

Constructing Oyama

rural community capacity, policy structures and change

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March 2013

Dissertation presented to the Higher Degree Committee
of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who helped me in conducting this research and producing this dissertation. I would like to thank Professor Koichi Miyoshi for his encouragement, advice, patience, and for believing in me. Thank you for seeing my potential and giving me so many opportunities to further develop both professionally and personally. I will always be able to proudly assert that I am a graduate of the Miyoshi School for rural development studies and I look forward to our continued cooperation and my participation in future projects and initiatives wherever I can add value.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the people of Oyama especially Kurokawa Teruko and her late husband Hirofumi, Koda Kazumi and the Mori *fufu* for opening their homes and sharing much more than their stories. I hope that I can return the favour when you visit me.

Thank you to Okabe Yumiko for supporting me both in the field and out. Also Cindy Banyai – I enjoyed the mutual support we showed each other. I learned a lot from you and grew as a person as a result of our friendship. I hope that you can forgive the cantankerous temperament, selfishness and oddities that I displayed over the years. I look forward to a time when we can travel and work together again and have new adventures.

This research was also made possible by the Japanese Government and the very generous financial support I received through the Monbukagakusho Scholarship program. Without this program it is unlikely that I would have ever ended up in Japan for my post-graduate studies in the first place. I also received support from my employer, the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, with paid study leave and extended recreation leave from work for writing up the dissertation. I should mention, however, that this dissertation is entirely my own views and in no way reflects the position of the Department or the Australian Government. I thank my colleagues, managers and staff there for putting up with my distant mind and tired face over the last few months of 2012 leading up to the submission of the dissertation. I also benefited greatly from the helpful attitudes and strong administrative support from numerous administrative staff at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, in particular staff of the Academic and Research Offices.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge my family, friends, classmates, teachers and others who supported me in various ways both through the writing process and in my journey to reaching this point. There are too many people to list, but especially Ruth Stenning (for being so understanding while I have not been fulfilling my duties as a big sister – I am sorry), Susan Lee, Matt Simpson, Phil Daniels, Will Chun, Rika Tsuchida, Suzuki Sensei and Sorin Sensei. And a special thank you to Seth Mansfield for your sacrifice and understanding through this – you are my greatest inspiration.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Annaiban	Noticeboard/sign
APU	Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
Bihin	equipment
Bucho	Division Head
Danchi	neighbourhood/group of houses – in this case a grouping of shuraku
Faena	voluntary work (in indigenous Teenek community in Mexico)
Fufu	husband and wife
Gappei	amalgamation/consolidation
Gessu	the absolute worst
Guzen	by chance/accidentally
Hachimaki	headband
IfCD	Institute for Community Design
JA	Agricultural cooperative
JA- Zenchu	Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
Jigoku	hell
Jikatabi	tabi used for walking on dirt (traditional style shoe)
Kabu	A neighbourhood in Oyama
Kacho	Section Chief
Kangaekata	the way people think
Kanjikata	the way people feel
Kibbutz	commune (Israel)
Kohai	junior colleagues
Kokudo	national road/highway
Kominkan	community centre
Konbanwa	Good evening
Konohana Garten	direct sales market established in Oyama
Koshokutsuiho	post WWII purge of public servants
Kumiaicho	Chairperson of Agricultural Cooperative
Kuri	chestnut
Kyoshitsu	classroom
Minpaku	home stay
Mushirobata	traditional straw protest banners and symbol of farmers' uprising
Nohaku	farm stay
Nokyo	agricultural cooperative (used for Oyama Agricultural Cooperative)
Nomikai	drinking party
Nomin	farming folk
Norinchukin	central organization of the JA Banking System
NPC I	New Plum and Chestnut movement
NPC II	Neo Personality Combination movement
NPC III	New Paradise Community movement
Obaachan	Grandma (affectionate)
Ogiriata	neighbourhood in Oyama
OGTA	Ogiriata Green Tourism Association
Ohayo	Good Morning
Ojiichan	Grandpa (affectionate)

Ojizosan	Small Shinto statue/miniature outdoor shrine
Onegaishimasu	respectfully request
Otsukaresama	good job/you worked hard
OYHK	Oyama yusen hoso, a cable radio station in Oyama
OYKC	Oyama Yume Kobo Corporation Inc.
OYT	Oyama Television, a local cable TV station
Pasokon	personal computer
Senpai	senior colleague
Shakuhachi	Japanese flute
Shefu	chef
Shinkokyoku	regional development bureau
Shokuin	employee
Shufu	housewife
Shuraku	neighbourhood / cluster of houses
Taiken	experience
Taiko	Japanese drums
Tanuki	native Japanese raccoon
Tenbinbo	yoke (stick for carrying weight on shoulders)
Ume	Japanese plum
Umeboshi	salted Japanese plum
Yakuba	town hall/administration/local government
Yaruki	drive/enthusiasm
Yattsu no danchi	literally "eight neighbourhoods"
Yobosho	communique
Yuzu	variety of citrus native to Japan
Yuzukosho	citrus and chilli condiment
Zenkyōren	National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives
Zen-Nō	National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations

ABSTRACT

Development has failed many of the world's rural poor. While the quality of life in urban centres has been seen to increase with development, there are a large number of people in rural and remote communities that continue to be forgotten, left behind to languish in their poverty. The serious inequity and injustice that development too often leaves in its wake calls for more research to be done, more holistic, logical and practicable theories and ideas to be generated, and better development policy and practice that benefit rural communities.

An alternative development is required, and this study responds to this with an approach that is both holistic and grounded in practicality. This is offered in the form of the community capacity development and policy structure model, a model for describing and discussing community capacity and development initiatives that will be useful both in theory and praxis. The model is a useful tool that can be used for development planning and evaluation by both national and local policymakers and community development practitioners, and is also a relevant lens or starting point for researchers interested in examining a number of different aspects of rural community development.

This research also outlines and discusses the development story of Oyama, a rural village in Japan that holds decades of extraordinary experiences. I have constructed this narrative with Oyama community members mostly in the course of my work as a practitioner while employed, volunteering or otherwise participating in JICA training programs delivered by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.

This study offers four main contributions to the field of rural community development studies. The first is a description of Oyama's development experience stretching over 50 years. The second is the community capacity development and policy structure model and associated conceptual discussion. Thirdly, the research offers a relatively unique approach in terms of methodology in the reflective practitioner's research approach. Finally, based on the description and analysis of development in Oyama, the research explores the policy and practical implications and makes recommendations for further research.

In the social fields, the most important contribution of the early career researcher's doctoral research project is generally going to be limited to the descriptive elements of the dissertation. This research is no exception and it is likely that the most valuable of the contributions listed above is the description of Oyama's development experience. This research has nonetheless contributed to the field by building on previous works of academics in a number of fields such as leadership theory, social capital, sense of community, knowledge sharing, community development and rural development.

I expect the research will be further built on by successive reflective practitioners of rural development and researchers including my kohai (junior colleagues) in the Miyoshi School and associate researchers of the Institute for Community Design by more specific and detailed examination of one or more elements of the model or an action research project, which might involve working with a particular community to further refine, build on, and add to the practical aspects of the model.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation outlines and analyses the development story of Oyama¹, a rural village in South-Western Japan that holds decades of extraordinary experiences and some very unique characteristics. The paper also presents a model for analysing community capacity and development initiatives that is useful both in theory and praxis. This chapter introduces the research problem explored in the dissertation, outlines the research questions, clarifies the objectives of the research, explains the significance and limitations of the research and outlines the study in brief.

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Development has failed many of the world's rural poor. While GNP per capita and the quality of life in urban centres has been seen to increase with development, there are a large number of people in rural and remote communities that continue to be forgotten, left behind to languish in poverty and hardship. The serious inequity and injustice that development has often left in its wake calls for more research to be done, more holistic, logical and practicable theories and ideas to be generated, and better development policies and practice that benefit rural communities. The persistent impoverishment of these rural communities around the globe requires a shift away from the conventional economic-centred approach to development. An alternative development is required, and this study is partly in response to this need.

Oyama was once one of the poorest villages in Oita Prefecture; said to be poor not only in a material sense, but a community also suffering from emotional impoverishment. Oyama now has a long history of community driven development experiences and is well known in rural development studies circles in Japan as a successful case of endogenous and sustainable rural community development.² Despite this, there has been very little in the way of academic observation and enquiry conducted in to the case of Oyama. How did Oyama achieve such a remarkable level of development from such humble beginnings? What elements, activities and events in the community led to the extraordinary leap in quality of life and incomes of the village's inhabitants? The community's rich history holds valuable lessons and ideas for other rural communities struggling to keep up with the pace of economic development set by urban and regional centres. Oyama's story also contains potentially important policy lessons for national and regional level government policy makers aspiring to promote and enable the endogenous development of rural communities in their jurisdictions.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

There are four main questions that drive this study:

1. What does a practical and holistic approach to community development look like?

¹ Also widely known and referred to as Oyama-machi and Oyama-cho.

² Oyama has been referred to as an archetype of the One Village One Product movement (see for example Miyoshi and Stenning 2007), a rural community development movement introduced by former Oita Prefecture Governor, Hiramatsu Morihiko, in the 1970s. Hiramatsu fashioned this movement, which continues today, based largely on the successful development experiences of three rural communities in Oita Prefecture: Oyama, Yufuin, and Himeshima.

2. What were the main happenings in terms of community development in Oyama between the post WWII period and today (2012)?
3. How can the development related activities, events and their outcomes in Oyama be explained in terms of community capacity development and local policy structure changes?
4. What main learnings can be garnered from Oyama for the benefit of other rural communities particularly in developing countries?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

There are four main objectives that this research hazards to achieve:

1. Develop an alternative approach to development (in the form of an analytical framework or model for looking at community development) that is both holistic and practical for use both in this research, later research and in the practical sense.
2. Describe the key aspects of development in Oyama from post WWII to 2012 and examine these based on the analytical framework.
3. Offer a unique approach to research that is practical and applicable to the development practitioner.
4. Based on the description and analysis of development in Oyama, explore the policy and practical implications and make recommendations for further research.

These objectives coincide with the research questions outlined above. The first objective is addressed in Chapter 3 which presents the community capacity development and policy structure model. The second objective is addressed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 which describe the development of Oyama between the 1940s and today. An examination of the implications for rural development policy and practice as well as recommendations for further research to build on this study are included in Chapter 7 which concludes the dissertation.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is significant because it:

- a. Documents in detail a successful case of long-term endogenous and sustainable rural development that has previously not been given attention academically; and
- b. Fulfils the need for a practical and holistic model for looking at rural community development elements and processes that can be useful in research, evaluation and development practice.

As mentioned above, very little in the way of thorough academic enquiry has been conducted in to the case of Oyama, despite being quite well known throughout Japan for its remarkable and successful endogenous development experiences. The act of capturing the history of events in Oyama in writing on its own has merit and warrants the research. From an anthropological or rural sociology perspective this documentation would be enough; however, there is also the opportunity to contribute something of value to the policy and practice of rural community development in both the developed and developing world. Therefore, the research continues on to analyse the sequence of events and processes and offer recommendations for the benefit of rural communities and policymakers more broadly. The research also offers, and to some extent demonstrates the practicality and use of, the community capacity development and policy structure model. This is a practical and holistic approach to community development that has been missing from previous development approaches.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

No research is without limitations. Some of these are imposed by time and resource constraints, particularly for the doctoral dissertation of an emerging scholar such as this. Practicality also requires that decisions need to be made about what can be included in the scope of the research and what should be left for future studies. Resource constraints and the requirements of practicality mean that the following are not included in the scope of the study:

- a) Thorough testing of the community capacity and policy structure model.

This research offers a model for looking at rural community development that is both practical and holistic. The model's use is demonstrated; however, the scope of the study does not include a thorough testing of the model. The model has already been utilized actively in training programs for government policymakers and non-government organization development practitioners at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University for a number of years. It is expected that future researchers and practitioners will further explore and build on the model and further flesh out its various components.

- b) Extended periods of immersion in the field.

Although months immersed in the daily life of Oyama would have been very attractive to this particular doctoral student, this option was neither available nor required. Extended fieldwork was not available due to the resource constraints of the doctoral student as mentioned above. Long periods in the field were also not necessarily required by my constructivist outlook and positioning of myself in the progressive qualitative research paradigm.³

- c) A definitive and all-encompassing solution to the quandaries of the world's rural poor.

This research constitutes but one piece of a broader puzzle. The study by no means offers an exhaustive, definitive or all-encompassing answer to the problems faced by the world's poorest living in rural communities. I believe that the model offered is a very good place to start developing policies that enable endogenous rural community development or practice that constitutes this. The case of Oyama also offers ideas and inspiration and highlights how sustainable and endogenous rural community development can work.

- d) Sophisticated analysis or robust theory making.

The strength of this research lies in the descriptive narrative – not in testing of theory or sophisticated analysis. Although some rudimentary analysis has been clumsily attempted in and part of the contribution includes an attempt at developing a model for viewing rural community development, it would be naïve for me, as a doctoral student and early career researcher, to expect that this will be viewed as particularly sophisticated or robust. Thus, I request readers to focus on the strength of the research, which lies in the narrative, the 'telling of the story' and appreciate Oyama's story for what it is – interesting, rich and worthy of being put to paper.

- e) Specific and detailed examination of each of the elements of the model

This research offers a holistic exploration of development in Oyama. This entails constructing an entire picture of development, which means that in depth study of specific elements is out of scope.

³ For more on this refer to Chapter 2.

This kind of study is necessary in order to understand rural development. Future studies of a more focused and specific nature can be undertaken to support or clarify certain elements where needed.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology undertaken to produce the research. This includes an exploration of the author's research paradigm, the rationale for the case selected for the research, the author's methodological philosophy and the strategy of enquiry for the study. This chapter also presents a rationale for selecting Oyama as the case for the study as well as the way in which the key events and processes were selected for inclusion. Data collection methods (referred to as constructing narrative) and field trips are also outlined.

Literature most relevant to this study is included on an as-needed basis in Chapter 3 in order to build the conceptual framework. This touches on the most relevant works from the fields of community studies, governance studies, decentralization, community capacity, alternative development and evaluation including program theory and logic models. The community capacity development and policy structure model, a model that has been developed based on both previous research and practice in the field of community capacity development, is also described in this chapter.

Chapters 4 through 6 are the main chapters of the thesis and construct the narrative of Oyama's development experiences. Each chapter covers a particular episode of the community's development history from post-war early Oyama, Oyama's heyday of the NPC formulation and implementation period, and modern Oyama. Each of these periods is described focusing on the main processes and events related to community capacity development occurring during the particular period. Chapter 4 looks at community formation in Oyama prior to the 1961 introduction of the whole of community development initiative, the New Plum and Chestnut (NPC1) movement. This period included some basic changes in community capacity and events that laid the foundations for the community development movement outlined in Chapter 5. Some of the most dramatic events in the history of Oyama's community development are covered in Chapter 5. This begins with the introduction of the NPC movements. Chapter 6 focuses on the more recent transformation of the Oyama community including amalgamation of the town with Hita City. This chapter also outlines some of the more recent activities that individuals and groups have been pursuing including green tourism activities and high value added agricultural processing.

The concluding chapter summarizes key aspects of the research, describing how the research has fulfilled the research objectives and explores the most important implications for policy and practice. Recommendations for further studies are also made.

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

*Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted.*

Albert Einstein

2.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In his book entitled *The Philosophy of Social Research*, John Hughes outlined two models or paradigms of social research which were premised on two different methodological positions, the natural science model based on positivism and the humanistic model based on naturalism (1990). A methodology based on positivism would involve a quantitative style of research consisting of research methods such as questionnaires, surveys and experiments. These would result in numerate or 'hard' data (Brewer 2000, p.30). A humanistic methodology based on naturalism, on the other hand, would result in 'soft' data in a natural language obtained through a qualitative style of research that involves such data collection methods as in-depth interviews, ethnography and participant observation, photo-elicitation or use of personal documents (Brewer 2000, p.30). Holliday describes a major binding feature of qualitative research as being its opposition to positivism, the philosophical basis for quantitative research (2002, p.2). Thus the two may be considered as competing or conflicting, mutually exclusive, however equally well-established, paradigms of social research.

Apart from this abovementioned distinction between the two major paradigms the qualitative direction may be split again into two broad perspectives, naturalist and progressive qualitative. The more traditional naturalist qualitative paradigm includes post positivism and realism and is closer to positivism in that reality is seen as relatively straightforward. The main characteristics of the paradigm are:

- That reality is still quite plain to see;
- Deeper social reality requires qualitative enquiry;
- Probable truth is supported by extensive, substantiated record of real settings;
- Researchers must not interfere with real settings (Holliday 2002, p.18-20).

Progressive qualitative researchers, on the other hand, approach social research from a critical theory, constructivism, postmodernism or feminism standpoint. They 'portray people as constructing the social world through their interpretations of it' (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, p.11 cited in Holliday 2002, p.20). The main aspects of a progressivist perspective include:

- Reality and social science are socially constructed;
- Researchers are part of research settings;
- Investigation must be in reflexive, self-critical, creative dialogue;
- Aims to problematize, reveal hidden realities, and initiate discussions (Holliday 2002, p.20-22).

Thus, naturalists believe that meaningful social worlds can be discovered by 'being there' – spending extended periods being fully involved in the setting and the everyday processes of people's lives to the extent of saturation. Progressivists on the other hand 'argue that there is no "there" until it has been constructed' and that 'every act of "seeing" or "saying" is unavoidably conditioned by cultural, institutional and interactional contingencies' (Gubrium and Holstein 1997, p.38; *ibid* p.vi cited in Holliday 2002, p.21). The progressive form of qualitative paradigm allows far greater variety in procedure and scope, in which data is presented more creatively, with more openness about who the researcher is and how she spins validity through the argument rather than claiming validity from representativeness and exhaustiveness achieved through saturation (Holliday 2002, p.20-21). A conversation had with my research supervisor, Professor Koichi Miyoshi, in the middle of the main

writing phase of this research in June 2012 confirmed once again that we are firmly in this realm of the qualitative spectrum:

“We have already let go of trying to be objective,” stated Miyoshi. “A long time ago?” I responded. “Mmm, a long time ago,” he smiled.

According to Hughes, prior preferences of the researcher to one or another methodology will dictate which kind of data collection methods are employed, not an inherent requirement of the nature of the problem at hand (cited in Brewer 2000, p.29). Thus, it is neither an honest nor worthwhile effort to argue that the nature of this problem absolutely required the methods that were employed, because there are probably just as many worthwhile arguments for the latter and to be honest this researcher would not have considered conducting a quantitative study because that is not her background or skill set. Quantitative, or positivist based methods consisting of hypotheses and sentences constructed of numbers, however reliably they may be recreated, would not have appeased her desire for description and construction of a narrative that is created through interactions with the people and society included in the study. Moreover, there has been much debate on the two methodologies (quantitative and qualitative) and there is no point in reinventing the wheel for this doctoral level thesis.⁴ Rather, it would be more honest, useful and less profligate to simply state the philosophical background of the researcher and outline the methodology employed including reference to any potential weaknesses of these methods. This information is contained in the following paragraphs; however, for clarity it should be established here that this is a qualitative study.

2.2 METHODOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY AND STRATEGY OF ENQUIRY

A constructivist outlook on research places me as a researcher within the progressive qualitative perspective, one which ‘makes it possible to devise a qualitative research approach for almost every conceivable scenario’ (Holliday 2002, p.21). Thus in order to fit with my own prior preference, and indeed that of my research supervisor, the study was conducted in a qualitative style. The strategy of enquiry involved a case study; that is ‘the study of a bounded system’ (Stake 1994, p.236). There were also elements of ethnography, which aims to explore the nature of a specific phenomenon, involves unstructured data, small Ns and participant observation (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, p.248 cited in Holliday 2002, p.18). Some elements of grounded theory were also visible in the strategy of enquiry, whereby one of the aims was to produce ‘theory that is systematically gathered and analysed’ and a characteristic of the strategy involved a main aspect of grounded theory – the ‘continuous interplay between data collection and analysis’ (Strauss and Corbin 1994, p.273).

Mostly, though, the study ended up taking the shape of narrative. Narrative is a powerful tool in the transfer, or sharing, of knowledge. The narrative method accepts the idea that knowledge can be held in stories that can be relayed, stored and retrieved (Fry 2002). The form of narrative that this research ended up taking is thematic narrative whereby the story is presented through the selective presentation of parts of the narrative organised around certain themes. Thematic narrative analysis differs from grounded theory in that the story remains “intact” because the narrative scholar theorizes from the case rather than from component themes or categories across different cases (Riessman 2008). This study, however, does not present the full narrative of Oyama; rather a few key topical narratives are selectively presented. By letting people talk about whatever they wanted and listening to their stories, I allowed them to somewhat independently select the events and narratives they themselves consider significant and relevant. Of course they

⁴ If it is necessary at this point to go into more detail on the arguments for qualitative research please consult Brewer (2000), Holliday (2002), Miles and Huberman (1994), Ragin (1994) or any of the other (many) texts on the subject.

were influenced by our backgrounds as scholars and practitioners of rural community development – when telling their stories they were well aware that the listeners (the JICA trainees and university people including me) were interested mostly in what we could learn from Oyama’s successful development experiences and thus framed their narratives accordingly.

Furthermore, it is generally acknowledged in the human sciences that “the researcher does not find narratives but instead participates in their creation” (Neander and Skott 2006, p.297 who draw on Mishler 1986). Thus the stories are all ultimately a construction of my own experience, which is an accumulation of interactions with Oyama. These interactions all essentially involved a form of narrative or another – Oyama telling its stories through various mediums. These stories were then processed and interpreted by me and captured in various forms of “constructed representations of experience” referred to by Clandenin and Connelly as “field texts” (Clandenin and Connelly 2000). These constructed representations of experience were such products as my handwritten notes, expanded and typed field notes, and visual products including photographs, video and sketches, products which I have used wherever possible in this dissertation. The parts of the narratives used in this study were all ultimately interpreted through my own frame and filters of understanding, selected for inclusion by me and presented in the way of my choosing. It is pertinent to emphasise here that narratives do not establish the truth of events, nor does narrative reflect the truth of experience. Narratives create the very events they reflect upon. In this sense, narratives are reflections on – not of – the world as it is known (Denzin 2000, p.xii-xiii cited in Riessman 2008, p.188).

This dissertation is not the complete story – rather these are excerpts and vignettes that help to build the case. As Riessman mentions in relation to thematic narrative approaches, this has involved the preservation of particular histories of individuals (and processes, events, organisations, etcetera), resulting in an accumulation of detail that is assembled into a fuller picture of the community (Riessman 2008). That being said, I have attempted to preserve sequences as “in narrative analysis, we attempt to keep the “story” intact for interpretive purposes, although determining the boundaries of stories can be difficult and highly interpretive” (Riessman 2008, p.74). Narrative analysis is by its nature case centred (Riessman 2008, p.74). This research is a longitudinal case study of the Oyama community, the merits of which are outlined in the section above.

The study also contains elements of the explorative research approach. In addition to describing the interesting and significant case of development in Oyama, I hope that the study also contributes to the academic and practical field by presenting a model of community development that can be used as a starting point for further studies and for fine-tuning of practice. It is expected that successive research including participatory action research will further refine and explore the different aspects of the model; indeed, I believe this to be already happening amongst the junior researchers in the Miyoshi School. By Miyoshi School I refer to the successive cohorts of undergraduate, masters and doctoral students, graduates, early career researchers and more established academics, and rural development practitioners who have been influenced and guided in their approach to the research and practice of rural community development by Professor Koichi Miyoshi and who actively contribute to his goals of improving the lives of people in rural communities around the globe.

Time spent in the field both during JICA training program and independent visits provided an intimacy and understanding of the concepts and theories, some of which had first been uncovered as relatively new and somewhat alien topics in the literature. In some cases, it was the opposite – I came across a certain phenomena in Oyama which I then sought out in the literature. The personal experience of reading literature, finding a theory or idea, and then observing the reality and vice versa confirmed that research is indeed a ‘dialogue between ideas and evidence’ (Ragin 1994, p.55). As pointed out by Riessman, prior theory also serves as a resource for the interpretation of spoken and written narratives (2008, p.73). Prior theory guided the inquiry at the same time as I searched for theoretical insights from the data. The process also allowed for more clarity of mind on the ideas and concepts being explored.

The research was conducted over quite a lengthy period of time and I was involved in quite a number of projects. Through this involvement I also found that I developed both personally and professionally and as I accumulated different experiences I gained increased insight into many of the theoretical elements that this study set out to explore. For example, time working in a local NGO in Aceh, Indonesia provided me with increased insight into the importance of local organisations and their potential roles in building the capacity of rural people and communities. At Oxfam Australia, I applied and developed my knowledge and understanding of networks and partnerships between local and international organisations and the positive impacts that this can have for remote communities. My time working in various divisions of the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has also contributed to my understanding of national policy-making and how difficult it can be for policymakers to develop and implement policies that are successful in supporting the development of communities, particularly in the remote Australian Aboriginal context. Thus over the years, each time that I returned to Oyama and revisited the research I had a slightly different (and improved) frame of reference. This may have contributed partly to the new narratives that continued to be formed in each of my successive visits to Oyama. It is likely that this could have gone on indefinitely; however, at some point I had to stop – I had reached the end of the grace period allowed by my university and I was tired. I am confident however that the narratives will continue to emerge and inform theory and practice as long as the JICA training program continues and my kohai (junior colleagues) in the Miyoshi School continue to be interested in the subject matter.

