putnam (2000) discussed the differences between bonding and bridging social capital. The development of bridging social capital, in which people from different groups interact with one another, enables the stimulation of an entire community. Mediators can revitalize rural communities by bridging the gap between residents and tourists.

Bauman (2001) described two classes of people: people of the lower class, who are restricted by space, and people of the upper class, who are restricted by time. The former are losing local communities, whereas the latter do not sympathize with local communities. However, this study showed that local communities are created by residents who could leave but decided to settle in their home town. Local communities are also created by tourists who seek community with local residents. We cannot simply regard the residents as people of the lower class and tourists as people of the upper class. Indeed, people of the middle class may play central roles in revitalizing local communities, and it is clear that members of the middle class continually try to find their identities. People who are anxious about their identities often create communities that exclude

non-members (Young, 1999). The communities of Takachiho *kagura*, however, do not exclude outsiders. Rather, some outsiders act as mediators that bridge the gap between residents and tourists and thereby activate local communities.

At this point, we can identify where the boundary between community members and outsiders is situated. Of the four hypotheses introduced, hypothesis 4 is likely supported. Mediators are important to making the creation of a cooperative community involving residents and tourists possible. Also necessary is the existence of a local culture that attracts residents and tourists. To enable the development of a comprehensive understanding of the features of local cultures that attract residents and tourists, I suggest that several members of each group be designated as mediators. Additionally, further research is needed to understand the factors that contribute to community creation. It is possible that the local culture of created communities may need to be rooted in the history and nature of the place itself, which would allow all participants to view the existence of the community represented by the local culture as natural (Horiuchi, 2012).

## Acknowledgements

I thank the dancers and audiences of Takachiho *kagura* for their cooperation. I also thank S. Ogata who introduced me the details of Takachiho *kagura*. I thank the members of Tokyo Meeting for Mathematical Sociology and the members of Research Group for Common Pool Resources for discussions. This research was financially supported by Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists (B) “The Conditions for the Residents of Mountains Areas and Urban Areas Cooperate Together” and Meiji University Global COE program “Formation and Development of Mathematical Sciences Based on Modeling and Analysis”.

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