Guiding questions for the research were developed, scrapped and redeveloped as the process matured (the most final of these are listed in Chapter 1). It should be noted that these questions were not set at the beginning of the research process and, in fact, were posed after most of the data collection had taken place – they are probably more a writing guide than real research questions. This is because the goal of the research was not to test or run an experiment but rather to explore the topic. Of the seven major goals of social research presented by Ragin, this study may be described as attempting three of them: 5. Exploring diversity; 6. Giving voice; and 7. Advancing new theories (1994, p.33).

2.3 THE CASE OF OYAMA

A longitudinal case study of Oyama was not my first choice for this doctoral research project; however, after my research supervisor requested that I focus on Oyama, I soon too recognised the value of such a study. The single case of Oyama can be considered akin, or even superior, to the examination of a multitude of communities. The rich, diverse, and well documented history and availability of living history and access to oral histories related to rural community building efforts in Oyama over a period of more than half a century from the 1950s to today make the case of Oyama very special. It would have been a shame to walk away from such an opportunity and a case study that is so worthy of being given voice. The case of Oyama it can be argued contains within it multiple significant and relevant case studies. The narratives contained in this history could well inform a number of additional doctoral dissertations or master thesis projects beyond this one and indeed they probably will. Focusing on the one community's experience over a considerably lengthy period of time also allowed a fuller exploration of the framework and better description of community capacity development and the introduction of higher value added policy structures over time. This in turn also assisted in the development of the conceptual framework presented in this study.

But why choose the community of Oyama and not a broader level of community, or some other grouping as the focus of the study? The boundaries of the case to me were obvious. Because I am interested in rural community development and contributing to improving the lives of those living in rural areas, it was natural that I would look at the rural community. Furthermore, Oyama

defines itself as a community (despite no longer being a town) and the community is a small bounded unit and “a convenient focus for analysis” (MacFarlane 1977, p.4). If nothing else, the boundaries of the case were perhaps as Macfarlane mentions “necessary, but [as] always, to some extent, arbitrary” (1977, p.33).

The analysis of a spatially delimited area can be the subject of many criticisms. Yet we continue to use the ‘community study’ approach. MacFarlane argues that this is due to the belief that one should attempt to study the ‘totality’ of human life, the interconnections and complexities which seem to emerge most fully within a small geographical area (MacFarlane 1977, p.33). The most important findings are generally presented by subject, for example studies of myth, magic, capitalism, slavery, the family etcetera and the community case study approach on its own is unlikely to contribute a full answer to any question – and at best only some parts of answers to some questions (MacFarlane 1977, p.33). One layer of evidence, however, will always come from the community study and it is this dimension, the infinite complexity gained from the evidence of a demarcated area, that saves us from being “left with an impoverished picture of man” (MacFarlane 1977, p.33).

2.4 PRACTITIONER’S APPROACH TO RESEARCH

This study is essentially a reflective practitioner’s research. What I mean by this is that the research was conducted by me as a practitioner in community development through my role as a facilitator in the Japan International Cooperation Agency training (JICA) programs run through Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU). One main audience of the outcomes of the research is also the practitioner herself. The research was also intended for the benefit of, and is being used by, practitioners including those participants or trainees of the JICA training programs who are mostly developing country government officials responsible for rural development (see *Appendix A* for an example product of the research used in the training program). By doing our jobs, but being reflective and examining our own experiences in practice and the processes and outcomes, we can achieve reflective practice. Writing it down and examining helps us as practitioners to clarify meaning and better understand and learn from the experience and this is likely to result in improved practice.



Image 2.4.1: Facilitating a conceptual activity in JICA training for ASEAN countries

Source: frame from film shot by Cindy Banyai, June 2009

2.5 CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE

Most of the data used in this research was collected through the course of my work as a practitioner while employed, volunteering or otherwise participating in JICA training programs delivered by Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Through my work as a practitioner I was involved in the stories of people in Oyama who conducted community presentations for the benefit of JICA trainees in that I was present when they delivered the narratives. JICA trainees helped to build these narratives by offering comments on their understanding of what had been presented to them and also asking questions to extract further information and detail. I formulated my own understanding of the stories from the words, gestures and facial expressions of the community presenters and produced notes based on this understanding. I was also making constant observations around Oyama as a participant in these trainings and taking notes of the environment, buildings, activities and other phenomena that I observed in Oyama. These notes were then expanded into field notes, which formed the main source of raw data used in this dissertation. My role as a practitioner in JICA training programs included:

- Production of training materials, for example, PowerPoint slides, case study papers, activities, and discussion guides;
- Facilitating classroom-based group discussions; and
- Accompanying groups of trainees and providing support on field visits to a number of rural areas in Oita Prefecture, including both day trips and overnight stays in Oyama.



Image 2.5.1: Yahata Kinjl delivers lecture for trainees while I take notes

Source: frame from video taken by Cindy Banyai

Many of the community presenters in Oyama prepared materials such as PowerPoint slides and handouts or copies of papers to assist in the delivery of their lectures. I used materials that I received while attending presentations, but also received some written materials and information remotely through Professor Koichi Miyoshi and Ms Yumiko Okabe, who was my kohai (junior colleague) and sometimes research assistant and is also an integral core team member of the Miyoshi School.

Apart from the community presentations, I was also fortunate to squeeze in informal chats during fleeting intimate moments with these community presenters. I also had a number of more in-depth conversations, some hours long, with Oyama community members who I stayed with while in Oyama. To find out more about what life in Oyama was like before the introduction of the NPC, I also conducted a two-hour long structured interview with Yahata Toranobu, an elderly resident of Ogirihata who I was introduced to by Kurokawa Teruko. I tried my hand at employing some interesting sounding techniques I had learned about through participation in Professor Miyoshi's

research seminar such as photo-elicitation⁵ (at Kurokawa Teruko's home with her husband) and my own versions of this including "film-elicitation" (home movies of Mori Tamiko performing karaoke and traditional dancing) and "object-elicitation" (Kurokawa Masateru and old farming equipment from 1950s) and "place-elicitation" (Koda Kazumi walking around his neighbourhood and telling JICA trainees stories as we walked).

I also drew on the many and varied forms of publications from official town records and published books from the Yakuba and Nokyo, old Oyama TV footage, and published articles and books including books both about and by Yahata Harumi. Newspaper clippings and internet blog entries also informed parts of the narrative.

The list of JICA training programs conducted over the years is summarised in Table 2.5.1. I also participated in a Japan Development Scholarship students' field trip to Oyama in December 2008, which also involved an overnight stay at a minpaku. In addition to this, I made a number of further field visits to supplement the visits to Oyama made during the JICA training programs. This was necessary to establish more of a "feel" for the community as well as to have more time to make more considered observations, and frankly because I was still subscribing to the advice given to me by my supervisor when conducting Master's research on decentralisation and community capacity development in Indonesia, which was "just go there". These independent field trips were effectively additional to the main research activities, which were conducted through our work on the JICA training programs. These independent trips included:

- February 2008 – 4 nights (on my own);
- March 2008 – day trip to the Ume Matsuri (Plum Festival) with colleague, Shin Yoonsun;
- July 2008 – Japan Development Scholarship students trip and overnight stay in Oyama minpaku (homestay);
- January 2010 – 3 nights (with research assistant, Okabe Yumiko); and
- May 2012 – 2 nights (on my own after JICA trainees left).



Image 2.5.2: Ready for a long chat with Koda Kazumi at his home in Kabu
Source: author June 2012

⁵ See Harper 2001

Table 2.5.1: JICA Training Programs 2006 – 2012

No.	JICA Training Course Title	Training Period
1	Training Course in Seminar for Municipal Mayors of Clustered LGUS: One Village One Product Movement (Philippines)	2006.10.16 - 2006.10.19
2	The Country focused Training Program on the "One Village One Product" Movement in Tunisia	2006.10.23 - 2006.10.27
3	Community Capacity and Rural Development-Focusing on One Village One Product- for ASEAN Countries	2007.6.27 - 2007.7.12
4	Philippine Local Government Cluster Activation Seminar (Philippines)	2007.10.15 - 2007.10.18
5	The Country focused Training Program on the "One Village One Product" Movement for Tunisia	2007.10.30 - 2007.11.2
6	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2008.3.24 - 2008.4.11
7	Training Course in Regional Development Promotion for ASEAN Countries - One Village One Product	2008.6.17 - 2008.7.3
8	Training Course in Enforcement of Regional Administrative Function for Local Industrial Promotion (Chile)	2008.7.17 - 2008.8.6
9	Training Course in Seminar for Municipal Mayors of Clustered LGUs: One Village One Product Movement (Philippines)	2008.10.13 - 2008.10.24
10	Training Course in Seminar on One Village, One Product Movement in Savannakhet and Saravanh (Laos)	2008.12.8 - 2008.12.19
11	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2009.4.2 - 2009.4.26
12	Training Course in Regional Development Promotion for ASEAN Countries - One Village One Product	2009.6.16 - 2009.7.2
13	Training Course in Enforcement of Regional Administrative Function for Local Industrial Promotion (Chile)	2009.7.16 - 2009.8.5
14	Training Course in Development and Promotion OF Regional Industries Utilizing Local Resources for Asia	2009.8.31 - 2009.9.10
15	Training Course in Andean Region One Village One Product Promotion	2009.10.5 - 2009.10.16
16	Training Course in Development and Promotion of Regional Industries Utilizing Local Resources for Indochina and Pacific Regions	2009.10.26 - 2009.11.6
17	Training Course in Seminar on One Village, One Product Movement IN Savannakhet and Saravanh	2009.11.30 - 2009.12.11
18	Training Course in Seminar for Local Officials and Local Functionaries of Clustered LGUS on One Village One Product Movement (Philippines)	2010.1.8 - 2010.1.20
19	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2010.4.5 - 2010.4.23
20	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2010.5.17 - 2010.5.28
21	Training Course in Community Capacity Development Promotion for Asian Countries – One Village One Product	2010.6.15 - 2010.7.1
22	Training Course in Enforcement of Regional Administration for Local Industrial Promotion (Chile)	2010.7.15 - 2010.7.30
23	Training Course in Andean Region One Village One Product Promotion	2010.10.4 - 2010.10.15
24	Training Course in Promotion of Local Industries for Guatemala	2010.12.2 - 2010.12.17
25	Training Course of Promotion of One Village One Product Movement in Colombia	2011.1.19 - 2011.2.2
26	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries (B)	2011.4.4 - 2011.4.15
27	Training Course on Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2011.5.16 - 2011.5.27

No.	JICA Training Course Title	Training Period
28	Training Course on Community Capacity and Rural Development Promotion for Asian Countries – One Village One Product – (A)	2011.6.14 - 2011.6.30
29	Training Course in Andean Region One Village One Product Promotion	2011.10.3 - 2011.10.14
30	Training Course in Promotion of Local Industries for Guatemala	2011.11.28 - 2011.12.9
31	Training Course in Nepal One Village One Product Promotion	2012.1.16 - 2012.1.27
32	Training Course of Promotion of One Village One Product Movement in Colombia	2012.2.20 - 2012.3.2
33	Training Course in Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries (B)	2012.4.2 - 2012.4.13
34*	Training Course on Community Capacity and Rural Development - Focusing on One Village One Product – for African Countries	2012.5.14 - 2012.5.25
35*	Community Capacity and Rural Development Promotion for Asian Countries – One Village One Product – (A)	2012.6.12 - 2012.6.27

Note: shaded rows are training programs that I was directly involved in as either a volunteer, paid facilitator or observer.

*Denotes those training programs that included an overnight stay in an Oyama farmhouse.

2.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

This study offers four main contributions to the field of rural community development studies. These include:

- A holistic description of Oyama’s development experience stretching over 50 years;
- The community capacity development and policy structure model and associated conceptual discussion;
- A relatively unique approach in terms of methodology in the reflective practitioner’s research approach; and
- Based on the description and analysis of development in Oyama and the model, policy and practical implications and recommendations for further research.

In the social fields, the most important contribution of the early career researcher’s doctoral research project is generally going to be limited to the descriptive elements of the dissertation (see Wolcott 2009). This research is no exception and it is likely that the most valuable of the contributions listed above is the description of Oyama’s development experience. Furthermore, as far as the dissertation itself is concerned there is one major objective – that is to partially fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies program; however, this is not the sole objective of the research and it is highly unlikely that this is where the research ends. I expect to further develop the narratives and adapt the text contained in this dissertation in order to:

- Publish as a book and/or as chapters of books so that more effective voice is give to the research and Oyama’s story;
- Publish in scholarly publications so that the concepts and ideas presented contribute more fully to the academic sphere; and
- Convert for use as training materials, for example handouts, presentations, activities and/or a textbook for the JICA training program and for use in university courses at APU, so that the story of Oyama benefits and informs the development of rural communities particularly those in less developed and developing countries.

CHAPTER 3 FRAMEWORK

He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may cast.

Leonardo da Vinci

This chapter has been kept purposefully brief; those expecting an encyclopaedic regurgitation of the academic and practical histories of and multitude of perspectives on rural development will be sorely disappointed. Those who subscribe to Wolcott's (2008) view that the tradition of the literature review is an antiquated waste of time can, on the other hand, rejoice in the decision I have made to limit my discussions to those concepts that have direct relevance and utility to this particular research study. Said concepts and ideas have been cherry-picked and included in the briefest possible manner. This all being said, I understand and acknowledge that I have the luxury of standing upon the shoulders of giants.⁶

Despite significant economic development in many countries, rural populations have too often been left behind and continue to find it difficult to compete with urbanized areas and achieve real improvements in living conditions. The majority of rural populations have to stay in their area without moving to economic-centred areas and utilizing accumulated economic advantages in urbanized areas for improving their lives. This situation will remain in the future despite their strong desire for a better life. Therefore, the persistent impoverishment of these rural communities around the globe requires a shift away from the conventional economic-centred approach to development. An alternative development is required. In order to benefit rural communities, an alternative approach to development is grounded in reality and is holistic in its view. It takes into account not only the economic and formal (market) aspects of life but also acknowledges the social, political and informal realms.

It is in response to this that this chapter aims to provide an alternative development approach that benefits rural communities. This proposed alternative development approach is two-pronged, aiming at developing community capacity as well as introducing and implementing higher value-added policy structures. Policy structure refers to the economic, social and political activities undertaken within and as a community and can improve the quality of life of the community's population. I emphasize the operational aspects of the utilization of this approach. Thus, in this chapter my intention is not to theorize on the rural development phenomena, but to conceptualize a rural development approach for practical usage. In reality, this subject matter is not so simple to be interpreted by simple theories for causalities. There are various options for development available for communities and policy-makers to choose from. It is important to clarify these concepts in order to examine and discuss their practical uses.

'Mainstream doctrine' on international development tends to reduce the definition of development to a purely economic consideration, for example GDP per capita, and directs focus on capital accumulation at the expense of other important development issues (Friedmann 1992). Such a narrow view of development inevitably results in the plight of the rural poor being largely ignored. In order for an effective 'alternative development' to work it is essential that a broader range of issues is included. This has been answered to some extent by the emergence of an asset based livelihoods concept and formal attempts at developing this concept in the late 1990s to early 2000s, resulting in the 'sustainable livelihoods approach' in Carney (1998) and the development of frameworks for livelihood conceptualisation and analysis (for example Ellis 2000).

Drawing on the work of Chambers and Conway (1992), a livelihood can be defined as comprising "the capabilities, assets (including both social and material resources) and activities

⁶ From the Latin – dwarfs stand upon the shoulders of giants – and mentioned in one of Isaac Newton's letters "If I can see far it is because I'm standing on the shoulders of giants".

required for a means of living” (Carney 1998). Sustainability is achieved when a livelihood “can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resources base” (Carney 1998, p.4). In explaining the basic elements of the sustainable rural livelihoods framework, Scoones submits that the key question to be asked in any analysis of sustainable livelihoods is:

Given a particular **context** (of policy setting, politics, history, agroecology and socio-economic conditions), what combination of **livelihood resources** (different types of ‘capital’) result in the ability to follow what combination of **livelihood strategies** (agricultural intensification/extensification, livelihood diversification and migration) with what outcomes? Of particular interest in this framework are **the institutional processes** (embedded in a matrix of formal and informal institutions and organisations) which mediate the ability to carry out such strategies and achieve (or not) such outcomes (Scoones 2005, p.3).

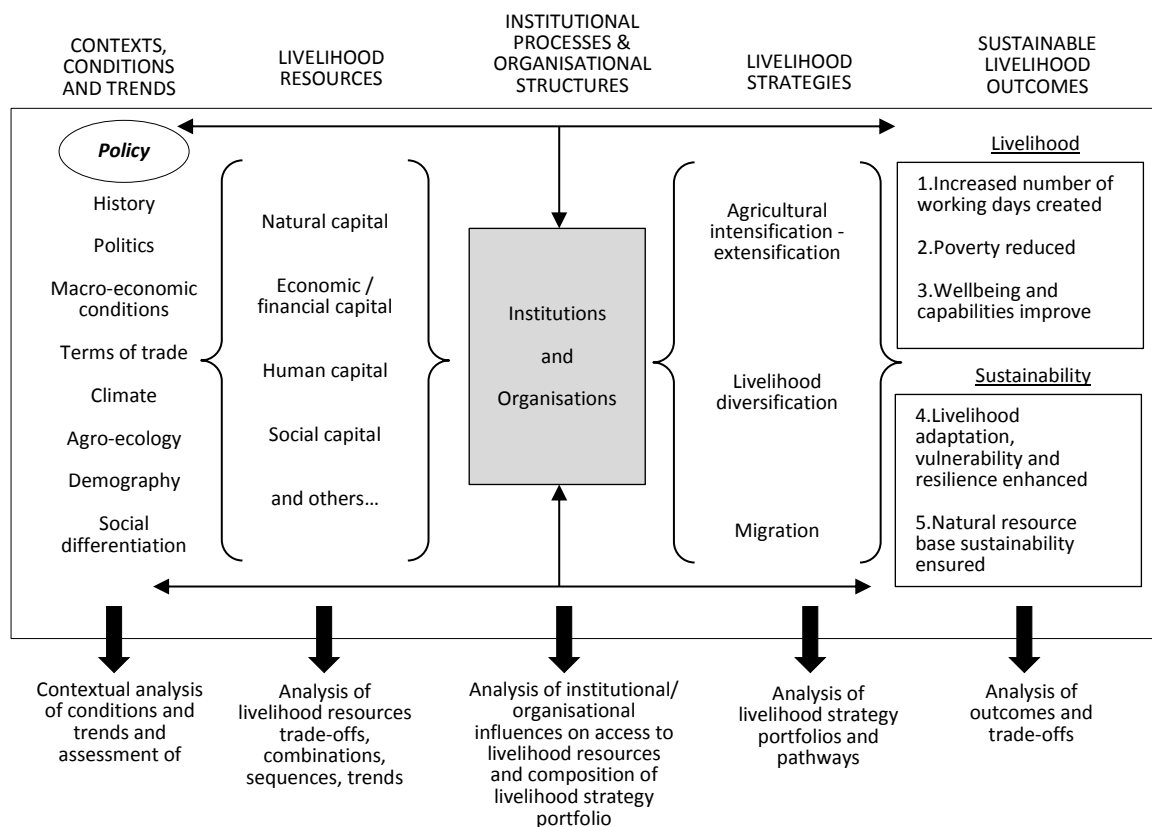


Figure 3.1: Sustainable rural livelihoods: a framework for analysis

Source: Scoones 2005, p.4

Conceptually, the sustainable livelihoods approach is interesting and informative and it is potentially an effective tool in the development of evidence based policy or outside imposed development ‘interventions’ aimed at increasing rural incomes; however, its utility in practice, particularly at the community level is limited and it largely ignores other non-income generating and collective activities including those that work to enhance community capacity, which I will argue is fundamental to the introduction of higher value added activities including production activities. There remains a need for a more holistic and operationalizable approach to rural community development. This chapter responds to this by presenting the community capacity development

and community policy structure model, which while building on the sustainable livelihoods approach, focuses on the development of community capacity to introduce new and value-added collective activities.

3.1 COMMUNITY

The alternative development approach holds the community as the main body of discussion, as well as the main unit of analysis and operationable activities. Why are we concerned with the community and its capacity? The concept of community has been the concern of sociologists for more than two hundred years, but even a satisfactory definition of it in sociological terms appears as remote as ever and there are a multitude of definitions (Bell and Newby 1974, p. xliii; see, for example, definitions of community in: Frazer 1999; Hoggett 1997; Willmott 1989; and Cohen 1985). This being said, in reality people create and establish relations when they live together in a certain territorial area. Therefore their delineation of established insider and 'outsider' groups would appear to have theoretical relevance (Bell and Newby 1974, p.5). This situation continues to exist at present.

In the specific territorial areas, especially in the rural specific territorial area confirmed by administrative boundaries, people recognize their position or roles depending on whether they are in or out vis-à-vis the social system which has been established by these people in the specific area. This kind of situation is simply identified if people are asked their relation with the other people in the specific territorial area, by using the term 'in' or 'out'. Some people recognize themselves as inside members or components of the specific territorial area. On the other hand, others do not recognize themselves as such and instead as outsiders of the specific territorial area, even though they live and act within the area. These kinds of interactions occur not only directly through personal relations, but also indirectly through the family or the household they belong to, the organization they are related to or work in, or associations or networks in which they participate. This relation of people creates a kind of social system of community which we treat as our subject of development.

The community is the social configuration in which the existence of people is defined as worth pursuing and their participation is recognisable as members.⁷ The community is a social system constructed by people in the specific territorial area, usually confirmed by administrative boundaries, in which the members (organizations, groups, and individuals) recognize themselves and each other as belonging to the same community. Area and common life is important factors for community. This concept can be applied to specific geographical territories such as rural agricultural villages, municipalities, prefectures, countries and global world.⁸ However, here the focus is on the rural area for this discussion of an alternative development approach. Community members include organizations through the recognition of the people working or acting in said organizations. In the Miyoshi School, therefore, we focus on community and its capacity which is constructed through the people in the specific territorial area, especially in the rural area for the development of their society, and which can be the object of study and provide an operational and practical concept for development for rural areas where the people have to remain to live.

Because the concept of community is central to this research it is necessary to highlight how this study approaches the meaning of the term. 'Community' is a word that one might overlook defining on the premise that one could reasonably be expected to understand clearly what such a commonly utilised word must mean. However, there are many possibilities for meanings and interpretations of this seemingly straightforward term. In the literature community takes on various meanings and is used to define groups of actors at various levels of society. One of the tightest or most closely defined uses of the term is referred to in the social work and community development literature of the United States, whereby 'community' is generally used interchangeably with

⁷ Referring to and based on Wenger (1998).

⁸ Referring to and based on Maclver (1970), Ninomiya et. al (1985), Funatsu et. al (2006).

‘neighbourhood’. This use of the term refers to a ‘geographically defined subarea of the city, where residents are presumed to share both spatial proximity and some degree of mutual circumstance’ (Chaskin et al 2001, p.1). At the other end of the range, uses of the term are much looser and broader, for example the ‘international community,’ a term used frequently.

For the purpose of this study a community is considered a group of actors or agents, such as leaders, individuals, and organisations (both governmental and non-governmental) who recognise themselves and each other as belonging to the same community. This approach views community as an operational construct, a constructed social aggregation (Stenning and Miyoshi 2012, p.63). As such community is perceived as being defined and constructed by its members. Here it is pertinent to emphasise that the model considers the local government unit to be part of the community, and thus this study treats the local government as such; an important actor in the community. The community has boundaries (either geographic or otherwise), yet at the same time it is also an open system which interacts with and is impacted upon by the external environment and the broader community/s or systems of which it is a part. Thus, depending on the level selected as the unit of analysis, a community may consist of a number of sub-communities, depicted below in Figure 6.2.1 as ‘Sub-community A1’, and may be embedded within a number of broader communities as ‘Community A’ is shown to be embedded within the broader systems of ‘Community B’ and ‘Community C’. Actors may belong to multiple communities simultaneously, thus some communities may bridge various levels of society (for example Community D in Figure 3.1.1 below).

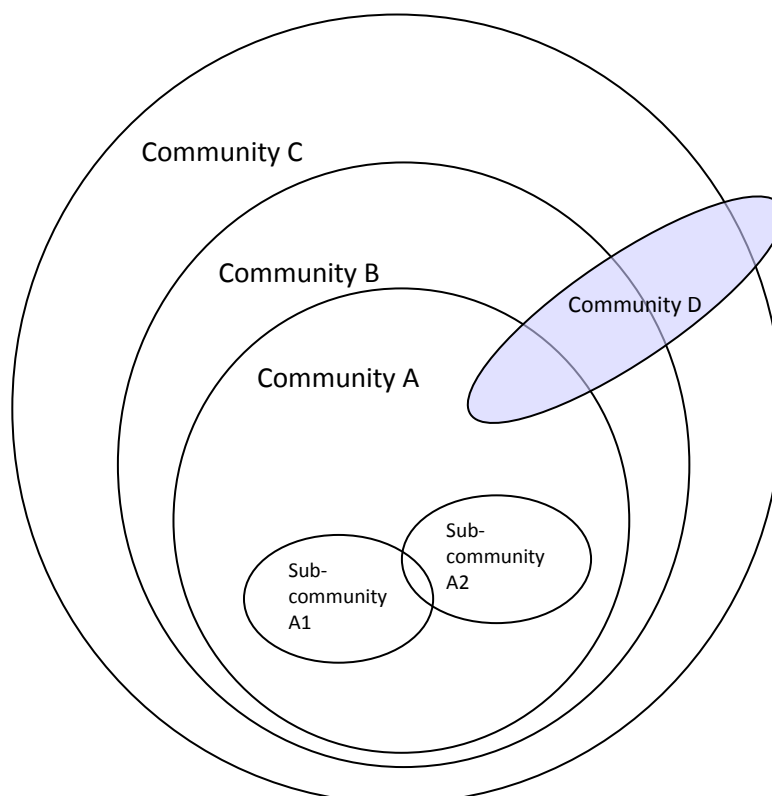


Figure 3.1.1: A system view of community
Source: Stenning 2007

For additional clarity the main characteristics of this concept of community are summarised below.

Definition of community

A community is a group of various actors who recognise their community and also may belong to more than one community simultaneously. For example:

- organisations (government, NGO, other)
- local government unit/authority (village or town administration)
- individuals (leaders, residents, CBO members, government officials)
- households/families

A community has boundaries such as:

- geographic boundaries
- administrative boundaries
- shared characteristics (for example ethnicity)

A community is an open system in that it:

- interacts with other systems/communities
- is impacted upon by the external environment
- is embedded within broader systems
- may consist of smaller sub-systems

3.2 COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY STRUCTURE MODEL

The definition of community capacity has been borrowed from the community building literature developed in the United States. The working definition of community capacity given by Chaskin et al is expressed as:

The interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community (2001, p.7).

This definition and the process of building community capacity is represented visually in Chaskin *et al's* relational framework of community capacity and capacity building which is illustrated in Figure 3.2.1. In the framework, community capacity is described as 'operating through informal social processes and/or organised efforts by individuals, organisations and social networks among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part' (Chaskin et al 2001, p.7).

Three dimensions of the framework specifically concern community capacity: its fundamental characteristics; the levels of social agency in which it is embedded and through which it may be engaged or enhanced; and its particular functions. The fourth concerns the strategies that may be followed to intentionally promote community capacity. The fifth describes context as the conditioning influences that may either inhibit or facilitate capacity and attempts to build it. The final dimension of the model focuses on particular community-level outcomes that may be the goals of community initiatives or of communities exercising their capacity towards particular ends.

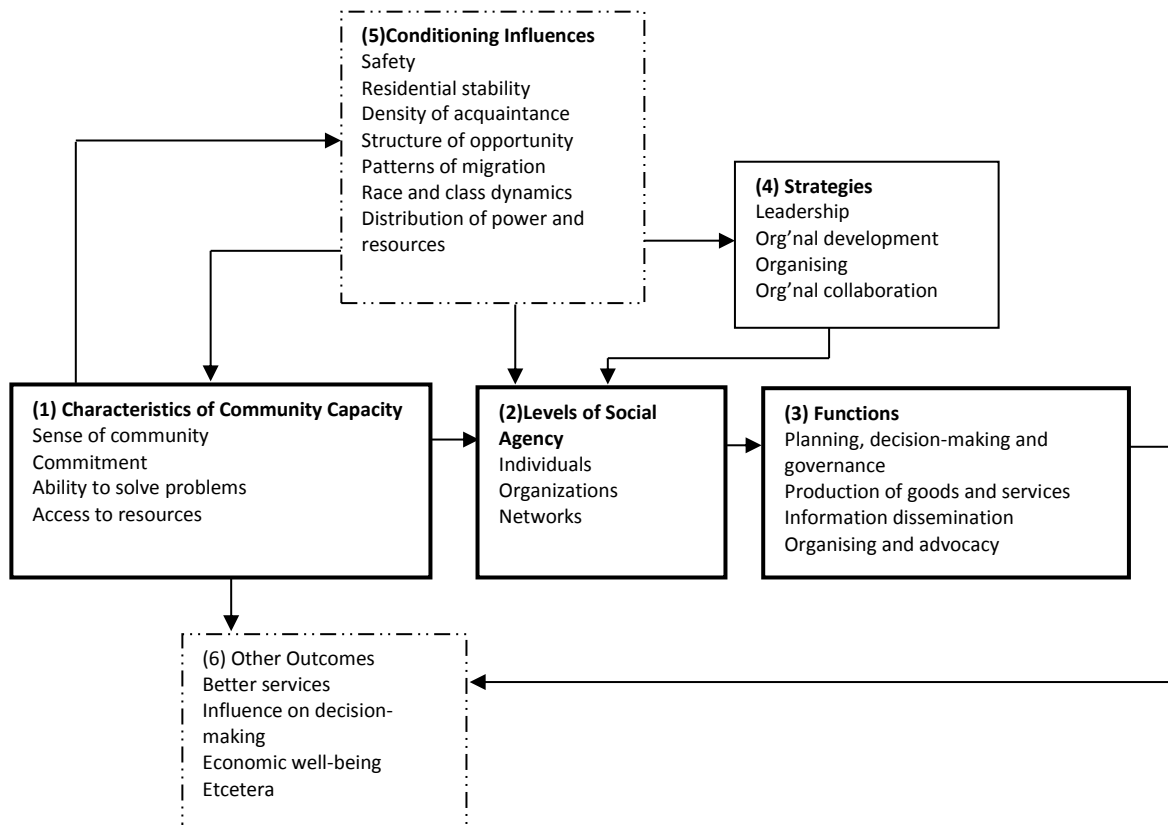


Figure 3.2.1: A relational framework of community capacity

Source: Chaskin et al 2001, p.12

The framework presented in Figure 3.2.1 was developed for the specific purpose of assessing and planning community building initiatives or interventions in urban neighbourhoods in the United States (Chaskin et al 2001). Despite this difference in context from the focus of this study, the concept of community capacity and the relational framework presented by Chaskin and colleagues is nonetheless highly significant and can be adapted to be applied in the context of the rural community, including in developing countries. It also has value in terms of examining endogenous processes related to community capacity, which are not necessarily the result of an externally implemented community building initiative.

Community capacity is a basic element that enables a community to function and refers to the ability to achieve the community's shared goals as well as to promote and maintain the richness of the community through the collective efforts of individuals and organizations within a community, utilizing the human, organizational and social resources available. Community capacity is built through the deepening of mutual relationships among individuals and organizations in the community, and is the result of efforts of individuals and organizations who are community members, toward enabling formal and informal economic, social, environmental, political, and cultural activities to take place. Community capacity is an intrinsic ability retained by individuals and organizations belonging to the community; therefore, as a basic rule, it is something that community members must be aware of and make conscious efforts to improve. It is especially important that economic, social, environmental, political, and cultural activities be organized and conducted collectively and continuously in order to achieve community goals and promote and maintain the quality of life of community members. It is important to find an appropriate combination of

individual activities for each person and organization in the community, as well as collective activities that individuals and organizations can do together that yield effective results.

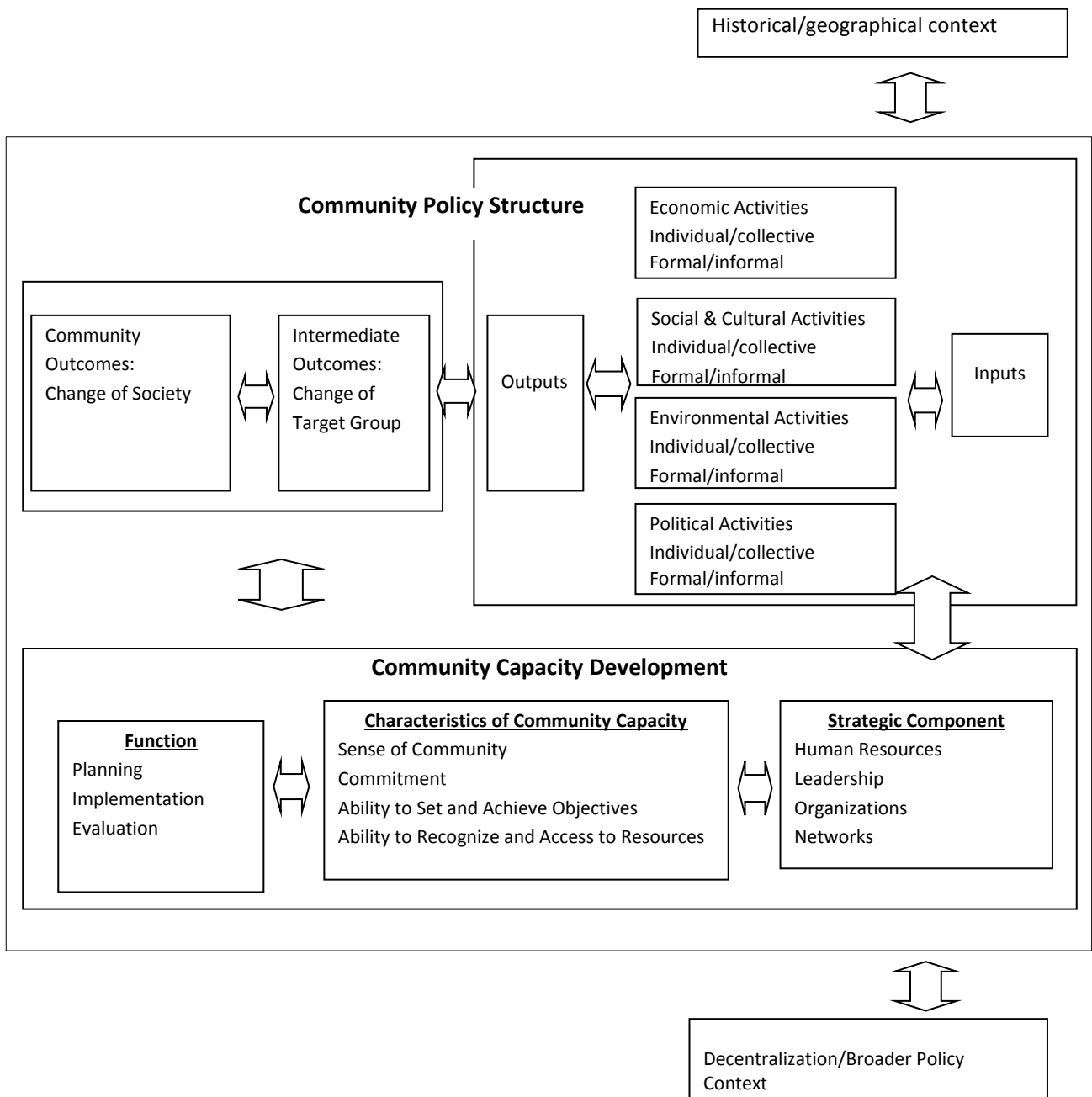


Figure 3.2.2: Community capacity development and community policy structure model

Source: Miyoshi & Stenning 2008 based on Chaskin *et al* (2001), Friedman (1992), Miyoshi *et al* (2003)

An alternative approach for rural development is presented in the community capacity development and policy structure model (referred to herewith as the model) outlined in Figure 3.2.2. Many developments in a community occur in a unique way, based on specific circumstances, through the behaviours of its members. These developments reflect the wishes and desires of the people and organizations involved. Although the process may seem similar, a closer investigation of the actual activities of those involved reveals that each activity is unique; however, by analysing these

developments through the concepts offered in the model, every development experience can be utilized as a shared experience by those involved in development.

This is a dual-function model that elucidates interaction and synergies between rural community capacity and community policy structure whereby improvements in community capacity enable the formation of more complex and sophisticated community policy structure. Community capacity and its development is one of the two pillars of this alternative development model and defined by the interaction of three basic elements: strategic components, characteristics of community capacity, and functions of the community.

First and foremost, community capacity is defined by its characteristics. If members' sense of belonging to the community is enhanced by them sharing their values, norms and future visions, then community capacity grows. Community capacity can be strengthened further if each community member also becomes conscious of his/her role and acquires a sense of duty in order to realize these values, norms and future visions, and carries out his/her role in a systematic and collective manner as one part of the greater whole of the community. If individuals and organizations in the community can set community values, norms and future visions as specific community goals and actually achieve those goals, community capacity can be developed further. Likewise, if the community is able to recognize resources available and utilize these, community capacity can be enhanced.

It is important to note that these community characteristics can function as community capacity by being converted into a tangible community function that plans, implements and/or evaluates the community policy structure as a community activity. This community function allows clearer discussion of the socially constructed community as a social body by implementing the concept of the community's policy structure. It is rare, though, that such policy structure is explicitly recognized among the individuals and organizations in the community. It is perhaps safer to say that usually the community's policy structure is probably recognized only after the administrative activities of core service providers such as city halls, town halls and village offices, and activities of other actors such as agricultural cooperatives, chambers of commerce and tourism bureaus are stacked up and looked at together. In general, people's lives and the activities of organizations have their own respective purposes, and people and organizations make various efforts and employ different methods in order to attain those purposes. If applied to the community, to realize the community's vision, values and norms, the link between a series of explicit or implicit community purposes envisioned by individuals and organizations, and the methods of attaining them, can be found. Connecting purposes and methods enables formation of the community's policy structure. This means that a community policy structure exists in any given community, be it explicit or implicit. Recognizing the general policy structure of the community, the functions of community capacity can be expected to be recognizing, planning, implementing and evaluating the activities of community members, individuals and organizations, as a collective activity. The policy structure functions to achieve an envisioned future of the community.

On the other hand, community capacity can enhance its own characteristics through the available leadership, human resources, organizations and networks that exist in the community. The emergence of leaders, existence of human resources, establishment or strengthening of organizations, and formation of networks can all greatly change a community's characteristics, such as individuals' and organizations' sense of belonging to the community, commitment, ability to set and achieve goals, and ability to recognize and secure resources. The emergence of leaders, existence of human resources, establishment of organizations, and formation of networks are all intrinsic; however, influences can be exerted externally.

Community capacity undergoes transitions. At times, changes in the administrative scope of cities, towns and villages due to municipal mergers may also bring changes to the community itself. The coincidental relocation of a certain individual into a community may result in the valuable addition of an influential leader. Laws may require the formation of a new organization, and this

organization may become the central actor of collective community activities. A symposium held in the region may trigger the sharing of future visions for the community.

Community capacity is not fixed; it must be constantly maintained and controlled by community members. The proposed development model can be used to enrich the lives of people in the community by viewing the community as an operationable social construct and an operationable framework. The planning, implementation and evaluation of community activities can be conceptualized as a collective, systematic, and strategic policy structure which is delivered through the enhancement of community capacity. This is why this research advocates for the development of community capacity. To this end, it is necessary to maintain, control, and enhance this changing community capacity in such contexts.

3.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY CAPACITY

The characteristics that define community capacity are identified in the community capacity development and community policy structure model: sense of community, commitment, ability to set and achieve objectives, and ability to recognize and access to resources. These are based on the results of a significant study by Chaskin *et al* (2001, p. 13), with the following modifications: 'ability to set and achieve objectives' replaces 'problem-solving ability', and 'access to resources' is enhanced by adding the 'ability to recognize resources'. These are replaced because in reality, a positive approach, or in other words, an asset-based approach to community development that takes into account the resources available to the community, has a higher possibility of success than focusing disproportionately on the community's problems or deficiencies. If a community sets realistic objectives based on their situation, and makes efforts to achieve those objectives by utilizing available resources, this is likely to be the more realistic and straightforward option, rather than the negative approach of focusing on unachieved issues or, in other words, problems and efforts needed to solve them. This is particularly pertinent when certain issues or problems arise due to structural or systemic or national policy issues that can often be beyond the control or reach of a community and therefore very difficult to change.

3.3.1 SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Early work on sense of community found relationships between sense of community and greater community participation (Hunter 1975; Wandersman and Giamartino 1980), perceived safety (Doolittle and MacDonald 1978), social bonding (Riger and Lavrakas 1981), strengths of interpersonal relationships/social fabric (Ahlbrandt and Cunningham 1979) and greater civic contributions both charitable and civic involvement (Davidson and Cotter 1986).

For Sarason, psychological sense of community is "the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (1974, p.157).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together". They identify four elements of sense of community:

1. Membership, which includes five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment and a common symbol system.
2. Influence, which works both ways: members need to feel that they have some influence in the group, and some influence by the group on its members is needed for cohesion.
3. Integration and fulfilment of needs: members need to feel rewarded in some way for their participation in the community.

4. Shared emotional connection: described as the “definitive element for true community” (p.14), it includes history and shared participation (or at least identification with the history). Membership can be identified and promoted through shared myths, symbols, rituals, rites, ceremonies, and holidays as well as common language, dress and customs (McMillan and Chavis 1986).

Sense of community shapes the very existence of the community by defining the community itself. This is because first and foremost it involves members of the community being aware or recognizing that they are in fact a community. Sense of community reflects a degree of connectedness among community members, and recognition of a mutuality of circumstance, including a threshold level of collectively held values, norms and vision as well as trust (McMillan and Chavis 1986; Chaskin et al 2001, p.14). If community members share a vision of the kind of society they want, their sense of community is enhanced. If people hold common goals that they believe the community should strive to achieve and share a common awareness of the qualities the community should promote and maintain, then shared vision will also become clearer. Similarly, the sense of community that organizations and associations hold as community members is defined by the intent of their establishment, their purpose and norms.

3.3.2 *COMMITMENT*

Commitment refers to the responsibility that individuals (as well as groups and organizations) take for what happens within their community. This includes recognizing oneself as a stakeholder in the wellbeing of the community as well as being willing to take action or participate as a stakeholder for the betterment of the community (Miyoshi and Stenning 2008). An awareness of one’s role and commitment toward progressing collective activities of the community shows whether individuals, groups and organizations are aware of their positions and responsibilities regarding what occurs in the community. This has two aspects. The first, regarding achieving the community’s shared goal and collectively promoting and maintaining the community’s richness, is the degree of awareness each person has as a constituent member of the community, as a direct or indirect stakeholder, and at times as a beneficiary of the community’s collective interests and activities. The second aspect is whether each member of the community consciously and actively participates in collective activities as a stakeholder in order to achieve the community’s shared goals and thereby promote, maintain and improve the richness of the community. This focuses on members’ awareness of their participation, as well as on the act of participation itself. In fact, often the responsibilities of community members toward collective activities are systemized and implemented.

Commitment to community (or any group or organisation for that matter) can be based on one’s feelings of closeness to other individuals in the community and/or feelings of strong identification with the community (affective commitment – wanting to stay), feelings of obligation or reciprocity (normative commitment), or even on the costs or risks of leaving the community or incentive structure within the community (need-based or continuance commitment) (Festinger, Schachter and Back 1950; Allen and Meyer 1996; Meyer and Allen 1991; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky 2002).

3.3.3 *ABILITY TO SET AND ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES*

The ability to set and achieve objectives is the ability to convert into action the role awareness and commitment illustrated above. We prefer to focus on objectives-oriented approaches such as appreciative inquiry. Such approaches are more realistic than problem-solving approaches that point out what is lacking, criticize reality, and then demand difficult changes in order to resolve problems.⁹

Our approach also focuses on setting objectives. The ability to set objectives, purposes, and issues is indispensable in accomplishing the longer-term goals, and crucial for guiding activities in the

⁹ See Case Western University.

appropriate direction. This calls for an objectives-oriented approach. Whether the community can set objectives that would realize their vision for the future depends on the community's abilities. The community must be able to set specific, realistic objectives, and to link these objectives to specific activities conducted by willing members who understand their roles. In order to do this a mechanism is required for community members to set specific objectives and go about achieving them.

3.3.4 ABILITY TO RECOGNISE AND ACCESS RESOURCES

The ability to recognise resources, and to harness these, requires recognition of diverse and useful community assets and ensuring their productive utilization. Resources include human, information, economic, social, political, physical, and environmental resources, whether within the community or outside community boundaries. This also includes promotion and capitalization of relationships between community member individuals and organizations and individuals and organizations outside the community. Relationships with prefectures, the central government, the international society of municipality-based communities and the various levels of communities not associated with administration are included in this view. A wide range of discussion is possible through these kinds of relationships, such as who the community knows, who has special knowledge and skills, and the relationship with these individuals and organizations. We also emphasize the ability to identify development resources that normally are not viewed as resources at all. The ability to discover and use these latent resources enables an expanded scope and more diverse options for development.

3.4 STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The strategic elements of the community shown in model influence the characteristics of community capacity; they can be viewed as something that maintains or influences community capacity. Therefore, strategic elements of the community can be handled either as the entry point for the development strategy of community capacity, or as specific targets. Asking questions such as: what is the leadership situation in the community? Are organizations being created? Are community human resources being fostered? enables one to grasp the current situation and formulate a way forward. Community capacity is improved by first analysing the community with emphasis on the community's leadership, human resources, organizations, and networks, and by implementing activities that result in positive changes to these elements, building on what already exists in the community.

The strategic elements of the community contribute to changes in the sense of community by intrinsic, community-initiated methods, and also by extrinsic interventions coming from outside the community. In practical terms, these strategic elements should be differentiated from the activities of the community policy structure under which strategic activities of community capacity development are conducted for the purpose of achieving better lives. This differentiation is very difficult; however, it is easier to understand if community capacity development is conceptualized as development of the fundamental infrastructure of the community. The various economic, social, political and environmental activities of the community then unfold on this infrastructure.

The strategic elements of community capacity are not necessarily stylized, static or fixed; as a community changes and evolves, community capacity and its components change and evolve as well. Attempts to fix community capacity at a certain level or to use one method as a cure-all solution are probably going to be ineffective at best. This is because each community is different and the situations of communities are ever changing. Community capacity must be understood as something diverse and flexible.

3.4.1 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

It is human nature for individuals to interact, discuss, share information or 'meaning' and learn from each other (MacKercher 1996). Survival skills have been passed on to the next generation by trial and error, observation and teaching family members and groups how to live in hostile environments for centuries (Mead 1959). Drawing upon the ideas, experiences and techniques of Senge (1990), Senge et al (1994), Freire (1972, 1974), Mezirow (1978, 1991), Kanter (1995), Stewart (1997), Vaill (1996), and Moore and Brooks (1996), there are indications that the general principles of adult learning, group process, problem solving, and decision making are shared by individuals in both the workplace/organisational context and in the community context. Developing human resources results in more effective community organisations, that can then fulfil the functions required to contribute positively to community development. A better educated base of human resources leads to higher likelihood of leaders emerging, and information gathering ability, understanding of where to go for information and intellect are key to being able to recognise and access resources both within and beyond community boundaries. Educational activities are for the most part done in small to medium groups, which can enhance bonding social capital between learners. Education that is focused on exchange and learning through experience as in Oyama also naturally results in the forming of bridging and linking social capital, also very important for accessing external resources including new knowledge and ideas.

Knowledge, and the creation and effective sharing or transfer of knowledge, is a central theme of human resource development. Knowledge is differentiated from information and data in that values and beliefs (culture) play a fundamental role (Davenport and Prusak 1998, p.12; Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). A useful definition is offered by Davenport and Prusak:

Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms (1998, p.5).

Much of the literature on knowledge and its management and transfer originated in and centres on the private sector organization and is concerned with ensuring that knowledge created through expensive research and development is capitalized on to its full extent. There has also been growing recognition in the international development community of the importance of learning and knowledge-based approaches and the need for knowledge sharing amongst development organizations, governments, academia and communities globally to maximize the equitable benefit of research and knowledge to communities globally (for example see NHS 2005; ODI 2007; SDC n.d.; Hovland 2003; and Ramalingam 2006). Stenning and Miyoshi (2008) theorise that there is a relationship between informal social activities and endogenous knowledge creation and sharing, in that such activities can contribute to knowledge creation and sharing and therefore the development of human resources/human capital just as formal learning programs can.

3.4.2 LEADERSHIP

Communities undergo change through their leaders. Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of a transformative approach to leadership that creates significant change in the life of people and organizations and redesigns perceptions and values, changing the expectations and aspirations of followers. Influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of human motivation (1943), Burns argues that the extent to which individuals will perform satisfactorily in the workplace is "affected by the extent to which their needs are satisfied" (1978). Thus, the leader's main purpose is described as helping people "meaningfully define their values so that they can be moved to purposeful action" (Burns 1978). Transformational leadership focuses on the process by which leaders play a vital role

in initiating change amongst their followers (Northouse 2001). In addition to recognizing the existing needs of followers, transformational leaders also consider their potential motives, aim to fulfil their greater needs and stimulate their entire person (Burns 1978). This results in “relationship stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Burns 1978, p.4).

Bass, who enhanced Burns’ definition by describing transformational leadership from the viewpoint of the followers’ needs (Northouse 2001), wrote about the “transformational leader” being someone who engenders trust, admiration, loyalty and respect in followers, resulting in the achievement of higher levels of performance than previously thought possible (1985).

He elaborates that transformational leaders inspire their followers to exceed expectations because they are able to (1) increase their level of consciousness about the significance and worth of specified and idealized goals, (2) entice followers to look past their own self-interest and (3) move them to focus on higher level needs (Bass 1985). Bass suggested that there were four different components of transformational leadership:

1. Intellectual stimulation: transformational leaders not only challenge the status quo; they also encourage creativity among followers. The leader encourages followers to explore new ways of doing things and new opportunities to learn.
2. Individualized consideration: transformational leadership also involves offering support and encouragement to individual followers. In order to foster supportive relationships, transformational leaders keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas and so that leaders can offer direct recognition of each follower’s unique contributions.
3. Inspirational motivation: transformational leaders have a clear vision that they are able to articulate to followers. These leaders are also able to help followers feel the same passion and motivation to fulfil these goals.
4. Idealized influence: the transformational leader serves as a role model for followers. Because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate this individual and internalize his or her ideals.

These components have been built on by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990), who propose six transformational leader behaviours: articulating a vision; providing an appropriate model; fostering the acceptance of group goals; high performance expectations; individualised support; and intellectual stimulation.

Here we are concerned with transformational community leadership as opposed to leadership in private enterprise, which the aforementioned leadership literature is focused on. The focus of community leadership is longer term and broader than private sector leadership and with this in mind there are a number of behaviours in addition to those listed above that can be identified as being part of a set of transformational community leadership behaviours including:

- A) Encouraging the building of social capital within the community;
- B) Fostering a learning culture – emphasising in particular experiential learning (learning through experience); and
- C) Cultivating broader and more diffuse community leadership and ensuring effective leadership succession by mentoring and shaping future community leaders.

Thus, we could add to the list of behaviours of transformational leaders to come up with a description of the behaviours of the transformational community leader:

1. Intellectual stimulation
2. Individualized consideration

3. Inspirational motivation
4. Idealized influence
5. High performance expectations
6. Building social capital
7. Fostering a learning culture
8. Cultivating community leadership more broadly

Bass, Waldman, Avolio and Bebb (1987) revealed what they referred to as a *cascading or falling dominoes* effect that transformational leadership has in facilitating followers' growth not only to become better, more productive and successful individuals, but also in developing them to become future leaders .

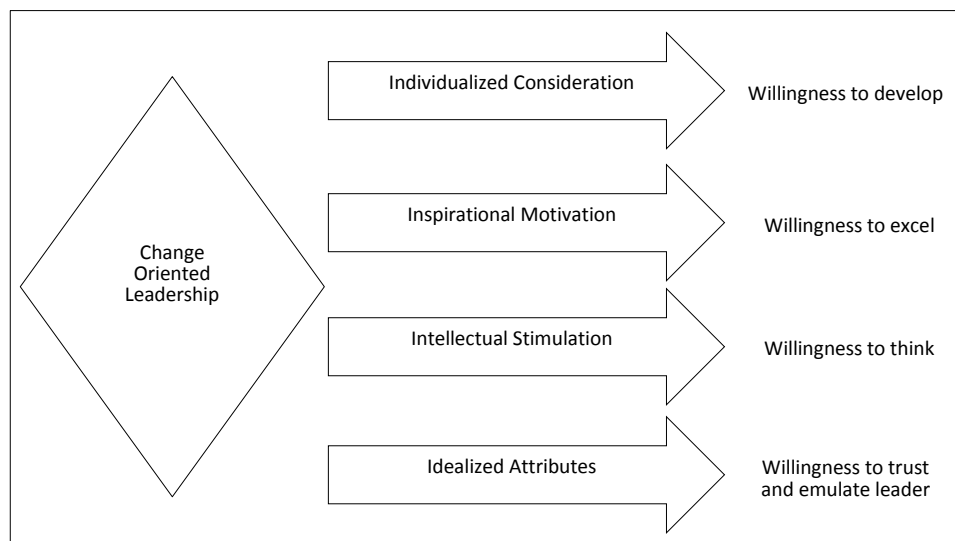


Figure 3.4.1.1: Follower Reactions to Transformational Behaviour

Source: Falling Dominoes Effect of Transformational Leadership by Bass, Waldman, Avolio and Bebb 1987 as cited in Huse 2003 and reproduced in Puatu 2012.

In line with these theories of transformational leadership, Miyoshi describes the role of community leaders in community change as primarily being about introducing new values, norms and rules to a community. This process, depicted in Figure 3.4.1.1, is also in line with the transformational leader theory, which is essentially about changing the beliefs and values of followers.

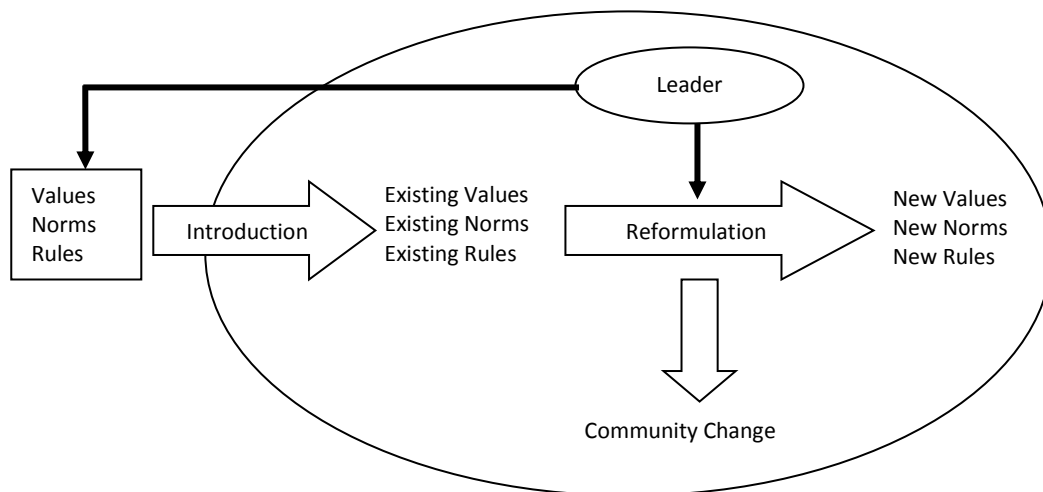


Figure 3.4.1.2: The Role of the Leader in Community Change
 Source: based on Miyoshi 2006

3.4.3 ORGANISATIONS

The existence of local organizations and associations in a community is both a result and a determinant of community capacity. In order to form a community organization a base level of community capacity, in particular leadership, commitment, common goals, and ability to recognize and access to resources, is required. On the other hand, the existence of an association or organization stimulates and facilitates the development of community capacity by providing a vehicle for the exercise of community based leadership and an incubator for the development of future leaders' skills and the development of human resources.

Thus, the establishment and/or strengthening of organisations contributes greatly to community capacity development and the introduction of more sophisticated policy structures by providing vehicles for the exercise of leadership, convenient structures for human resource development and leadership incubation, and often by improving a community's ability to access outside resources, for example to government grants or funding that requires organisational status to be eligible. The key point, though, is whether an effective incubator or institution can be established that promotes the community's characteristics and enables people and organisations in the community to conduct collective activities.

3.4.4 NETWORKS

The final strategic element identified in the model is networks, which in this context can be translated as social capital. Coleman functionally defined social capital as "a variety of different entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure" (1988, p.98). Putnam builds on this by referring to social capital as the features of social organization, such as trust, norms of reciprocity, and networks of civic engagement, that can improve the efficiency of society through facilitating coordinated actions (Putnam 1993, p.167).

Defining Social Capital

Bourdieu: 'Social capital is the 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu 1986, p.249).

Coleman: 'Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure' (Coleman 1994, p.302).

Putnam: 'Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue.” The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital' (Putnam 2000, p.19).

The World Bank: 'Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions... Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together' (The World Bank 1999).

Michael Woolcock, a social scientist with the World Bank (and Harvard) has helpfully argued that many of the key contributions prior to *Bowling Alone* failed to make a proper distinction between different types of social capital. He distinguished between:

Bonding social capital which denotes ties between people in similar situations, such as immediate family, close friends and neighbours.

Bridging social capital, which encompasses more distant ties of like persons, such as loose friendships and workmates.

Linking social capital, which reaches out to unlike people in dissimilar situations, such as those who are entirely outside of the community, thus enabling members to leverage a far wider range of resources than are available in the community (Woolcock 2001, p.13-14).

Thus three main types of social capital have been identified; bridging social capital, bonding social capital and linking social capital (Gittell and Vidal 1998; Putnam 2000; Woolcock 2001, p.13-14). Bridging and linking social capital “brings together people or groups who previously did not know each other” whilst bonding social capital on the other hand “brings closer together people who already know each other” (Gittell and Vidal 1998, p.15). Thus, bonding social capital may be described as “a kind of sociological superglue” whilst bridging and linking social capital constitute “a sociological WD-40” or lubricant (Putnam 2000, p.23). In the context of a small rural community, where nearly all members know each other at least to some degree, bonding social capital would involve the relationships between members of a small hamlet or neighbourhood (*shuraku* in Japan), whereas bridging social capital might be connections between residents of different shuraku within the same geographic area (for example in the same town), while linking social capital might be the relationships and networks connecting members of the community (organizations and individuals) with entities outside beyond its borders. However, it is important to acknowledge that the types of

social capital are difficult to distinguish and should be conceptualized as a scale of more or less (bonding at one end and bridging to linking at the other) rather than as either-or categories into which social networks can be neatly divided (Putnam 2000, p.23).

For John Field (2003, p.1-2) the central thesis of social capital theory is that 'relationships matter'. The central idea is that 'social networks are a valuable asset'. Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit social fabric. A sense of belonging and experiencing social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people.

Trust between individuals thus becomes trust between strangers and trust of a broad fabric of social institutions; ultimately, it becomes a shared set of values, virtues, and expectations within society as a whole. Without this interaction, on the other hand, trust decays; at a certain point, this decay may begin to manifest itself in serious social problems. The concept of social capital generally contends that building trust requires face-to-face encounters (Beem 1999, p.20).

There is now a range of evidence that communities with a good 'stock' of such 'social capital' are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement, and better economic growth (Halpern 2009b). Stenning and Miyoshi (2008) theorise that there is a relationship between informal social activities and endogenous knowledge creation and sharing, in that such activities can contribute to knowledge creation and sharing and therefore the development of human resources or human capital.

In a paper on what is referred to as "SocioTechnical Capital", Resnick describes social capital as being both "a residual or side effect of social interactions, and an enabler of future interactions" (2002, p.2). This process is depicted in Figure 3.4.4.1 which shows how the introduction of new activities and building of social capital are highly related and mutually interact.

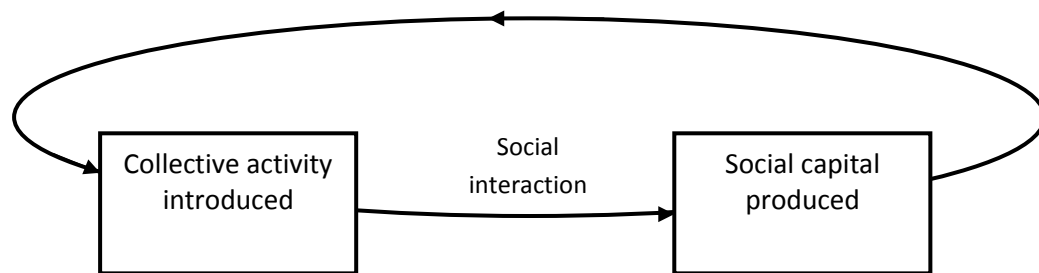


Figure 3.4.4.1: Introduction of collective activities and production of social capital

Source: Adapted from Resnick (2002, p.2 and p.7)

3.5 COMMUNITY POLICY STRUCTURE

The consequences of community capacity development interact with and produce an impact upon the selection of community policy structures. By policy structure, I refer to the economic, cultural, social, environmental and political (and so on) aspects of life within the community and, in particular, collective activities. The community's selection of policy structure and introduction of collective activities depends heavily on community capacity and will change when there are changes in community capacity. Thus as the community develops or upgrades its capacity, the community transfers to or selects a new and more sophisticated policy structure through their evaluation, planning, and implementation functions. This is an ongoing process that does not necessarily ever finish as depicted in a simplified form in Figure 3.7.1.

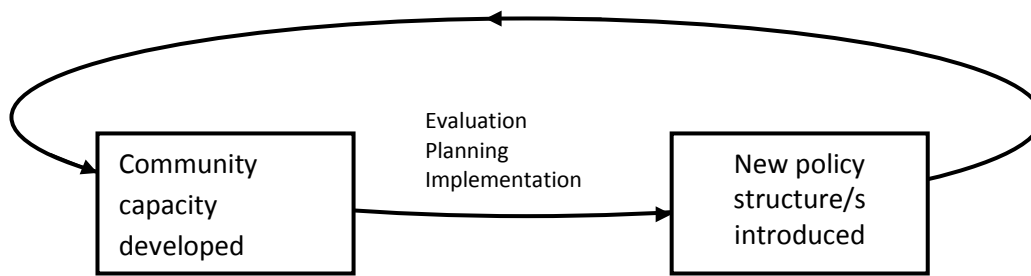


Figure 3.7.1: Simplified interaction between policy structure and community capacity

Source: Created by author

The policy structure part of the model includes non-economic aspects by incorporating social and political activities and allowing for the incorporation of informal (as well as formal) activities. Community policy structure illustrates the process of collective activities through the application of program theory. Program theory, which is also often referred to as a logic model or logical framework, has its roots in evaluation (Funnell 1997).¹⁰ Program theory conceptualises the relationship between the outcomes (or expected outcomes) and methods (or activities) of an initiative. Most evaluation addresses causal relationships between constituent elements of the subject policy, program or project. These include end outcomes (effects manifested as change in the society in question), intermediate outcomes (effects manifested as change in target groups, including both individuals and organizations), outputs (goods and services generated by the activities), activities (actions taken in order to apply inputs to the generation of outputs), inputs (human and material resources, financial resources, facilities, capital, expertise, time and so on).

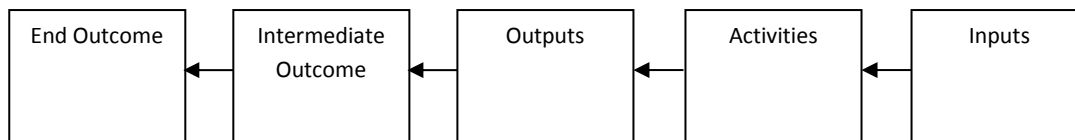


Figure 3.7.2: Logic Model (Program Theory)

Source: based on Funnell 1997

In the Western world, the logic model is usually described from the inputs side first, and end outcomes last and is usually thus portrayed visually as well. This is consistent with the way the Western person reads from left to right, and has been trained to think, chronologically from start to finish. This can cause one to inadvertently consider inputs first, and therefore place more emphasis or focus on inputs rather than outcomes. In the Miyoshi School, we have purposefully flipped the model horizontally as shown in Figure 3.7.2. This influences the user of the model to consider outcomes, arguably the most important element of a logic model, first and foremost.

End outcomes signify the eventual change in society due to a certain activity or process. Intermediate outcomes are the changes in the target groups' behaviour or situation that are expected to lead to the end outcome. Outputs are the results of activities usually expressed in numerical terms (number of workshops conducted, for example). Activities, on the other hand, are

¹⁰ For more on logical frameworks/program theory refer to Funnell (1997), Rogers et al (2000), JICA (2004), Miyoshi et al (2003), Miyoshi (2007).

the actual workshops themselves (for example), whilst inputs include any resources used for a certain policy structure such as funds, local human resources, and external experts and so on.

The community's selection of policy structure and its successful implementation depend heavily on the community's capacity situation. Moreover, as the community develops or upgrades its capacity, the community will naturally transfer to or select a new and more sophisticated or value-added policy structure. The process of a community using its capacity to plan, implement or evaluate a certain policy structure may also contribute to developments in community capacity, particularly if these results in expected end and intermediate outcomes (changes in society and specific target groups).

Program theory is a useful tool in the description, planning and evaluation of initiatives including the collective activities of a community. For example, it might be used to describe and clarify agricultural production processes, plan and implement development initiatives and community events, or evaluate an existing program. As mentioned above, the community policy structure part of the model applies program theory to illustrate the process of collective activities. This allows a detailed description, consideration and definition of collective activities including the logic or theory between activities and expected or actual outcomes of such activities.

Barreda identified two different groups of collective activity within the Teenek indigenous community in Tamaletom, Mexico. These were traditional collective activities (TCA) and community-oriented collective activities (CCA) (2012, p.295). TCA were generally not remunerated, that is they were voluntary activities, organised locally from within the community and centred on subsistence, reciprocity and preserving the Teenek identity. These included voluntary work (known locally as *faena*), trade among neighbours, religious processions, community governance processes, subsistence farming, dances, housing building and maintenance, and disaster relief. These were participated in widely throughout the indigenous Teenek community and, according to Barreda, fostered a strong sense of community (2012, p.300). CCA on the other hand were a result of external financial and technical support and interventions as well as the emergence of local leadership and organised community groups. CCA included such activities as groups organised by the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, radio programs, and skills-building workshops for locals in, for example, first aid for tourists, recovery of indigenous plants, value addition to honey products, and water recycling. These led to the community having new shared objectives, and therefore increased commitment as well as increased recognition of and access to resources (Barreda 2012, p.300).

Building on Barreda's idea, it is possible to identify a range of collective activities in the rural sphere. By collective activity, I refer to any activity in which more than one person or actors in the community participate in the planning, implementation or evaluation. These could be economic, social, cultural, political, agricultural-focused, educational, or others and might be formal or informal in nature. The collective activity may be traditional, passed down for generations, or something more recently introduced in the community. Collective activities may be initiated internally from within the community or come about as the result from an external intervention from NGOs or national government programs for example.

Miyoshi categorises formally organised collective activities for rural community development as being able to be organised with three relatively distinct levels: the policy formulation level, the implementation organisation level and the producer or participant level (2012, p.10-12). This distinction of roles helps identify the ways in which national or prefectural government can support the promotion of collective activities in communities and in turn how local organisations as community members can support the participants of such collective activities in communities. At the policy level a policy-making organisation, such as a national or prefecture level government, formulates policy on the approach to the collective activity, selects and supports implementing organisations, for example local government unit or NGO, develops guidelines for and facilitates training of implementation organisations, provides leadership mentoring or training, and a range of support to the implementation organisation such as marketing, technical and financial

support. The implementation organisation builds a local framework and supports the farmers, small producers or small business to plan and implement collective activities. This includes the promotion of human resource development within the implementation organisation and participants in the collective activity, the facilitation of knowledge sharing amongst participants and between participants and other individuals or organisations, and a range of other support services to participants. These may include marketing support, direct sales facilities, antenna shops, technical support and financial support including micro-finance. The producer or participant level refers to the participants and beneficiaries of collective activities, for example, small farmers, small business or industry, or other groups and individuals. These participants may already exist or may be identified as potential participants and utilise existing, potential or latent resources in the course of their participation in the collective activity.

There are a multitude of examples of collective activities in the following chapters, which demonstrate also that collective activities become more sophisticated as community capacity develops over time. Some collective activities identified in Oyama's case are a result of a strategy of systematic value addition whereby the community continuously adds to and improves particularly production-based collective activities to pursue their goals. These kinds of production-based collective activities have been referred to as collective entrepreneurship. Connell defines collective entrepreneurship in the following way:

Collective entrepreneurship combines business risk and capital investment with the social values of collective action. It is an event that exists when collective action aims for the economic and social betterment of a locality by means of some transformation of social norms, values, and networks for the production of goods or services by an enterprise (1999, p.20).

Whereas the concept of social capital lends an economic, or productive, perspective to social relations, collective entrepreneurship lends a business development perspective to social capital. In this, collective entrepreneurship is a means of realising the inherent potential of social capital (Connell 1999, p.20).

Certain levels of community capacity are required in order to successfully introduce collective activities, and the more complex or sophisticated the activities the more community capacity is required. There would also appear to be some collective activities that can continue despite a later reduction in community capacity due to such things as, for example, a change in community boundaries and loss of organisations such as the local government unit.

3.6 COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

Community functions consist of the planning (redefinition), implementation (action), and evaluation (reflection) of a community's policy structure. Community capacity is executed through the fulfilment of these functions. Community functions can be viewed as the process of realizing the community's goals. Community policy structure is actually the collective concept of activities to achieve the respective goals of individuals and organizations. Activities carried out to achieve the respective goals of individuals and organizations are recognized as separate activities of each; however, it can be difficult to fully conceptualize all of the activities in a community policy structure. In fact, it is rare that a community policy structure is recognized fully by the community.

Municipalities devise basic administrative plans of cities, towns and villages, but the scope of such basic plans is, in general, insufficient in describing the community policy structure in its entirety; however, whether a community is able to recognize its policy structure and then plan, implement and evaluate this as a community greatly influences its ability to achieve its goals and

targets. The ability to examine the end outcomes of the desired social changes and who in the community will be responsible for them is particularly important.

The functions of community capacity are designed by the community as a whole, resulting in the community's existing policy structure. Individuals, groups and organizations will each act under this community policy structure. By differentiating the functions of community capacity and the separate activities of individuals, groups and organizations under the community policy structure, it is possible to provide more specific and practical direction to rural development efforts. Whether a richer community policy structure can be planned depends on the level of community capacity. If capacity to carry out the planning function is high, the community will be able to devise a more complex and higher value added policy structure; if the implementation function capacity is also high, the community will be able to appropriately operate, control and implement this complex policy structure.

Whether collective activities by individuals, groups and organizations can be absorbed into the community policy structure is especially significant. Absorbing collective activities into the community policy structure enables other activities that would be otherwise unachievable by an individual or single organization. The community's policy structure can evolve into something more complex and rich. Establishing a shared community policy structure helps the community to fulfil functions required to realize its shared vision, values and norms.

Collective activities are, more often than not, carried out by the core organizations within a community. It is important for a community to establish the ability to design and implement strategies as a community; this equips the community with the ability to design itself.

3.7 COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing community capacity is referred to as community capacity development. Community capacity development is seeking and creating strengths and opportunities that can lead to development, in order to promote positive change within the community. Capacity is developed through attempts of the community to develop and maintain these discovered strengths and opportunities.

The community's hidden strengths and opportunities are represented by the potential of the community's strategic components, characteristics of community capacity, and community functions. By identifying potential strengths and opportunities that can lead to development and then focusing on them and by energizing mutual interactions and synergies among the community capacity components of various community strategic components, characteristics of community capacity and community functions, the potential strengths and opportunities can be objectified and activated.

It must be emphasized that community capacity development should be perceived not as something linear, but rather as a continuous process. Furthermore, capacity development achieved through the promotion of intrinsic development by mutual interaction and synergistic effects among community capacity components is preferable over development forced onto a community by external intervention. Strategic components of the community, characteristics, and community functions should not be simplified to a linear, mono-directional concept of mutual relationship that can easily be categorized. In reality it is not that simple. For example, improving individuals' abilities contributes to the betterment of the community organization, and improving the organizations' abilities reflects back to the ability enhancement at individual levels.

Community capacity is unavoidably connected to and influenced by the historical and communal context. The development of community capacity is the result of a long-term process spanning five years, ten years, one generation, or at times even several generations. Community capacity development is an ongoing phenomenon for communities. Political context may not always be present in a community. Community boundaries also influence community capacity. For example, decentralization usually takes place in a space that transcends community boundaries, but

can bring positive outcomes to community capacity (Stenning 2007). Municipal mergers in Japan also influence community capacity by bringing changes to the community members.

This chapter proposes a concept of alternative approach for rural development, and by viewing communities as an operational construct established in society, attempts to clarify methods to renew or change the scope or boundaries of communities, community capacity, and existing community policy structures. There are many reasons behind rural developments; some are economic, social, environmental or political, and individual or group benefits, among other factors, may also exist. A community is, as discussed in the introduction, a constructed social aggregation. Community capacity can be changed through the efforts of people. By implementing such a concept, people of the community can then have discussions, enabling them to create more realistic, operational, and practical approaches to development.

3.8 CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY

This chapter offers a concept for an alternative approach for rural development in the form of the community capacity development and policy structure model. This approach views community as an operational construct, a constructed social aggregation and therefore able to be defined and designed by its members. Community capacity can be changed through the efforts of people. By implementing such a concept, people of the community can then have discussions, enabling them to create more realistic, operational, and practical approaches to development.

This model presented in this chapter is a dual-function model that elucidates interaction and synergies between rural community capacity and community policy structure whereby improvements in community capacity enable the formation of more complex and sophisticated community policy structure. Community capacity and its development is one of the two pillars of this alternative development model and defined by the interaction of three basic elements: characteristics of community capacity, strategic elements, and functions of the community.

The characteristics that define community capacity are identified in the model. These include sense of community, commitment, ability to set and achieve objectives, and ability to recognize and access to resources. The strategic elements of the community shown in the model influence the characteristics of community capacity; they can be viewed as something that maintains or influences community capacity. Therefore, strategic elements of the community can be handled either as the entry point for the development strategy of community capacity, or as specific targets. Community capacity can be improved by first analysing the community with emphasis on the community's leadership, human resources, organizations, and networks, and by implementing activities that result in positive changes to these elements, building on what already exists in the community.

Community functions consist of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a community's policy structure and it is through the fulfilment of these functions that community capacity is executed.

The consequences of community capacity development interact with and produce an impact upon the selection of community policy structure. By policy structure, we refer to the economic, social and political aspects of life within the community and, in particular, collective activities. The community's selection of policy structure and introduction of collective activities depends heavily on community capacity and will change when there are changes in community capacity. Thus as the community develops or upgrades its capacity, the community transfers to or selects a new and more sophisticated policy structure through their evaluation, planning, and implementation functions. This is an ongoing process that does not necessarily ever finish.

Enhancing community capacity is referred to as community capacity development. Community capacity development is seeking and creating strengths and opportunities that can lead to development, in order to promote positive change within the community. Capacity is developed

through attempts of the community to develop and maintain these discovered strengths and opportunities.

The community's hidden strengths and opportunities are represented by the potential of the community's strategic components, characteristics of community capacity, and community functions. By identifying potential strengths and opportunities that can lead to development and then focusing on them and by energizing mutual interactions and synergies among the various community strategic elements, characteristics of community capacity and community functions, the potential strengths and opportunities can be objectified and activated.

It must be emphasized that community capacity development should be perceived not as something linear, but rather as a continuous process. Furthermore, capacity development achieved through the promotion of intrinsic development by mutual interaction and synergistic effects among community capacity components is preferable over development forced onto a community by external intervention. Community capacity is unavoidably connected to and influenced by the historical and communal context, and development of this community capacity is an ongoing phenomenon for communities.

CHAPTER 4 FROM THE BEGINNING



昭和30年代の大山村

Image 4.1: Oyama neighbourhood in 1950s

Source: Matsunaga 1989

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Oyama is located within Oita Prefecture in the north-east corner of the island of Kyushu in south-western Japan. It is a small community nestled between mountains and rivers a short drive out of Hita City down Kokudo Number 212. Oyama is approximately halfway between Oita City and Fukuoka City in the westernmost part of Oita Prefecture not far from the prefectural boundary with Fukuoka Prefecture and about in the centre of Northern Kyushu. Oyama is shaped like a leaf and runs six kilometres east to west, and 10 kilometres north to south (Oyama 2004, p.2). The Oyama River, a main tributary to the Chikugo River, flows through the centre of Oyama and the 3,147¹¹ inhabitants live in 36 small *shuraku* (hamlets/groupings of houses) located on the limited flat land alongside the river and in small valleys amongst the surrounding mountains.

Mountainous forests make up the majority of the area of this community with over 3,800 hectares of the total 4,572 hectares of land within Oyama's boundaries falling within this category. Farmland, on the other hand, accounts for just 360 hectares with the average amount of land per farm just 50 ares¹² (Oyama 2004). Because of this combination of mostly steep mountains and very little available farmland, Oyama is not well suited to large scale farming. Oyama is now relatively well known throughout Japan both as a successful case of rural development and as an ume (Japanese plum) producing region due to the highly successful community development activities undertaken by the small community since the mid-1950s, most notably the New Plum and Chestnut movement (NPC). This chapter looks at Oyama during the post-war to pre-NPC implementation period, which was one of the toughest times in history for Oyama residents who were described as being both emotionally and materialistically impoverished.

¹¹ This figure is the population in 2012. See Chapter 6 for detail on population figures/depopulation.

¹² One are is equal to 100 square metres.



Image 4.1.1: Location of Oyama in Japan

Source: Google Maps, September 2012

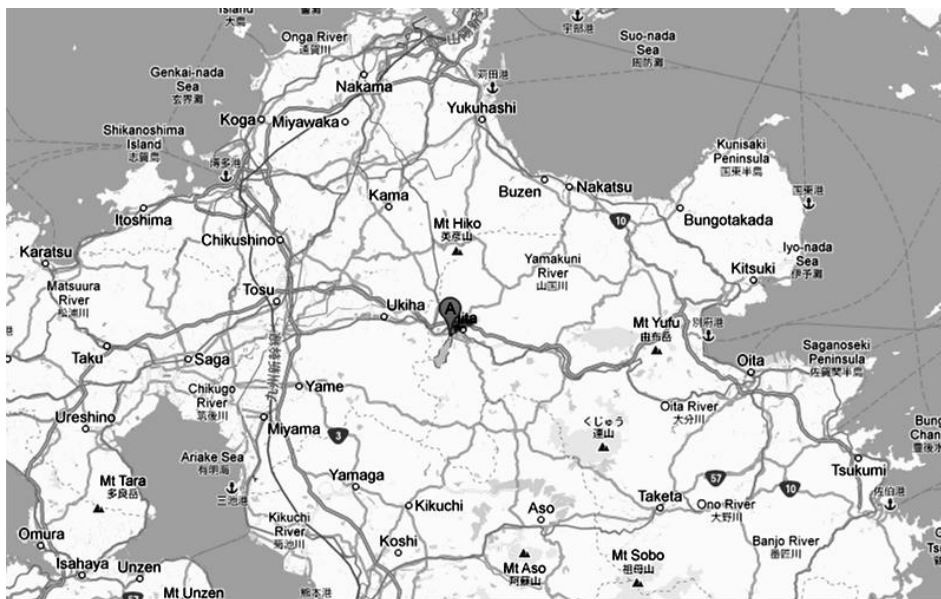


Image 4.1.2: Location of Oyama in Oita Prefecture on Kyushu Island, Japan

Source: Google Maps, September 2012

Collective activities in Oyama were limited to the *shuraku* level, for example, traditional style rice planting in groups, cultural events such as annual religious festivals, and collective roof thatching maintenance. There was little sense of community at the village level and little latent commitment to, or ability to, participate in village level collective activities due to the nature of agricultural work, a culture that frowned on frivolity and the isolating geographic conditions, not to mention that there was not really much in the way of village activities to participate in to begin with. Farmers had no access to information, no ability to organise or participate in the planning, evaluation or implementation functions, they were also said to be distrustful and suspicious of each other. Agriculture was simple, but labour intensive and mostly for subsistence, while other cash income

generating activities were also difficult and labour intensive and would also prove to be vulnerable to market shocks including advances in technology.

4.2 OYAMA BEFORE

Oyama has been an agricultural village for hundreds of years. In the Modern Age from 1800s onwards, the main crops grown in Oyama were wheat and rice. These were planted between autumn and spring. Between spring and autumn farmers also grew soy beans, potatoes, hemp, azuki beans, *daikon* (giant white radish), tobacco, millet and in some cases soba (buckwheat) (Oyama 1995, p.162). Likewise, the kind of agriculture in pre-war and wartime Oyama was mostly subsistence farming; households produced rice, wheat, soy beans, and azuki beans largely for household consumption (Miwa 1987, p.10).

Due to the limited amount of usable land, the traditional form of agriculture centring on rice production did not allow Oyama to prosper. The price of rice has historically been controlled by the Japanese government and kept relatively constant. In order to profit from such a regulated agricultural commodity, farmers needed to produce in large quantities. Japanese farmers with the smallest plots of land, like Oyama's farmers, had difficulty producing a quantity that allowed them to profit from the crop and income diversification was necessary to earn enough cash to survive.

To make a little cash income, farmers grew hemp, which after sold was used to make fishing nets. They also produced the raw materials used in making mulberry paper, and some men also worked in the cedar logging industry. Yahata Toranobu, who was born in 1932 and lives in Ogirihata, described what he could recall of life in Oyama from the mid-1930s when he was about to begin elementary school to the mid-1950s during a conversation with me in January 2010:

“Roughly 80 to 90 per cent of produce was for household use. People used cows to plough the fields. From summer to the beginning of autumn they planted grains like millet and wheat and for cash income they grew hemp and processed the bark for fishing nets. During the winter we made the raw material ingredients for mulberry paper.”

“Even before the war there weren't any farmers in Oyama that could survive by just growing rice. There was much emigration to other areas for work...apart from that, most [men] also cut logs and rafted them downriver,” explained Yahata Mamoru who was born in 1908 (cited in Miwa 1987, p.10). Community presentation materials from Hibiki no Sato in Oyama also describe how long ago most Chikugo River raftsmen were from Oyama and a main trade of the village was cutting down cedar trees in the mountain forests and rafting them downriver as shown in Image 4.2.1 (Hibiki no Sato 2008).

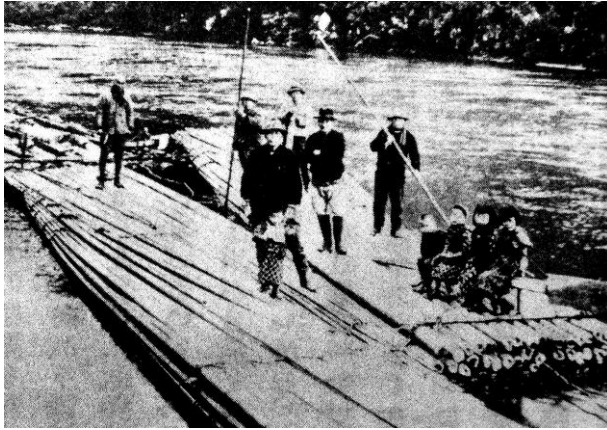


Image 4.2.1: Scene of rafting cedar logs down Oyama River

Source: Matsunaga 1989, p.42

Women of farming households in Oyama also earned income as migrant workers between April and June each year picking and packing nashi, a kind of Japanese pear, in Haki, a nashi producing area in Fukuoka Prefecture (Miwa 1987, p.10).

Before World War II, some Oyama families had even immigrated to Latin America in search of a better quality of life. Yahata Toranobu recounted the story of a family of five from Ogirihata shuraku who took up an opportunity in Brazil in the mid-1920s; however, unfortunately they did not find the rich life they were promised in Brazil and returned disappointed to an even further impoverished Oyama in the 1950s.

The location and geography of Oyama contributed to the isolation and poverty of its inhabitants. Located at the westernmost point of Oita Prefecture, for the most part transportation, distribution and sales of agricultural products, higher education, and health services had to be accessed through either Kitakyushu or Fukuoka (Koda n.d.). Even within Oyama Village itself, each shuraku was separated by steep mountains and/or rivers, which along with a lack of paved roads made travel even between shuraku within Oyama difficult.

In post-war Japan during the late 1940s to early 1950s, strong economic growth and development was being fuelled by the Korean War; however, this was centred in Tokyo and other major Japanese cities. The economic impacts of this development did not extend to rural regions like the mountainous region of interior Kyushu where Oyama is located. Technological advances that accompanied this period of development did in fact impact on Oyama; however, the immediate outcomes of these technological advances were not positive. The introduction of the chainsaw and truck caused the logging industry to change dramatically. When chainsaws replaced hand saws and wire and trucks started to be used to transport logs down mountains and to market, logging became much easier and the requirement for manual labour in the logging and rafting of the logs downriver all but disappeared. An important source of cash income for the men of poorer households in Oyama was lost.

The invention of nylon and subsequent emergence of nylon fishing nets in Japan in the late 1940s also made one of Oyama's traditional cash crops, hemp, obsolete. The farmers of Oyama therefore lost two important sources of cash income at around the same time. Oyama was set back further also as the town was severely affected by the great flood that accompanied typhoons in 1953 (The Machizukuri View, 1991). As a result, at this time a good percentage of the farming households in Oyama were faced with unemployment and therefore severe poverty (Miwa 1987, p.11). Yahata Toranobu described this period as one of the most difficult in Oyama's history.

“The poverty was so severe that it was often difficult to eat. During this period farmers grew wheat and sweet potato for self consumption...”

Rice was scarce. As mentioned by Yahata Toranobu, at times there was barely enough food to survive. For a time, villagers had to survive on eating just sweet potato and a little bit of rice gruel cooked with wheat. In 1954, the average household income in Oyama was just 80,000 yen per year.¹³ This placed Oyama at the very bottom of the 58 municipalities in Oita Prefecture in terms of household income; Oyama was the poorest village in a poor prefecture. In comparison, incomes in the big cities such as Tokyo or Osaka had climbed to about 40,000 yen per month.

Yahata Toranobu explained that often people would end up needing to borrow money at some point. They would borrow for example 7,000 or 10,000 or 15,000 yen from a lender in Oyama. Yahata mentioned that there were a few people within his own shuraku, Ogirihata, who would lend money to other farmers. The loan would then be repaid over a year. If for some reason they could not repay the lender within the year they would sometimes have their land taken.

Yahata recounted that farmers sold their goods to a merchant within Oyama, who would buy from a number of households individually and then take them to market in other areas. There were no collective distribution channels that benefited farmers at this time.

“We would sell the hemp to an Oyama person. They used to come to the house and inspect the quality and tell us how much it was worth and buy it from us, from each household separately. It was pretty much the same process for shiitake.”

According to Yahata Toranobu, everything was muddy and dirty as there were no paved roads. The type of housing was not comfortable. Roofs were thatched straw and many houses had walls made of mud, although Yahata Toranobu mentioned that his own family’s house was wooden. Houses also often housed cattle that were used to plough fields. Yahata recalled that there were always a lot of fleas, flies and mosquitoes in the houses.

Ishibashi Hiroto, who worked at the Nokyo, described his impression of the poorest households in Oyama, which he was exposed to in 1954 when Yahata became head of the Nokyo and brought the Nokyo employees around to each shuraku in order to meet with residents and get to know the plight of farming households:

“The impoverishment was beyond what we as leaders of the village could have imagined. Thatched straw roofs, rough mud walls, and dank earthen floors. Cows were being kept inside, in the back of the same building that humans lived. Hearths were filled with the stench of manure” (Ishibashi quoted in Miwa 1987, p.15).

Koda Kazumi told a group of JICA trainees about the situation in his neighbourhood of Kabu when he was a boy during a community lecture in June 2012.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Each house only had one or two electric light bulbs. The first television was brought into Kabu shuraku to his house around 60 years ago when Koda was in primary school. It was the only television set in the neighbourhood, so all of the neighbours’ children (and their dogs) would come to his house in the evenings to watch TV. There was no town water supply at that time so the small community had to share water that came from a spring further up the mountain...Most of the houses had thatched straw roofs and all of the neighbours would get

¹³ Yahata Kinji, presentation given to JICA trainees 26 June 2008.

together to help each other repair and maintain them. “I lived a very poor lifestyle,” reflected Koda.

Agriculture was physically difficult and time-consuming. Farmers used cattle or horses to plough fields. These beasts of burden were normally fed grasses that were collected daily or twice daily. Daily life therefore consisted of waking up before 5am, sometimes as early as 3am to trudge through the mud to cut and carry grass back to feed the livestock. Due to the limited amounts of land with grass available in Oyama, farmers sometimes had to walk long distances in order to find feed for their animals and then carry this back usually with a *tenbinbo*. “There were no roads, no cars – you had to either carry things with a *tenbinbo* or with your hands, or tie them to the backs of cows or horses,” explained Yahata Toranobu.

During our chat, Yahata Toranobu also talked of the hardship associated with hemp production in his village:

*“Well, work differed depending on the time of year, but in short, from around the end of February or beginning of March was the hemp producing season so there were various things to do related to this. In around July or August, in the heat, we harvested the hemp, and then we steamed it and dried it. Hemp production was an all day kind of job from early in the morning. It was really hard work – hemp plants are about three metres long and we would bundle them up in a bunch about this round [gestures with hands]. There was no other option than to carry the bundles with a *tenbinbo*. There definitely was not any carrying it in cars or anything like that.”*

Getting water was also a great difficulty, especially for those living in the small *shuraku* on the mountain slopes as they were further from the river, which was the main water source. Bath water was never thrown away – it was reused. Water was carried on a *tenbinbo* (yoke) usually by the *obaachan* (old woman/grandmother). In terms of food, firstly people rarely ate any fish or meat, only chicken occasionally and usually just vegetables. “People sometimes caught and ate tanuki,” laughed Yahata Toranobu.¹⁴ Salted preserved fish and shrimp sellers would sometimes visit the village on foot. Later, after the road was built, a kind of “supermarket car” would come with a wider selection of processed foods and necessities.

Due to the long hours worked there physically was no time left for much participation in fun or social activities. Apart from that, having fun and frivolity in general was actually looked down upon. “Dancing or that kind of thing was considered *gessu*¹⁵, yeah *gessu* the absolute worst,” elaborated Yahata Toranobu. During my conversation with Yahata Toranobu, Kurokawa Teruko piped in to support Yahata’s assertion that the inhabitants of Ogirihata looked down on fun and frivolity – so much so that the hamlet was referred to as ‘Ogirihata Jigoku’ (literally the Ogirihata Hell) by wives who lived there.

“Anyway, I said it just before, didn’t I? This place was known as ‘Ogirihata Jigoku’, right. People just worked, they really never had any kind of fun. That’s what it was like here.”¹⁶

Another resident of Ogirihata, Mori Tamiko, who like Kurokawa Teruko had married into Ogirihata, also referred to the old Ogirihata as “Ogirihata Jigoku” a number of times during our conversations over the years. Yahata Toranobu maintained that the closest thing they had to fun in Ogirihata were annual festivals, which were traditional religious celebrations that had been passed down by ancestors. The Hadaka Matsuri involved the young men of the *shuraku* splashing water over their

¹⁴ A tanuki is a kind of native Japanese raccoon.

¹⁵ *Gessu* = the absolute worst

¹⁶ *Jigoku* = hell

naked bodies and running up the mountain to pray at Ushuku Shrine. Yahata also talked of the joyous occasion of rice paddy planting:

“Another event was rice paddy planting. Paddy planting began usually from around twenty-fifth of June or so and work was done collectively. Ogirihata was separated into two work groups. People were divided into kamigumi [upper group] and shimogumi [lower group] and worked together. After the paddies had all been planted there was something called a nokyubi [farming holiday] and everyone took a rest. That was about it really. At each house, I wouldn’t really call it a feast because it was the country, but people made udon or killed a chicken or something like that.”

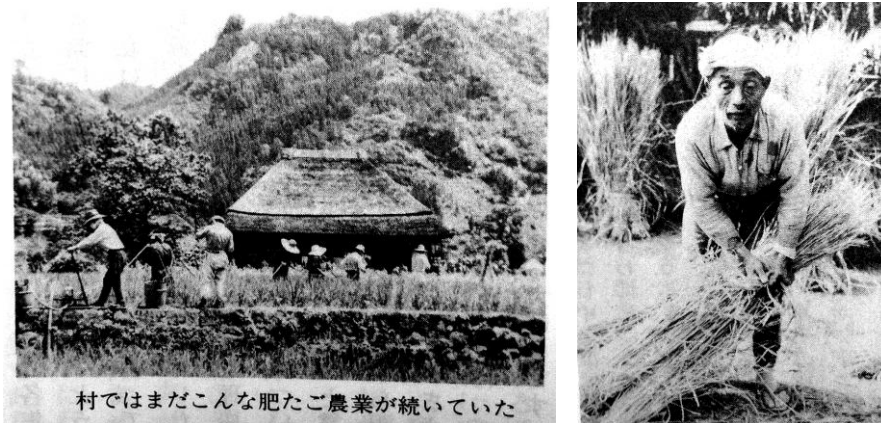


Image 4.2.2: Oyama farmers (left) and an elderly Oyama farmer circa 1950s (right)

Source: Matsunaga 1989

During a tour of workshops on Marukin Farm, I noticed some antique-looking wooden farm tools on the wall of one of the sheds. The tools were mostly made from wood and some, like the harness for a cow driven plough and a kind of saddle for carrying things on a cow, seemed to be made from straw. Some of these can be seen in Image 4.2.3 hanging on the wall in the background behind the trainee from Africa who is listening to Kurokawa Masateru talk about the different tools and how they were used. Image 4.2.4 shows an Oyama farmer ploughing a field using a cow such tools that Kurokawa described.



Image 4.2.3: Kurokawa Masateru tells JICA trainees about his antique farm tools

Source: taken by author May 2012

Field note 16 May 2012:

While most of the group, including the interpreter, proceeded to the farmhouse for the lecture, Kurokawa proceeded to tell the group of stragglers all about the tools that I had found hanging on the walls and beams of the shed. “That one was for ploughing earth,” he said gesturing towards a wooden frame on the wall, “and that one was for carrying things. This one we would use to carry things on cattle. This board here was used for silk.” I asked Kurokawa if these were his tools or if they had belonged to his father. He responded “Well of course these were mine! I used them. Here in Oyama we still used these kinds of tools until the early 1960s. And this drum here, this was used to store rice. These aren’t used anymore either because the vermin get in.”



Image 4.2.4: ploughing a field in Oyama circa 1950s

Source: still from *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi* 1973

Ogata Hideo, who was a town hall employee for 35 years and now works at Hibiki no Sato, talked of his experiences in Oyama to a group of Japan Development Scholarship recipient students from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in April 2009. He showed us the photograph depicted in Image 4.2.5:



Image 4.2.5: Small boy caring for an infant sibling circa 1950s

Source: *Hibiki no Sato* 2011

“See the small boy in this picture?”

Ogata pointed to the boy with the baby on his back in the foreground of the photograph shown in Image 4.2.5.

“Actually, at the time this picture was taken this young boy was two years younger than me, but I was just like that about 50 years or so ago. At that young age I had to help out by looking after my siblings and working in the home while my father worked hard in the field – those were difficult times.”

This need to help out at home meant that most children did not attend school and therefore the population was fairly uneducated. Ogata also talked of the poverty and hardship that was experienced by Oyama’s residents during the decade after the end of World War II. One phrase summarised the situation particularly well:

“Tired thatched roofs, humble earth walls, and no money; but above all, an unusually strong sense of mistrust and jealousy...”



Image 4.2.6: Elderly farmer in post-war Oyama

Source: Wa ga ai suru midori no machi 1973

These were in fact the words of an unnamed journalist who visited Oyama in the late 1940s describing his perception of the village. His words indicated that not only were Oyama’s people materialistically impoverished, but they were also suffering from another different but highly related affliction, a kind of emotional impoverishment. Images like the poor elderly farmer in Image 4.2.6 are used in Oyama local government and Agricultural Cooperative publications to emphasise the abject poverty and hardship experienced in the post-war period. Yahata Kinji described the way Oyama in that time is remembered when delivering a community lecture for JICA trainees in June 2008.

Field note 26 June 2008:

When Yahata Harumi [Yahata Kinji’s father] became chairman of the Nokyo 46 years ago, the village was desperately impoverished. Kinji elaborated that there was also no access to

information, no ability to organize, and nobody trusted one another...Kinji explained to us that 50 years ago there were 58 municipalities in Oita Prefecture. Of these, Oyama was the poorest at that time.

Despite the post-war period being incredibly tough for Oyama residents and farmers in particular, and there being a distinct lack of community capacity this period saw the emergence of the foundations for the events and processes that would allow Oyama to be transformed from this image of the most impoverished mountain village in a poor and backward mountainous region of Oita Prefecture to one of the most successful agricultural villages in Japan. These foundations are described in the following sections.

4.3 OYAMA BEFORE – FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

As outlined in the description above, the period between the end of World War II and preceding the introduction of the New Plum and Chestnut movement was one of the hardest for the people of Oyama who were described at the time as being both materialistically and emotionally impoverished. Farmers had relatively low levels of education due to children being needed to help out in the home and work. Not only were they poor and uneducated, they were also tired and worn down from the hardships of poverty and were close to despair and lacking dreams or vision for future, accepting their fate. Life was hard; the kind of agriculture and other income generating activities that most Oyama residents were engaged in were labour intensive and involved working long hours every day meaning that there was little time left for socialising or participating in activities with other members of the community.

The village experienced a clear lack in capacity including a weak sense of community at the village level and a corresponding lack of commitment, and ability, to participate in whole of village collective activities. Community policy structures were simple. There was no capacity to plan, evaluate or implement collective activities with the local government and newly established agricultural cooperative not engaged in farmers lives more than was required by national government policy (registering births, deaths and marriages, collecting taxes and implementing the national government's rice production policy for example). Agricultural production activities were also simple and there was a passive approach to distribution of produce, which limited the bargaining power of farmers.

However, there were some important community capacity elements present and appearing at this time that would form the basis for successful future development efforts in the community. These key elements included:

- Existence of the village local government unit referred to as the Yakuba. The Yakuba provided a legitimate vehicle for the exercise of leadership, a convenient organisational structure for the development of human resources and shaping of future leaders as well as mechanism for the transportation of the leader's development philosophy over the decades. The Yakuba also presented an opportunity to harness resources through the village budget and administrative staff.
- Establishment of the Oyama Agricultural Cooperative (herewith referred to as the Nokyo). Similar to the Yakuba, the Nokyo provided another vehicle for leadership as well as a structure for human resources development and leadership promotion. The Nokyo also secured access to financial capital in the form of farming household savings through the Nokyo savings facility.
- Emergence of a visionary leader in Yahata Harumi whose leadership was given formal authority and legitimacy through the Yakuba and Nokyo. Yahata effectively introduced new values to the village and communicated a shared vision, which would result in an increased

sense of community as well as increased commitment by residents as well as organisations such as the Yakuba and Nokyo.

- Wider community leadership and the setting and achievement of collective goals under the Dam Action Committee in response to a proposed dam in the community.
- Introduction of a cable radio station as a mechanism to share information, instil shared community values, and encourage participation in community activities.

These elements set the foundations of community capacity which allowed for the successful introduction of a new and higher value added community policy structure, the New Plum and Chestnut movement.

4.3.1 YAKUBA

Under the leadership of Yahata Harumi, which is discussed further later in this chapter, the Yakuba became a key agent in driving development and helping to lift Oyama's people out of poverty. The existence of the Yakuba provided a legitimate vehicle for the exercise of leadership, a convenient organisational structure for the development of human resources and incubation and mentoring of future leaders, and access to resources through the village budget and administrative staff.

Collective activities are, more often than not, carried out by the core organizations within a community. In Oyama, the Yakuba and Nokyo played this role by creating a system that supports collective activities. In the first phase of the NPC Movement, the Yakuba distributed subsidised plum seedlings to farms that decided to switch from rice farming to plum orchard cultivation. From early on, people and organizations with information became resources themselves, making efforts to collectively share the information and knowledge among the residents (using cable radio broadcasting, cable TV, and in the beginning of the NPC Movement, through organized technical guidance study groups – these are detailed further in Chapter 5).

Japan is a unitary state with two tiers of local government. The first tier is the prefectures which serve a wider area. There are 47 prefectures in Japan; one to (metropolitan district – Tokyo), two fu (urban prefectures – Kyoto and Osaka), 43 ken (normal/rural prefectures), and one do (district – Hokkaido). The lower tier governments, municipalities, provide local services. They are classified as shi or gun (city or counties in the case of wider rural areas), cho (town – also referred to as machi), and son (village – also referred to as mura). In addition, there is a system by which municipalities of a certain size can deal with what is generally considered to be prefecture administrative work; by government decree, they are called designated cities, core cities or special case-cities (CLAIR 2011).

Municipalities are generally designated a village, town or city depending on population size. Each of these types of municipalities is parallel and not ordered hierarchically, for example a village does not fall under the jurisdiction of a city or town. Each municipality is headed by a directly elected executive mayor and has an elected municipal assembly. This is replicated at the prefectural level, although with different nomenclature. The exceptions to this are the designated cities, which enjoy more autonomy than basic municipalities, and Tokyo, which has special arrangements as the nation's capital.

Through the Local Autonomy Law of 1946 local government enjoys specific legal status in Japan's legal framework (Stevens 2012). The law sets out a respect for local self-government, the separation of the executive and legislative branches and the definition of local councils and their status in relation to central government. This system is very much influenced by the American model, which is natural given the role of the United States in administering the country during the post-war reconstruction era.

Local government in Japan has its basis in the nation's Constitution, which was adopted in 1946 and established what has been referred to as the "age of local government" by providing a legal basis for local government and recognizing the system of local government as part of the

Constitutional system. Under the heading “Local Government,” Chapter 8 of the Constitution contains the following four Articles (these are also provided in the extract of the Constitution below):

- Opening with a declaration of respect for local government and its basic principles;
- Providing that heads of local governments and members of assemblies be elected by direct public elections;
- Stating clearly that local governments should have a broad range of authority over a broad range of administrative functions, and granting local legislative authority within the local jurisdiction; and
- Imposing restrictions on the enactment of special legislation applicable only to a given local government.

Constitution of Japan (Extract)
CHAPTER VIII LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Article 92. Regulations concerning organization and operations of local governments shall be fixed by law in accordance with the principle of local government.

Article 93. The local governments shall establish assemblies as their deliberative organs, in accordance with law. The chief executive officers of all local governments, the members of their assemblies, and such other local officials as may be determined by law shall be elected by direct popular vote within their several communities.

Article 94. Local governments shall have the right to manage their property, affairs and administration and to enact their own regulations within law.

Article 95. A special law, applicable only to one local government, cannot be enacted by the Diet without the consent of the majority of the voters of the local government concerned, obtained in accordance with law.

A number of laws have been enacted concerning local government, but the core legislation for dealing with its organization and management is the Local Government Law. The provisions of the Local Government Law deal mainly with residents’ affairs, elected councils, and their executive bodies – all that forms the core of local government. The Law also defines the status of local governments, including their relationship with national government as well as with other local governments, and has legal provisions for their financial affairs and other important administrative matters. As such, local government is clearly defined in Japan’s Constitution and other national laws.

While national authorities directly controlled local government in the pre-war period through prefectural governors appointed by the Home Ministry, the post-war reforms, of which the Constitution of 1947 was the most important, broke or diminished these hierarchical controls (MacDougal 2001, p.43). Most importantly, as shown in the extract above, Article 93 of the Constitution provided for direct popular elections of governors and mayors and Article 94 for the separation of local administration from the national bureaucracy. Direct elections of chief executives had the effect of generating a new political dynamic whereby governors and mayors were forced to direct their attention to local interests and electoral constituencies, even at the expense of cohesive relations with national authorities.

While much of the work of local government continued to be delegated to them under national government supervision, it was no longer directly controlled by the centre and communications and directives guiding the conduct of this work had to be within the scope of the law (MacDougal 2001, p.43-44). In this way, separation of local and national administrations allowed the emergence of differing perspectives and priorities. Local chief executives and assembly heads became important bargaining agents for financial, legal, and other conditions favourable to local government (MacDougal 2001, p.44).

Each local government has an assembly/town council, whose members are directly elected by its citizens, as the highest decision making body. Local governments operate according to the chief executive system (the presidential system). This is in contrast to the parliamentary cabinet

system that is adopted at the national level. The number of local assembly members is varied in line with population size. For example, in 2009 Yokohama City had the largest number of assembly members of the municipalities with 92 assembly members, whereas Toshima Village had the least with only six members (MIC 2009). In 2004, Oyama's town council had 12 elected members (Oyama 2004). The term of office of local assembly members is four years and candidates are required to be citizens of the local entity and at least 25 years of age. Local assembly consists of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Committee and Special Committee. In order to function most effectively, the Oyama Town Council was divided into three committees: General Affairs; Industry and Construction; and Education and Welfare (Oyama 2004). Major authorities held by the local assemblies include: creating ordinances; approving budgets; reviewing settled accounts; voting on major projects and other proposals developed by the administration; and censuring non-confidence motions against the chief executive officer (Oyama 2004; MIC 2009). Regular assembly sitting periods are held four times per year and ad hoc sessions also take place when necessary. Terms of sessions differ among local government units and usually last from between one week and one month (MIC 2009).

It is mandated by law that local governments in Japan provide compulsory education, police, waste collection and treatment, primary health care, nursery education and protection of small children without parental care, and water and sewerage.¹⁷ Thus, Japanese local government is tasked with responsibilities that would normally be the domain of the national government in many other societies. In particular, local government is burdened with responsibility for social insurance and healthcare, with prefectures and municipalities acting alongside the central government in the delivery of Japan's welfare system. Some demarcation takes place between the various tiers – for instance, municipalities are responsible for basic healthcare provision while the prefectures administer hospitals. Roads are designated as National Expressways, National Highways, Prefectural Roads or Municipal Roads and maintained by the corresponding level of government. Local government is also responsible for police and fire services and disaster management. In education provision, local boards of education are organizationally independent from local councils, but are appointed by governors and mayors with council approval. Funding for these services is dispersed from the national government through grants.

Pre-grant disparity among local governments was a feature of the period during 1954 to 1964, whereby prior to distribution of local allocation tax funds there was a great difference between the revenues of the rich and poor areas (Mochida 2001, p.102). The political slogan of 'Improvement of Regional Disparity' became one of the main national policy goals to deal with the social problem of a large number of young people relocating from rural areas to the metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya (Mochida 2001). In line with this national policy guideline, the local allocation tax was distributed mainly to the backward or less developed districts in inverse proportion to their financial capacities.

Access to, and a relative amount of autonomy over the allocation of, the local government budget resources was an important foundational characteristic of community capacity in Oyama. Since Oyama was most probably regarded as one of these abovementioned backward areas, Oyama would have received a reasonable amount of budget allocation from the national government when compared to the village's small tax base. With the support of the local assembly and through authority invested in local government by the Constitution of 1947, the Yakuba was able to allocate this budget as well as its own human resources relatively autonomously. Thus, when introducing the NPC, the Yakuba devoted most of its budget for three years on the agricultural development project. Likewise, government administrative staff were for the most part moved into the industrial promotion division to work on the project including in roles that were more like field extension worker roles than administrative roles. Meanwhile, other divisions of the Yakuba including those responsible for schools and healthcare were skeletons, being only allocated the bare minimum required for maintaining what they had and not introducing any new projects unrelated to the NPC for the entire three years. Defying the national government policy of rice promotion would,

¹⁷ Japan Local Government Bond Association at www.chihousai.or.jp/english/03/public02.html

however, come at a price; Oyama could not benefit from the subsidies that accompanied the policy. In this way, it was demonstrated that localities like Oyama have the ability to say “no” to the central government; however, as asserted by Aldrich this does not mean that they are able to force the state to say “yes” if it does not want to (Aldrich 1999). This defiance and resultant sacrifice was deemed necessary in order to secure a prosperous future for the village.¹⁸

At different times in history Oyama has been a village and a town and a district of a city. In 1969, Oyama’s 80 year history of village administration ended with the introduction of the town system of government (APEC 2007). Thus Oyama Village became Oyama Town (Oyama-machi, also referred to as Oyama-cho).¹⁹ During Oyama’s history as a town, local council and mayoral elections were held every four to five years.²⁰ In 2005, Oyama Town was amalgamated into Hita City and became a district of the city. The Yakuba became the Shinkokyoku, the Oyama Regional Development Bureau, in essence a branch office of the Hita City administration.²¹

Total local government expenditure in Japan in the fiscal year 2011 was 82.5 trillion yen – this is broken down in Table 4.3.1.1. In the fiscal year 2008, local government expenditure amounted to 59 per cent of the nation’s entire budget, with the national government ratio at 41 per cent.²² This shows that local government in Japan has quite a large role in the delivery of services and responsibilities extend far beyond “roads, rates and rubbish” which is the extent of the local government responsibility in some countries such as Australia.

Table 4.3.1.1: Local government budget Japan FY 2011

Japan Local Government Budget FY2011: 82.5 trillion yen		
Allowances	Teachers, fire fighters, police, welfare personnel, etc.	21.2 trillion yen
General administration	Operation of schools, garbage disposal, nursing care, nursery education	30.8 trillion yen
Public investment	Roads, rivers, ports, public housing, welfare facilities, schools, etc.	11.3 trillion yen
Public debt expenditure	Repayment of local government bonds	13.2 trillion yen
Transfers to local public enterprises	Water and sewerage, public hospitals, etc.	2.6 trillion yen
Others	Maintenance and repair etc.	3.4 trillion yen

Source: www.chihousai.or.jp/english/03/public02.html

As illustrated in the field note below, historically the Yakuba did not feature much in the lives of farmers in Oyama. Farmers would register births and deaths at the Yakuba office and pay taxes to the Yakuba, but there was very little more interaction above this between the local government and farmers in the village. This changed after Yahata Harumi became Mayor and focused the efforts of the Yakuba on providing intensive assistance to farmers to improve the lives of farming households.

¹⁸ See Chapter 5 for more on this.

¹⁹ In 2005, Oyama was amalgamated with the neighbouring city of Hita and is now a district of that city – see Chapter 6 for more on this.

²⁰ These were held in: 1925, 1929, 1933, 1937, 1942, 1947, 1951, and 1955.

²¹ See Chapter 6 for more on post-amalgamation situation in Oyama including the current role of the Shinkokyoku.

²² www.chihousai.or.jp/english/03/public01.html

Koda Kazumi talked to me about the role of the Yakuba in the pre-NPC movement period during one of our late night chats when staying at his *minpaku*²³ (home stay) with JICA trainees in June 2012.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Koda said that prior to Showa 30, the Yakuba was quite distant from normal farmers. Farmers did not feel that the Yakuba cared about them or their situation. Apart from registering births and deaths and collecting taxes it was really "*kankei nai*"²⁴ – nothing to do with them. At this time the Yakuba did not interfere in or give farmers any guidance on their production activities.

The Mayor, Yahata Harumi, used the Yakuba to develop the human resources of the village firstly by shaping the local administrative staff and also to mould the village's future leaders particularly in the younger staff of the Yakuba who would essentially become his protégés. As is evidenced in the field note below, Yakuba staff were instilled with the ideals of their leader and would often hold lively discussions on the development and future of Oyama long into the night.

Field note 15 June 2012:

When Koda joined the Yakuba there were only around 30 staff members. The mayor did not have his own private office either, so the mayor and staff were very close. There was a roster for staff to stay overnight in the Yakuba office in pairs in case of emergency or disaster. Although only two staff were assigned often other staff would choose to stay with them. Each staff member that stayed contributed 100 yen and they bought sake which they drank while eating whale meat and having very animated discussions. The extension workers, Ikenaga and Mitoma often joined. Yahata also came whenever he had the time. Koda said that any staff who did not want to hear what Yahata had to say would not join these after work *nomikai* ("drinking parties"). They held lively discussions; however, when Yahata joined he generally dominated the discussion. He would talk and talk and talk, instilling his ideas into the minds of his staff. "I guess it was a kind of brainwashing," joked Koda. When Yahata was not there, everyone was allocated five minutes at a time each to talk – including Ikenaga and Mitoma, who complained loudly "Give me my five minutes, too!" Koda said they had to allocate time because everyone had so much to say. They discussed the NPC movement thoroughly. "Well, of course there was all kind of dirty talk as well, but we concentrated on the NPC," smiled Koda. Koda told us that his uncle and Mitoma were both section chiefs and apparently it was during these drinking parties that they crafted a poem to help motivate people.

The other key organisation in Oyama that was instrumental in the development of the village was the Nokyo, which was also chaired by Yahata Harumi at the same time as he was Mayor. The Yakuba worked closely with the Nokyo, particularly when Yahata Harumi held the roles of both Mayor and Kumiacho concurrently (1955 – 1971). At times there also appears to have also been a healthy level of competition and conflict between the two institutions.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Koda said that while Yahata Harumi was both Mayor and Chairman of the Nokyo the two organisations worked very closely. He elaborated that "Naturally, after Yahata quit the job of Mayor they grew further apart, but, you know, they were different organisations so..." Koda said they still continued to communicate regarding industrial promotion despite growing apart and cooperating less closely in general.

²³ *Minpaku* = home stay

²⁴ *Kankei nai* = literally no relationship

4.3.2 *NOKYO*

Along with the Yakuba, the Oyama Agricultural Cooperative (the Nokyo) was a very important foundational element that would contribute greatly to community capacity development in Oyama. Similar to the Yakuba, the Nokyo provided another vehicle for leadership as well as a structure for human resources development and future leadership promotion. Through its cooperative savings facility the Nokyo also facilitated community access to a latent resource, household savings.

The history of cooperatives in Japan is quite long. Mutual assistance groups sprung up organically among the less economically powerful during the Edo period and Ninomiya Sontoku helped peasants set up the first rural credit associations in the mid-1800s (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.510; Yoshimoto Tadasu 1912).

Efforts to transplant the German system of cooperatives in Japan began as early as 1891 when the Meiji government sent observers to the West (Churchill 1945, p.204). These efforts culminated in the Japanese Cooperative Law being passed by parliament in 1900 in an attempt to adapt some of the strengths of the German guild system (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.510). Based on intensive study of the German system, the beginnings of the modern cooperative movement in Japan had two general features. First, it was instigated from above by the government and not developed from below by the people. Second, it was designed to aid small producers, primarily small farmers, who were adversely affected by the changing economic conditions of the latter nineteenth century (Churchill 1945, p.204).

After the Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905, the Japanese government put substantial effort into the development of agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives, following in the German guild framework, were to serve four main functions: credit, marketing, purchasing and management (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.510). The industry cooperative law was improved in 1921 and, in order to improve the serious situation faced by farmers in the Showa agricultural recession in 1930, the government set up the five-year Industry Cooperative Development Plan and encouraged every farmer to join a cooperative. This resulted in cooperatives being developed extensively throughout the country (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.510).

From 1938 the Japanese government began to attempt to use cooperatives and other cooperative-like associations as tools to organize citizens and to ensure a resource base during wartime. These associations were brought into an umbrella organization called the Agricultural Association in 1943. Members did not have the right to choose to join or leave the cooperative. Writing in August 1945, Arthur C. Churchill described the Japanese agricultural cooperative movement of the prior 15 years as having “mushroomed into a top-heavy adjunct of a militaristic government and the business interests in Japan” (Churchill 1945, p.207). The Agricultural Association became more democratic following the end of World War II (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.511).

In 1947, the Agricultural Cooperative Law was established, encouraging the creation of local cooperatives. The Agricultural Cooperative Improvement Law was then passed to increase government financial support for agricultural cooperatives and other enabling legislation in the late 1940s also led to the creation of forestry, fisheries, consumer co-ops and credit unions (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.511). In 1956, the umbrella organization for most Japanese cooperatives, the Japanese Joint Committee on Cooperatives, was also formed (Klinedinst and Sato 1994, p.511).

The JA-Zenchu (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives) is now the apex body of Japan’s agricultural movement, representing the interests of Japanese farmers and their agricultural cooperative organizations otherwise known as JAs (JA-Zenchu 2006). The JA-Zenchu list its main activities on its website. These include:

1. To promote better farming and better living activities of member cooperatives;
2. To give guidance to JAs on their management and organization;
3. To audit organizations;

4. To conduct education and public relations activities;
5. To conduct farm policy legislative activities; and
6. Liaison and collaboration with international organizations (JA-Zenchu 2006).

The JA-Zenchu is complemented by the Zen-No (National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations), which handles the economic side of marketing and supplying, the Zenkyoren (National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives), and the Norinchukin, which is the central organization of the Japanese agricultural cooperative banking system (JA-Zenchu 2006).

Agricultural cooperatives undertake a number of functions that one might expect to normally be the responsibility of the local government unit or even the national government. In short, they have had a pivotal role in the development of rural towns and villages all over Japan.

4.3.2.2 Establishment of the Nokyo in Oyama

In 1948, a year after the passing of the Agricultural Cooperative Law, Oyama Agricultural Cooperative, herewith referred to as the Nokyo as it is known in Oyama, was established. Agricultural cooperatives in Japan often act like local development agents; the Nokyo in Oyama was no exception. Many innovative and beneficial village development activities would be initiated by the Nokyo over the following half century or so and this continues to this day.²⁵

As outlined in the following section, in 1954 Yahata Harumi became head of the Nokyo. This marked the beginning of an era for the small village's agricultural cooperative, which transformed from a relatively benign presence in the town to one of the main organisers and facilitators of collective activities.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Koda said that prior to Showa 30 (1955) the Nokyo did not really provide any kind of leadership or agricultural guidance or much in the way of organising real collective activities. There may have been some collective sales for commodity items such as rice and tobacco, but these were under a national system, controlled by the national government. Goods were generally sold through niwasaki (front garden) system whereby someone would come to each individual farmer's house and buy from them individually. Farmers did not expect or receive much in the way of support from the Nokyo – it was just an organisation that they belonged to in name only. There was a savings facility, but to begin with most people with savings used post office accounts or conventional banks. The role of the Nokyo began to change to guidance and leadership when Yahata became the Kumiaicho and recommended that all farmers place their savings in their Nokyo accounts. With the farmers' savings the Nokyo had more capacity to do things and began to play a very active role.

Basic principles of the Oyama Nokyo after Yahata became Kumiaicho included:

- Multidimensional agriculture;
- Nokyo savings movement;
- Buy farming inputs cheaply and pass the savings on to farmers;
- Process goods in the future;
- Utilise Nokyo profits for village development;
- Farmers need to take holidays;
- Mukade Agriculture – produce many varieties in small quantities to be sold at premium prices;
- Ceasing the keeping of cattle movement; and
- Aiming for light work (Yahata 1989).

²⁵ Some of these initiatives are covered in more detail in the following sections.

The fundamental paths of village development would be based on the ideas of:

- Hataraku (Work);
- Manabu (Learn); and
- Aishiau (Love).

These three main principles continue today and can still be seen painted in oversized characters on the main Nokyo warehouse in Oyama.

4.3.2.3 Nokyo – current structure

The Nokyo is presided by a board of directors consisting of 10 individuals elected by popular vote of the Nokyo members. Out of these 10, one is elected as chairperson. A further five auditors are also elected.²⁶ Requirements for membership include that the farmer lives in Oyama, owns land, and invests at least 5000 yen in the Nokyo. The Oyama Nokyo organisational structure described below is also presented in Figure 4.3.2.3.1. In 2010, Nokyo departments included:

Finance: The Finance Department consists of three Branches, the Finance Branch, the Audit Branch and the Mutual Aid Branch. The Mutual Aid Association, “Kiunso”, is administered by the Mutual Aid Branch.

Administration: The Administration Department consists of the General Affairs Branch and the Accounting Branch. Under the General Affairs Branch, are the Culture Division and the General Affairs Division, which hosts the Committee for the Management of Agricultural Promotion Funds. The Culture Division consists of two sections, Recreation and Public Relations, which is responsible for publication of the Nokyo journal and cable radio. There are a number of associations affiliated with the Recreation Section. These include the Young People’s Association, the Middle-Aged People’s Association, the Women’s Association, Hitomikai, Yamabukikai, the Scholarship Committee, Hawaii Travel Association (35 groups), Friendship exchange with Wuxian City, Suzhou Province China (31 groups), and a number of different friendship associations.

Daily Life Department: The Daily Life Department includes three Branches, Fuels, Branch Offices, and A COOP, which serves as secretariat for the A COOP Management Committee. A COOP is a small supermarket run by the Nokyo in one of their buildings.

Agricultural Management and Distribution Department: The Agricultural Management and Distribution Department contains three branches, the Food Processing Branch, External Affairs Branch and Agricultural Management Branch. External Affairs includes Sales to Outside Customers and Konohana Garten Divisions. The Konohana Garten Division is also responsible for the various Konohana Garten antenna stores. The Agricultural Management Branch includes divisions for sales, agricultural management guidance – contracted advisors, the Kamate Centre, facilities, materials, composting plant, agricultural management guidance including for ume, apricots, chestnuts, grapes, citron, ginkgo, watercress, blossoms, herbs, greenhouse horticulture, Konohana Garten, enoki mushrooms, nameko mushrooms, and artificial bed shiitake mushrooms.

Mushroom Department: The Mushroom Department includes two branches. The Mushrooms Branch is responsible for the Denri Workshop, the Oiwake Workshop, the Koitsuma Workshop and the Fungi Centre, which runs a project to develop species and technology. The Artificial Bed Mushrooms Branch includes the Higashizuru Workshop and the Hodaki Centre.

²⁶ Field note April 2010

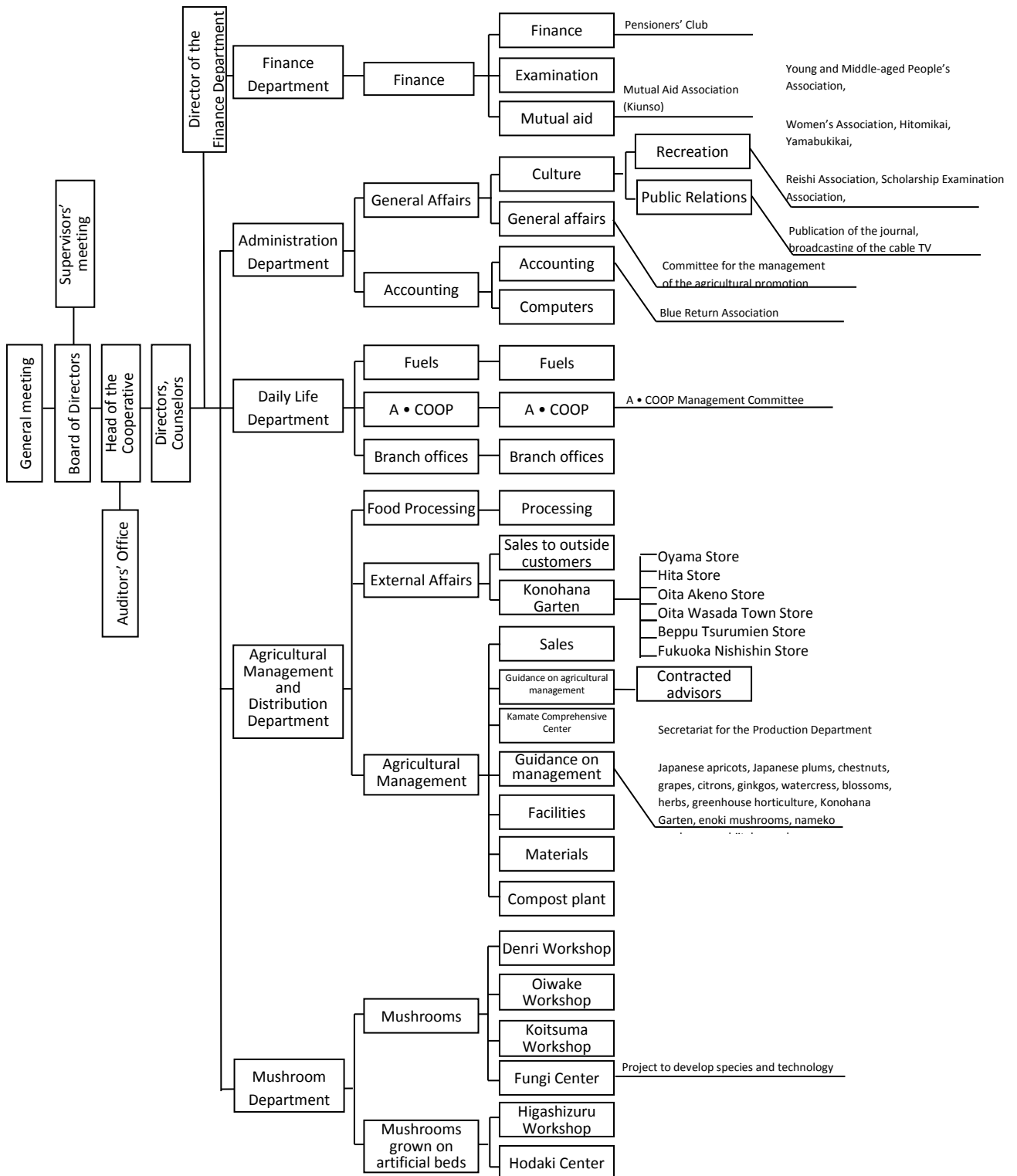


Figure 4.3.2.3.1: Nokyo organizational chart
 Source: Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative

The Nokyo was established in a top-down manner as an initiative of the national government, it was not grown organically like most community organisations; however, the Nokyo delivers a number of community development related activities including the support and promotion of various collective associations. The savings facility provided by the Nokyo proved particularly important in Oyama's

case (and undoubtedly in rural towns and villages all over Japan). Before establishment of the savings facility, Oyama residents would invest their savings in bank accounts outside of Oyama or in a postal savings account – Japan Post had a branch within Oyama, but it was basically an outside entity and did not invest directly in the community. After the Nokyo was established, farmers could then save their money in a community entity. The Nokyo could then use farmers’ savings to issue loans to farmers and invest in village development or agricultural development, which ultimately benefits the farmers. This difference is depicted in Figure 4.3.2.3.2. An example of how a drastic increase in the amount of farmers’ savings held by the Nokyo resulted in investment in important village infrastructure that would be instrumental to the success of subsequent community development initiatives is illustrated in the OYHK section of this chapter (section 4.3.5). Thus, accumulated capital in the Nokyo boosted the capacity of the organisation to provide services and implement community development initiatives.

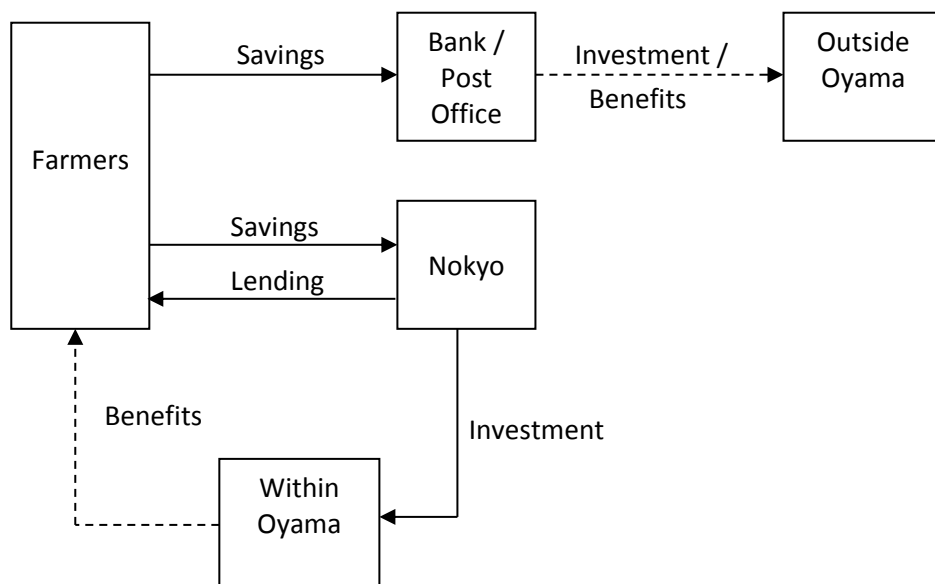


Figure 4.3.2.3.2: Nokyo savings facility and regular bank or post office savings

Source: adapted by author from Miyoshi 2012

These foundational organisations in Oyama, the Yakuba and Nokyo, did not grow naturally out of the community like many community organisations around the world. Rather, both were established by an external actor, the Japanese government. Although established in Oyama through outside/external influences, both of these organisations can be considered internal actors – a part of the community. Both of these organisations would also prove to be an extremely important element of community capacity, in particular as vehicles for community leaders like Yahata to exercise their leadership and in developing all important human resources as well as accessing resources from within and beyond Oyama, both latent and otherwise. This is demonstrated by the Nokyo savings facility, which turned farmers’ savings into an asset that the community could use to invest in development projects and infrastructure such as the Oyama Yusen Hoso (OYHK) as well as support to farmers in the form of soft loans.

4.3.3 YAHATA HARUMI: THE FATHER OF OYAMA

“When we were kids, we used to run after rainbows, but were of course never able to reach them, no matter how fast we ran. Likewise, our utopia is far away, and we have to keep running for it. After all, we are all rainbow chasers.”²⁷

Yahata Harumi



Image 4.3.3.1: Yahata Harumi contemplating how to help build a future for his village

Source: Hibiki no Sato 2011

When discussing leadership in Oyama, one must start with Yahata Harumi. The emergence of the charismatic natural born leader Yahata was *guzen* (by chance); an inexplicable and uncontrollable phenomenon, organically occurring out of the unique mix of environment, experience, knowledge, education, skills, intellect, curiosity, adventurous spirit, emotion and genetic make up that caused this human being to be the way he was. Unfortunately there is no known recipe for this. Charisma is not something that can be engineered; however, we can examine leaders like Yahata to understand their approach, identify specific behaviours that contribute to their successful leadership and learn/teach them. The emergence of Yahata as a leader in Oyama also gives us the opportunity to examine the impacts of such a leader and how leadership impacts on the strategic components of community capacity (organisations, networks, individuals, leadership) as well as the functions of community capacity and introduction of new value-added policy structures.

Yahata's leadership had significant impacts on community capacity in Oyama including the development of human resources and incubation of future leadership as well as the formation of networks and strengthening of organisations. Through emphasising education, human resources were developed both within the Nokyo and Yakuba, but also among the farmers, particularly the younger generation. This also contributed to a kind of 'entrepreneurialisation' of agriculture in Oyama. Yahata also effectively introduced new values to the village and communicated a shared vision, which would result in an increased sense of community as well as increased commitment by residents as well as organisations such as the Yakuba and Nokyo. Yahata's leadership was attributed formal authority and legitimacy through his positions in the Yakuba and Nokyo. Likewise, both the Nokyo and Yakuba were developed organisationally under Yahata's leadership for example through reformed procurement policies, structures, and enhanced human resource development including attitudinal change in staff.

²⁷ Yahata Harumi quoted in APEC (2007).

Yahata cultivated “satellite leaders” that would work to disseminate his vision and continue to infect others with his enthusiasm even in his absence and also long after he had passed away. These were located within the Nokyo and Yakuba, in each shuraku, and even in each of the farming households. Through this approach Yahata was able to diffuse leadership throughout every level of the community.

The Nokyo website refers to him as “Oyama no kamisama” (Oyama’s Angel) and he referred to himself as “Oyama no oyaji” (Oyama’s father). If someone in Oyama talks about “ano hito” (that person) others recognize immediately who they are talking about; the story of Oyama begins with Yahata Harumi.

Yahata, the eldest son of a land-owner and sake brewer, went to technical high school in Hiroshima before returning home to Oyama to work with his father in his sake brewery business. Yahata spent his free time riding around the countryside on his motorbike and going to see films in Hakata. He was known fondly as “Saka-ya no Harumi-san” delighting villagers as he drove by in the only three-wheeled vehicle in the village on sake deliveries (Miwa 1987).

Yahata was drafted into the Japanese military in 1932, at the time the military conscripted one young man from each of the mountain villages of Oita Prefecture. Along with his unit of 150 soldiers, Yahata was deployed to China in 1937 (Matsunaga 1989, p.252). Yahata returned to Oyama in 1940 after being discharged from the military and married a woman from Nakatsue Village. Yahata soon set out about establishing a post office in Oyama. Although at the time he said that it was for the benefit of the village, Yahata would later admit that in fact he was so eager to set up the post office mainly because he wanted a telephone (Matsunaga 1989, p.62).

Many people would come and go from the post office, including the elderly and wives of farming households. As soon as the weather turned cold, Yahata would bring out the post office stove and cook up a big pot of azuki beans to make a sweet porridge to share with the post office customers who would gather there. Before too long the post office became a central place for socializing in the village (Matsunaga 1989, p.65).

In addition to the travel associated with his time in the military, Yahata at some point had also travelled with a doctor friend of his. These trips apparently had a profound effect on Yahata and would inform his ideas for the future of his village. Matsubara Kimiko had worked at the Yakuba for over 35 years from when she was just 20 years of age. She enjoyed sharing her knowledge of Yahata Harumi and her ideas about how his earlier years and extensive travels contributed to his ideas and behaviours as recorded in the field note below.

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko told me that before introducing the first NPC movement Harumi had travelled overseas. She said he got the chance to go overseas because his friend, a doctor, was travelling to the United States, Europe and the Middle East and invited him to go along with him. She said that he had been to New York and been absolutely stunned and extremely impressed by the city. Kimiko mentioned that at some time Yahata had also visited Israel and had seen the kibbutz system. Kimiko seemed to think that these overseas experiences had an influence on Yahata’s original ideas and motivation for implementing such drastic change in Oyama.

As World War II ended there was a severe shortage of rice, which forced the Yahata family’s sake brewery to close. As it is a key ingredient, without rice one cannot make sake. At around the same time, Yahata lost his job as postmaster. This was due to the *koshokutsuiho* (purge of public officials) enacted through Edict No. 109 issued in 1946 the name of the Japanese emperor. The Edict prohibited co-operators of World War II from engaging in public service and was effective until 1952. Cleared fields owned by the family had also been lost in the post-war land reforms. In order feed his family, Yahata cleared about one hectare of nearby forest-land and together with his wife began

farming for the first time. Yahata's first farming experience was tough and he found it very difficult to make a living.

"I tried hemp and tobacco and they both failed. No matter how much effort I put in, the work just didn't progress and wouldn't bring in money. I started to realise that, compared to jobs like a sake brewer or postmaster, farming was a profession that really did not pay at all" (Yahata Harumi quoted in Miwa 1987, p.12).

4.3.3.1 The emergence of a leader

Yahata was not only the formal leader of an organisation and a political leader; he was a whole of community leader. His followers, those whom he led, included two main groups of individuals. These were the *shokuin* (staff of both the Nokyo and Yakuba) and his constituents, Oyama's general population, but in particular farmers and farming families who were also members of the Nokyo.

In 1954, Harumi Yahata became head of the Nokyo. The following year, he was also persuaded to take on the role of Mayor after the incumbent Mayor fell ill. Yahata would continue to hold both of these positions concurrently for 16 years. After four terms in office, he decided not to run for mayor again in 1971; however, continued his duties as head of the Nokyo for a total of 33 years, retiring from the position in 1987. Yahata passed away in October 1993 at 81 years of age.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Yahata Kinji attributed the success of Oyama much to his father, Yahata Harumi. Kinji described his father as being someone who "if he was involved in politics he could have become the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry." "But," added Kinji, "he was too selfless for such a life and instead devoted his life to improving the lives of farmers in Oyama."

Yahata was adventurous and courageous, when he was younger he loved riding motorbikes around the countryside of Kyushu and he spoke of how he did not fear death while serving in China during the World War II (Matsunaga 1989). Yahata also would appear to have had a healthy level of independence and disregard for authority. Apparently his motorbike in Hita City was kept a secret from his father; however, when his father told him it was time to settle down and marry he did so, agreeing to marry the woman his family had picked out for him even though he had never met her (Yahata 1988). Yahata held a deep love for his community, commitment to seeing it prosper, a vision for the future and an ability to communicate effectively with community members.

During lectures to JICA trainees, Ogata Hideo, the General Manager of Oyama Yume Kobo who had also worked closely with Yahata for many years in the Yakuba, outlined his impression of leadership, which he had learned from Yahata's example. He said that the key qualities of leadership included enthusiasm and vision, love for one's hometown and possessing an independent spirit from the central government and authority, executive abilities and a sense of responsibility, as well as insight and the ability to come up with ideas. Ogata also highlighted the importance of being able to gather information and the willingness to do the "footwork" as well as the ability to network. An attractive and charismatic character and the ability to motivate and mobilize people were also quoted as highly important as well as good geographic and historical knowledge and political and economic understanding. Ogata added that it is very unusual to find all of these qualities and skills in a single person and that is why it is necessary to seek out and develop individuals with these characteristics to make up a core group of leaders that when totalled add up to this kind of leadership.



Image 4.3.3.1.1: Yahata Harumi

Source: Hibiki no Sato 2008

4.3.3.2 Yahata's approach as a leader

Yahata's style of leadership appears to be in line with what is referred to now as "transformational leadership". Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of a transformative approach to leadership that creates significant change in the life of people and organizations and redesigns perceptions and values, changing the expectations and aspirations of followers. Bass (1985) wrote about the "transformational leader" being someone who engenders trust, admiration, loyalty and respect in followers, resulting in the achievement of higher levels of performance than previously thought possible.

4.3.3.2.1 Intellectual stimulation and high performance expectations

Yahata gave staff challenging tasks. For example, the story told by Ogata Hideo and outlined in the field note below shows that Yahata gave him challenging work and that this was successful in motivating him to try very hard. Field note 15 June 2012:

Ogata returned to Oyama from Tokyo at the age of 19 as he had not found life in Tokyo satisfying. After returning he got a job at the Yakuba. When he first started Yahata Harumi said to him "You are the equipment of this town, so you need to shine." Ogata felt angry at this comment and said, "If I'm an equipment of the town, then what are you?" Yahata replied, "I am a consumable." This made Ogata feel better. Yahata also added that equipment needs to be maintained and looked after and you need to develop your skills, intelligence, facial expression, behaviour and use of words.

Ogata started at the Yakuba doing clerical work, but was very bad at it and did not enjoy the work. He was labelled a bad public servant and was demoted to doing physical labour. At night Ogata drew and painted signboards, which he was very good at and people started to notice that signs in the village were looking very good. They assumed that a professional sign writer was operating a business in Oyama. After a while Ogata stopped making signs. The Mayor noticed that the signboards were being replaced by less good looking signs and mentioned to someone that the professional sign writer must have closed his business. He was told that in fact there was never a professional artist, but it was one of his staff, Ogata, who had been painting the signs in the evenings.

After finding this out, Yahata assigned Ogata to the PR department. Usually PR jobs are done by the local Buddhist priest seasoned public servants of 50 years of age or more, not young public servants in their early 20s. PR was an important job. On his first day in PR, Ogata found a book on his desk. It was a book written by a PR person whose PR magazine had been awarded as the best in Japan. Ogata found the book very interesting and it motivated him making him think that he wanted to do the job. Yahata also made an agreement with Ogata; he said that he would promise to let him stay in the job for three years, but Ogata had to promise to produce a PR magazine that could be evaluated as the best in Japan. With this goal in mind Ogata worked really hard. Yahata also supported his development and sent him to any PR-related training and seminar opportunities. Ogata said “Well I didn’t quite reach that goal, but my magazine was evaluated as number two in Japan and when I left the department I passed the goal on to my successor who also worked very hard and his magazines would be highly evaluated as well.”

Kurokawa Masateru of Marukin Farm had worked with Yahata for decades in the Nokyo. He says that Yahata was “very skilful at scolding” his staff. According to Kurokawa, “First, he would scold. After that, he would then give praise. For example, after being scolded by him quite severely, he would then take me out and buy me noodles for lunch...ah, but those noodles never tasted very good.”

Yahata worked hard at developing the skills of the Nokyo and Yakuba employees. As reflected in the field note below, he instilled in them a sense of duty towards their town saying, “Your role is not to implement the national or prefectural government policy or do as they say – your role is to ensure that the happiness and welfare of your town is maximized.” This was a significant diversion from the normal approach of local governments in Japan at that time.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Ogata told us how Yahata would never approve any proposals made by staff that simply followed the national or prefecture government policies. He told Ogata “There are two main criteria that you need to consider:

- 1) Will it contribute to community affluence? and
- 2) Will it contribute to the happiness of our town’s people?”

Yahata emphasised that local government should be a policymaker itself and not just a subcontractor of the national government. He said it was the role of local government staff to persuade prefectural and national government. He reinforced this perspective with rewards/punishments, for example, if a staff member was going to meet with a prefectural government official he had to do much preparation before making the trip to the city. If he was successful in persuading the official then the Yakuba would pay for his travel expenses/travel allowance. If he was not successful, then the reason was because he did not present his argument clearly or persuasively enough, so the travel allowance was not awarded.

4.3.3.2.2 *Individualized consideration*

Yahata was skilful at identifying and nurturing talent within the organisations he headed. Yahata identified staff with particular skills or characteristics, matching them with appropriate jobs that would best utilise their talent. For example, Ogata was branded a bad public servant until thrust into an important position in the PR department that built on his natural artistic talent. He spent time with individuals even the newest recruits and youngest trainees in the Yakuba received their share of face time with the mayor. Much of Yahata’s time outside of business hours was devoted to spending time socialising with his employees.

Yahata was also fearlessly proactive about cutting out any conservative and narrow-minded or non-performing staff, stripping the older section chiefs who could not get on board his agenda of their positions and shifting them to the division dubbed “Meiji-mura” (Meiji Village – called so because most of its inhabitants were born during the Meiji period, which meant they were at least in their mid-40s to 50s when Yahata became head of the village).²⁸

Yahata cultivated the skills of a core group of youngsters through the Oyama Youth Agricultural Study Group, which was composed mostly of young agricultural successors including those who had received scholarships to study at agricultural high school (Ogata 2012, p.136). Young, bright and motivated Nokyo and Yakuba employees were also a part of the group. Yahata also established producers’ associations, kokumiai, for each product category to reinforce production training and marketing (Ogata 2012, p.136). In recognition of the need to further develop the knowledge and awareness of farmers, Yahata introduced Oyama Yusen Hoso, a village cable radio and intercom system (outlined in more detail in the section on this below). Yahata also set up the Scholarship Program for Educating Future Farmers, under which the Nokyo offered a monthly scholarship of 3,000 yen to agricultural successors in order for them to attend agricultural high school outside of the village (Ogata 2012, p.136). Yahata strongly emphasised and encouraged experiential learning – that is, learning that is achieved through direct experience – among Oyama’s community members. Thus he promoted exchanges such as the kibbutz training, group field trips to other farming areas, leisure and cultural activities such as trips to Fukuoka to go to the theatre as well as overseas holidays. Yahata emphasised living a culturally rich and enjoyable life. His ultimate goal in increasing farmer incomes was so that they could afford to live a culturally rich and enjoyable lifestyle. Yahata also encouraged the women of Oyama’s farming households to learn, experience new things, enjoy life and be more independent from their husbands. Matsubara Kimiko, who was a long-term employee of the Yakuba, was born and raised in Oyama and continues to live there today. She attributes the empowerment of women in Oyama to progressive ideas introduced by Yahata.

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko also talked about Harumi Yahata. She said that an especially great thing that he had done for Oyama was in terms of women’s empowerment. For example, she said that previously women’s incomes were paid into their husband’s bank accounts. She said that Harumi told the women to create their own bank accounts and that the Nokyo would pay them for their products directly into their own accounts rather than their husbands’ accounts. According to Kimiko, this was a very important change. He had also encouraged and helped Oyama women to go out on group trips to Fukuoka to go to the theatre for example. It seemed that she felt that these kinds of things gave the women motivation to work hard and to save money and made them feel special and valued as people and contributors to the community.

Kimiko told me that her mother had had a very hard life as a farmer’s wife and had encouraged Kimiko to study and to never become a farmer and experience the hardship she had experienced. Kimiko said that it had been the same for other girls her age and so most of the women born in Oyama did not end up staying in Oyama. As a result, wives were brought in from other towns and, according to Kimiko, in some ways this was a good thing as they brought with them new skills and fresh ideas that also contributed to Oyama’s development.

²⁸ Meiji-mura = Meiji Village. The Meiji period began in 1868 and ended in 1911.

4.3.3.2.3 *Inspirational motivation*

Yahata held strong convictions and ideas about how rural village life should be and about how Oyama could reach this “utopia.” He not only held these strong ideals, but he also effectively communicated them to followers through a range of different mechanisms:

- Regularly holding meetings to talk face-to-face with villagers in their own *shuraku*;
- Daily addresses to the entire population of the community through OYHK;
- Strategically selling his vision to those most likely to support first – the younger generations;
- Not having his own office – Yahata worked on the floor with all of his staff so they worked very closely and had constant communication;
- Holding formal lectures/classes for *shokuin* as well as informal *nomikai* talk fests in the evenings; and
- Socialising with *shokuin* and key supporters regularly e.g. Kurokawa Masateru telling us that he often would call him to go and have dinner together on a Sunday evening and after work *nomikai* and eating whale together with *shokuin*.

Thus, Yahata was able to foster the acceptance of his vision and group goals among his followers (both *shokuin* and *nomin*) by virtue of his “*wajutsu*,” but also through perseverance, energy and the employment of clever “marketing” strategies.

The introduction of new values and norms were necessary in order to enable the community to switch from traditional farming practices to a new system of agriculture. Beliefs or accepted “truths” of what makes a farmer a farmer and how farming should be done needed to be challenged and reformulated. Conventional ideas about lifestyle, for example how long one should work and participation in leisure activities, also needed to be changed. Yahata introduced these new values and instigated this change in his constituents.

Yahata realized early on that the older farmers would be difficult to persuade and would not easily accept drastic change. Thus he took the approach of gaining support from the younger farmers, who were more open to change and easier to motivate into action. It is said that he even enlisted the help of schoolteachers to spread his message to school children so that they would then go home and pass the messages on to their parents and grandparents. Yahata aimed at achieving a balance between inciting anxiety and helping people to hold a dream or aspirations for the future; on the one hand he wanted people to be somewhat unhappy with the status quo and feel that “It would be no good if this situation continues,” whilst at the same time having a dream for what kind of situation they want and think that “It would be wonderful if such a dream is realized” (Yahata 1989).

After becoming Kumiacho and Mayor, Yahata introduced immediate relief measures to ensure that people in the direst of situations would be able to survive. This included a kind of microcredit program for poultry and hog raising to generate quick cash income. This program also served as an introduction to alternative kinds of agriculture (Miwa 1987). A unique welfare system was also established, which involved the establishment of Welfare Committees in each *shuraku* to help provide immediate assistance to those in trouble (Miwa 1987, p.37-38). Yahata’s motivation was that “If they can’t eat, they can’t do anything else either” (Yahata 1989). Thus Yahata believed that in order for people to become motivated and committed to improving their community through a development initiative, they first needed to be able to satisfy the primary need of survival.

Ishibashi Hiroto, who was a Nokyo employee at the time that Yahata became Kumiacho, recalled that “as soon as Yahata Harumi became Kumiacho, the way of thinking in the Nokyo changed instantly and dramatically” (quoted in Miwa 1987, p.15). Yahata worked tirelessly to nurture trust among and gain an understanding of the situation of farmers. He also ensured his employees in the Nokyo gained this understanding. When he first became Kumiacho, Yahata visited each of the local communities. He walked to a different *shuraku* almost every night, holding meetings where he talked repeatedly and enthusiastically with community members. Nokyo staff were also required to walk the dark paths alongside Yahata to each *shuraku* to attend these meetings (Ogata 2012, p.135; Miwa 1987, p.15).

Yahata was an excellent communicator and was able to inspire and motivate people. As noted in the field note below, he also viewed himself as a “seeder” rather than a leader. He viewed his role as being to fertilise the soil and sow the seeds that would enable Oyama to prosper on its own.

Field note 8 February 2008:

Teruko and her husband also talked of Yahata Harumi. Teruko said he had “*wajutsu*” meaning that he was a good speaker. She said when he spoke people believed and became motivated. I imagine he must have been a charismatic leader. Teruko said that she liked how he called himself a “seeder” instead of a leader, meaning that his role was to sow the seeds for the people to have a dream and be motivated rather than telling them what to do or drag them up. She said, “I think he was a really wonderful person...not everyone thinks so, some people have a different way of thinking, but I do”.

4.3.3.2.4 *Idealized influence*

Yahata commanded respect and one could go so far as to say that most of his followers even adored him. His protégés like Ogata and Koda were inspired and continue to be influenced by Yahata’s role model and teachings. Yahata not only had good skills in communicating his ideals to followers, he could also “walk the talk”. He presented a role model for his followers, both *shokuin* and *nomin*. He not only forced his staff to walk along the dark roads to meet with villagers in their own neighbourhoods each night, he walked alongside them. He not only encouraged his staff to learn and study as much as they could, he joined and facilitated after work study sessions with them. When asking farming successors to remain in Oyama rather than heed the attractive call of the cities, he also begged his own son to forego an overseas post-graduate education and remain in Oyama. When asking farmers to take a risk and plant plums and chestnut trees, Yahata did the same and was affected as much as anyone when the first harvest proved the crops to be tainted by non-fruiting varieties.

4.3.3.2.5 *Transformational community leadership*

Here we are concerned with transformational community leadership as opposed to leadership in private enterprise, which the aforementioned leadership literature, apart from Miyoshi, is focused on. The focus of community leadership is longer term and broader than private sector leadership and with this in mind there are a number of behaviours displayed by Yahata in addition to those listed above that can be identified as being part of a set of transformational community leadership behaviours including:

- A) Encouraging the building of social capital within the community by establishing forums such as the Agricultural Youth Study Group and networked extensively– within Oyama, vertically and horizontally as well as by making more distant connections overseas;
- B) Utilising technology to enhance his leadership, for example through addressing Oyama residents through Oyama’s cable radio broadcasting system, OYHK;
- C) Accessing technical expertise to supplement his own knowledge, for example in the form of the agricultural expert, Ikenaga Chitose, from the Oita Prefecture government;
- D) Fostering a learning culture – emphasising in particular experiential learning (learning through experience); and
- E) Cultivating broader and more diffuse community leadership and ensuring effective leadership succession by mentoring and shaping future community leaders (both among young *shokuin* and successive generations of farmers).

In light of the community capacity development model, points A), D) and E) above are considered especially important. Thus, based on Yahata’s example we could add to the list of behaviours of

transformational leaders to come up with a description of the behaviours of the transformational community leader:

1. Intellectual stimulation
2. Individualized consideration
3. Inspirational motivation
4. Idealized influence
5. High performance expectations
6. Building social capital
7. Fostering a learning culture
8. Cultivating community leadership more broadly

Leadership does not necessarily need to be vested in a single individual. Rather diffused leadership and the participation of many in community leadership may well be much more desirable.

The impact of a transformational community leader may well also depend on there being appropriate “leadership vehicles”. In the case of Yahata, these came in the form of the Nokyo and Yakuba. By becoming a formal or institutional leader in these organisations, Yahata also gained the authority, legitimacy and resources needed in order to effect drastic and sudden community-wide change. The structure of the organisations, their infrastructure and human resources also handed Yahata the perfect environment to recruit, mentor, train and educate his protégés. This next generation of leaders fostered by Yahata contributed greatly to the development of the town. During the NPC Movement, they were the ones who translated the future vision of Oyama into reality based on their experience in the kibbutz, set goals to specifically promote multi-dimensional agriculture, developed and introduced new products and production methods and established a sophisticated community policy structure supported by value added production activities.

4.3.3.3 Yahata’s legacy

Yahata cultivated leadership skills, commitment to the community, understanding of development and a progressive way of thinking in a number of community based leaders who had studied in the “Yahata University”. To name a handful, Yahata’s eldest son Kinji, Kinji’s close friend Koda Kazumi, Ogata Hideo the current general manager of Oyama Yume Kobo, the late Kurokawa Hirofumi and his wife Teruko, Matsubara Kimiko who had worked in the Yakuba since she was 20 years of age, and Kawazu Yoshikazu, who had been sent to the kibbutz at the tender age of 21 and ended up starting his own shiitake business at just 24 years of age.

Yahata also had an influence on the leaders of other municipalities such as Yufuin, Usa and Hita and at the prefectural and national levels. In statements published in the Oita Godo Shimbun after his death in 1993, Yahata was referred to as a great sempai and teacher and a “wonderful leader who could be called the father of rural development” by a number of community leaders in Oita Prefecture (Oita Godo Shimbun, 2 October 1993).

While staying at Koda Kazumi’s house with a group of JICA trainees from African countries, Koda gave some insight in to how the Yahata School continues to affect him long after Yahata has passed away.

Field note 16 May 2012:

As we ate dinner Koda Kazumi continued to talk. One of the trainees from Ethiopia asked him if he could tell us a bit about Yahata Harumi. Koda told us that even now he often dreams of Yahata. Koda sometimes visits his grave to pay his respects, but he thinks that Yahata also visits him. He thinks Yahata is still telling him that he has to continue to work hard for the future of Oyama. He said a lot of people working under Yahata in both the Yakuba and Nokyo were influenced and learned a lot from him – including himself. He thinks that perhaps some people have forgotten his lessons since they left the workplace though and he wishes they would remember and continue to strive for the development of

Oyama even after they retire. Koda told us how he only studied to high school and he did not go to university. But he believes that he attended the "Oyama Yahata University". He added that he has not graduated yet and thinks that later in life at some point Yahata will visit him in his dream and hand him his graduation certificate.

In an interview for the 50 year anniversary publication of the Nokyo, Kawazu ended his interview with the following words, which show his progressive approach which he links back to Yahata:

"I think the time is coming for us all to think again together, harking back to the blueprint that Mr Yahata Harumi left behind for us. Mr Yahata Harumi did not want to make plums and chestnuts. The plums and chestnuts were simply the means to an end; they themselves were not the objective. Likewise, as for the kibbutz exchange, was this sufficient in itself? Perhaps there were other more fitting aspects. Rather than be slaves to what was, I think now is our chance to re-evaluate and move forward" (Kawazu Yoshikazu quoted in Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998).

Matsubara Kimiko had worked in the Yakuba for over 35 years and during a conversation with me also demonstrated this kind of progressive thinking and desire for change.

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko told me that lately people in Oyama were getting set in their ways and afraid of change. Her view is that if people resist change Oyama will not progress further. The reason why they are where they are now is because people embraced change and took drastic measures. She seemed to believe that if people continued to attempt to maintain the status quo it would lead to the breakdown of the Oyama community and be tragic, both economically and socially. She said that she thinks if there is to be a bright and continued future for Oyama, people need to be flexible and also remain open and receptive to influences from outside of the community. She said she thinks that it is about time for another big change like the sort instigated by Yahata Harumi with the first NPC.

During a lecture given to JICA trainees in 2008, Yahata Kinji, who was himself a leader in the Nokyo at the time of the lecture, claimed that one of his father's biggest achievements was leaving his son behind. He elaborated that after graduating from a top university in Tokyo, Kinji had made a plan to go and study in United States. "I had planned to go for about 10 years." Yahata Harumi begged his son to remain in Oyama; Kinji obliged out of a feeling of duty towards his father and ended up becoming a very influential Oyama leader himself.

Yahata also left his legacy in print in the form of numerous newspaper articles and in 1988 he also published the book, What can agricultural cooperatives do for regions? Both the Nokyo and Yakuba have produced numerous publications that preserve Yahata's philosophies and teachings to be passed on along with the stories of individuals who knew and worked with Yahata to future generations. The introductory pages of the Nokyo's annual reports including the 2012 Annual Report continue to include the tenants of the NPC movement developed under Yahata's leadership, which continue to guide development and activities in Oyama to this day. Ogata Hideo also mentioned that since Yahata's time as a leader of the community, the development philosophy that he introduced had continued under the successive leaders that came after him as it had been instilled in the culture of the Yakuba and its administrative staff.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Ogata said that a special feature of Oyama is the community development philosophy introduced by Yahata when he was Mayor. Even when the Mayor changed to a different Mayor, the philosophy continued in the "*bihin*" that is the "equipment of the town", the administrative staff of the Yakuba.

4.3.4 DAM ACTION COMMITTEE

Signs of forming foundations of community capacity were observed through the opposition movement of the dam construction in Matsubara area in Oyama against the Ministry of Construction. Oyama organized a countermeasures committee against the dam construction and visited antecedent case areas of dam construction and prepared for conditional opposition. Oyama prepared a basic proposal for a better life after the dam construction to the Ministry. The negotiation did suffer difficulties; however they obtained their requirement from the Ministry. This experience of negotiation by the village as a whole contributed to the foundations of a future unique development movement.

The establishment of the Dam Action Committee, a temporary representative organisation, provided the opportunity for wider community leadership in the form of the 12 representatives on the Committee including representatives of those being displaced by the dam construction. The Committee offered an opportunity for the setting and achievement of collective goals in response to a proposed dam in the community. The impact of the Committee and its activities on community capacity included foundational building/changes to both the other strategic components (human resources, leadership, networks) and the characteristics of community capacity (sense of community, commitment, ability to set and achieve objectives, ability to recognize and access resources).

In response to the devastation of the 1953 North Kyushu Flood (also referred to as the 1953 Western Japan Flood) the Basic Plan for Flood Control on the Chikugo River System (the Basic Plan) was developed by the national government. The floods hit Fukuoka Prefecture, Saga Prefecture, Kumamoto Prefecture and Oita Prefecture in June 1953. Torrential downpours during the rainy season had flowed down the river systems to flood a number of rivers including the Chikugo River. In the mountainous region around Kusu Mountain in Oita Prefecture, the highest rainfall exceeded 900mm (Sonoda 2004). The flood left over 1,000 people dead or missing, almost a half million damaged houses and buildings and a total damage bill of more than 2,161 billion yen (Sonoda 2004).

The Basic Plan involved constructing a number of dams on rivers that flowed into the Chikugo River in order to better control floodwaters and mitigate against further damage like what was experienced in the 1953 flood. One of these proposed dams was the Kuzegahata Dam. Kuzegahata was technically going to be located within Hita City; however, in terms of environmental impacts of the proposed dam, Oyama would have borne the brunt with almost two thirds of the village inundated. Of the total 1,071 households, 652 would have been affected; from the total population of 6,500 villagers, 3,820 people would have been displaced (Oyama 1995, p.829). Almost half of the arable land and about three per cent of Oyama's mountain forests would also have been inundated if the Kuzegahata Dam were built (Oyama 1995, p.829).

The Village Committee for Opposing the Kuzegahata Dam Construction (the Village Committee) was formed to campaign against the construction of the dam on behalf of the residents of Oyama. The village was unanimous in its opposition to the proposed dam. Evidence of this overwhelming opposition included a drop banner across the front of the Yakuba that read: *damu kensetsu zettai hantai*, which is roughly translated as the equivalent of the English dam protest phrase "No dam, no way"²⁹ (Oyama 1995, p.829). *Mushirobata*³⁰ (traditional protest banners) had

²⁹ The author has seen this slogan on bumper stickers of local residents protesting a proposed dam in the Mary Valley in Queensland, Australia in the 1990s.

also been raised along the length of the proposed Kuzegahata Dam site by locals opposing construction of the dam.

The central government policy at the time was to financially compensate people whose houses and land would be inundated; however, as outlined in a yobosho (communique) of October 5, 1953 to Oyama's farmers "kane wa ichinen, tochi wa mannen" (money lasts for one year, land for ten thousand years) (Oyama 1995, p.830). Thus they were not persuaded by the prospects of being financially compensated for the loss of their land.

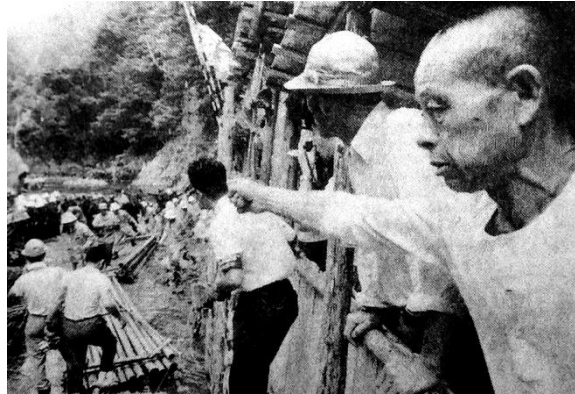


Image 4.3.4.1: Murohara leading the battle at the Shimouke Dam site

Source: Matsunaga 1989, p.138

Another dam was also to be constructed not far from Oyama, the Shimouke Dam. Local opposition against this dam was also very strong and included the infamous so-called *Hachinosujo* (Bee-hive Castle). Local residents opposing the dam construction and led by wealthy local resident and cedar grower, Murohara Tomoyuki (pictured in Image 4.3.4.1), blocked works from progressing by constructing a temporary village along the Chikugo River and living on the site – this temporary village was given the moniker *Hachinosujo* and is depicted in Image 4.3.4.2. The strong opposition to construction of the two dams was in part due to a perceived lack of consultation of local people alongside a lack of information provided to local people as well as general displeasure with the attitude and approach of the officials from the Ministry of Construction (Takahashi 2004). The *Hachinosujo* affair in particular gained much attention and later became a basis for the establishment of the Act on Special Measures for Development of Reservoir Areas 1972, which provided for higher levels of local consultation and a more considered approach to compensation for communities impacted by the construction of dams (Aldrich 2008).

³⁰ Straw flags used by farmers as protest flags/banners in the *Hyakushouikki* – farmers' uprising in the Edo period.



Image 4.3.4.2: The Infamous Hachinosujo

Source: Matsunaga 1989, p.132

Construction of the Shimouke Dam, which was extremely important to the Basic Plan, proceeded despite the level of local opposition including the ever persistent *Hachinosujo*; however, completion of the dam was delayed until 1972. Construction of Kuzegahata Dam on the other hand was ultimately cancelled and new plans made for another dam in a different part of Oyama, Matsubara. The Matsubara Dam, a concrete gravity dam, would be 82 metres high and have a volume of 294,000 cubic metres. This time, instead of taking a *zettai hantai* (complete and unanimous opposition) stance, Oyama, under the leadership of Yahata Harumi decided to undertake conditional negotiations on the construction of the dam. This decision was taken because, rather than a threat to the existence of the community, Yahata was able to see the construction of Matsubara Dam as an opportunity. He recognised that negotiating with the national government could help to secure the foundations for the future development of Oyama (see Oyama 1995, p. 831).

In order to conduct these negotiations and ensure community participation and influence in the process, the Dam Action Committee was formed. The purpose of this committee was not to take on the national government and oppose the construction of the dam until the end, but rather to work with the government to negotiate more favourable outcomes for the community as a result of the dam construction. Apart from Yahata, the Dam Action Committee comprised of 12 members. These included seven representatives of community members whose houses would be inundated by the dam, and a further five representatives from the general population. The committee's first meeting was held 4 May, 1958 at the Oyama Junior High School. Yahata Harumi, who was mayor at the time, gave the following inspiration to open the meeting:

"Delegated by resolution of the Village Committee, the responsibility of the [Dam Action] Committee to undertake all [dam-related] negotiations is truly grave. Committee members are charged with courageously progressing the dam measures on behalf of all of the 6,500 residents of this village" (speech given by Mayor Yahata Harumi in 1958 cited in Oyama 1995, p.833).

As Mayor, Yahata Harumi would be the head of the Dam Action Committee and through this position he gained much trust and popularity among Oyama's citizens. In order to persuade his fellow citizens who made up the Committee, Yahata gave moving speeches, one of which the following is an extract from:

"I have been moved deeply by the words of each of the [Dam Action] Committee members. Let us ensure that the friendship and solidarity of these citizens displayed here in this Committee and the rehabilitation of the lives of those being displaced become impetuses for Oyama's development. In the deepness of the greenery of the Oyama River and Oyama Village, our history tells this story; so that we do not leave regrets as we eventually enter the

afterlife, let us swear to carry out our duties to the best of our ability and, based on the consensus of this Committee, let us vote for Oyama Village to begin conditional negotiations on the construction of Matsubara Dam” (speech of Mayor Yahata Harumi 1958 cited in Oyama 1995, p. 832).

Through negotiations with the Ministry of Construction and the Kyushu Electric Company, the Dam Action Committee was able to secure a number of favourable outcomes for the village. The most important of these outcomes, which would later ensure that the development activities introduced would succeed, was the condition that local residents were employed temporarily as construction workers during dam construction. Other favourable outcomes included compensation for displaced households and community influence and voice in the actual location of the dam – in short the Dam Action Committee gave Oyama residents a voice and helped them feel empowered and involved in the dam construction, a project that greatly affected their village. The Dam Action Committee also provided an additional vehicle for the execution of the leadership of Yahata Harumi and the opportunity for another 12 local residents to develop their leadership skills and be developed as human resources through their representative roles. Having a common problem and recognising their mutuality of circumstances as well as working together to find a solution and these shared experiences would have enhanced the sense of community and commitment as well. The Committee and their activities also helped to solidify and define Oyama itself as a community (in addition to the 36 separate hamlets, which identified very strongly as communities).

4.3.5 OYAMA YUSEN HOSO

Oyama Yusen Hoso (OYHK), Oyama’s own local cable radio station, was an important initial step in the history of development in Oyama. As Ishibashi Masaaki from Oyama Shinkokyoku³¹ told a group of JICA trainees from Laos in December 2008 “well, thinking about it retrospectively, I would have to say that *yusen hoso* was probably the most important contributing factor to the success of the NPC movement”. OYHK would prove to be an instrumental tool in the sharing of information, dissemination of shared community values, as well as an effective facilitator of participation in community activities. The success of OYHK in these resulted in an enhanced sense of community and commitment as well as increased participation in community activities and therefore strengthening of bonding social capital within the village. OYHK also contributed to the development of human resources by being an effective mechanism for the transfer of agricultural technical knowledge. OYHK would contribute to the introduction of various successive new policy structures including the NPC movements. The main social capital, knowledge, community capacity development and policy structure impacts of OYHK are summarised in Table 4.3.5.1.

The introduction of the cable radio constituted a bonding social capital building tool that brought the community leaders (Yahata Harumi, the Nokyo, and the Yakuba) closer to the rest of the community. OYHK enabled community leaders to share their knowledge with every household in the community particularly in terms of values and vision, but also information. Little by little this would result in common values and a shared vision laying the foundation capacity for future community policy structures including the NPC movements. The radio also served as a tool for social capital building and knowledge sharing by encouraging participation in community activities and events, resulting in increased interactions between community members.

³¹ Shinkokyoku = Hita City Oyama Regional Development Bureau

Table 4.3.5.1: Summary of OYHK impacts – social capital, knowledge, CCD and PS

Initiative	Social Capital Effects	Knowledge Outcome	Community Capacity Development (CCD)/Policy Structure (PS) Outcomes
OYHK	<u>Bonding</u> : by informing residents of and encouraging participation in community events	<u>Sharing</u> : through increased person to person interaction due to participation in collective activities; through leaders being able to diffuse their own values and visions for the community	<u>CCD</u> : creation of shared values and vision; increased sense of community and commitment <u>PS</u> : various successive policy structures including the NPC movements

Source: adapted from Stenning and Miyoshi 2008

I had first discovered Oyama’s *yusen hoso* (cable broadcasting station) when staying at Kurokawa Teruko’s house in Ogirihata in 2008.

Field note 8 February 2008:

While we were talking out of nowhere I heard a radio voice start announcing some activities planned for later in the day and inviting people to participate. I had not noticed anybody turning on a radio and when I asked about it I was informed by Teruko that it was Oyama’s *yusen hoso*, a cable radio service limited to Oyama residents. Teruko told me that every household had one of the transmitters in their kitchen or lounge room through which regular, at least twice daily it seemed, announcements are broadcasted.

In the mid-1950s Yahata was pondering for long hours on how to reawaken Oyama’s *yaruki* (drive/enthusiasm), which had been lost to the fatigue of the dire poverty experienced during the previous decade since the end of World War II. Should he focus on income first? Or should he work more on knowledge, which would form the basis of people’s aspirations for the future? Finally, Yahata decided that both needed to be worked on simultaneously. In order to help farmers start to earn cash income the Nokyo introduced a kind of micro-credit program whereby the Nokyo loaned chickens and pigs and farmers repaid the loan from the profits of selling the eggs or pork (Miwa 1987, p.22). This also introduced the farmers to a different kind of agriculture from the rice farming that they knew.

In terms of improving knowledge, Yahata tried to think of a mechanism by which he could more directly communicate with and transmit information to community members. There were already newsletters being published through both the Nokyo and the Yakuba, but they were only produced once per month and also depended on people actually picking them up and taking the time to read them. Yahata was able to meet and talk with representatives from each of the 35 shuraku regularly as well; however, this forum allowed him the chance to communicate directly with only one person from each shuraku. In Yahata’s opinion this was not sufficient (Matsunaga 1989); what was needed was a line of direct communication that would reach every single person in the village on a daily basis.

In 1955, Yahata heard about an agricultural cooperative in Shizuoka Prefecture that had installed a cable broadcasting system (*yusen hoso*) in their area – the first town to do this. This piqued Yahata’s interest. The Nokyo already held 20 million yen in savings and Yahata figured that if this could be raised a further 30 million to 50 million yen, it would be possible for Oyama to install its very own *yusen hoso* system. Yahata decided that he would announce this to the village pledging to “make a *yusen hoso* in the village when savings reached 50 million yen” (Matsunaga 1989, p.159).

A Nokyo employee criticised the approach saying that it would never work and that people needed more motivation to invest their savings in the Nokyo (Miwa 1987). They decided to also offer an invitation to everybody in the village who contributed to reaching the goal of 50 million yen to join a free trip to the Great Beppu Onsen Tourism Industry Expo, which would be held in 1957 in Beppu City. Beppu is an onsen (hot springs) mass tourism destination in Oita Prefecture that is famous all over Japan. At the time, the prospect of a sightseeing tour was extremely attractive to the farmers of Oyama – a string of households went straight to the post office to withdraw their meagre savings and deposit them into their Nokyo accounts. The savings goal of 50 million yen was surpassed surprisingly easily and just two short years after the announcement savings in the Nokyo had had reached 60 million yen, 10 million more than the target. This was in time for the Beppu Onsen Expo trip; in March 1957, on the first day of the Beppu Onsen Expo, as promised 20 large tourist buses pulled up outside of the Nokyo to transport all of those who had contributed to reaching the savings goal to the Expo in Beppu.

The Nokyo had acquired the funds required to set up the Oyama Yusen Hosho (OYHK) much more quickly and easily than Yahata had expected, “Because I had no idea just how easily we would raise 50 million in savings, we hadn’t even learned how to go about implementing it yet!” said Yahata (quoted in Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative, 1987 p.24). It was decided that the Nokyo would immediately deploy Kiyozan Eiko, a 22 year old female Nokyo employee who Yahata deemed to be particularly active and intelligent, on a study exchange to Kikukawa Nokyo in Shizuoka Prefecture (Matsunaga 1989; Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1987). Within this three month period Kiyozan was charged with finding out about both the “hard” and “soft” sides of yusen hosho operations from the Kikukawa Nokyo. “Because it had become quite famous, there were about 10 trainees there to learn about yusen hosho – we received quite an education” (Kiyozan Eiko quoted in Miwa 1987, p.24).

Kiyozan learned about the infrastructure and equipment necessary for broadcasting, radio programming, as well as the work and job descriptions of the radio announcers. Kiyozan brought that knowledge back to Oyama and the Nokyo began to set up the broadcasting studio and systems required to run a broadcasting station. The Nokyo invested 5.85 million yen³² to purchase the necessary equipment and cable wire and then asked each shuraku to pitch in by providing and erecting the cable poles that would form the important network infrastructure for OYHK. In order to get villagers to participate in the set up of the cable poles and wires, the wife of a Nokyo employee “drove round and round in a senden car³³ calling out ‘everybody, let’s all participate for yusen hosho!’” (Kiyozan Eiko quoted in Miwa 1987, p.24).

Field note, 9 February 2008:

Kimiko³⁴ talked about the *yusen hosho*. She said that the Nokyo had invested 3 million yen or so in the radio sets and had provided them free to every house in Oyama on the condition that each neighbourhood construct the lines for the radios themselves. She said that this resulted in all sorts of different construction methods, some using bamboo for the line poles and others using cedar trees and some of the constructions not being particularly solid and swaying around in typhoons.

As depicted in Image 4.3.5.1, whole neighbourhoods showed up to participate in the construction of the lines – men, women, children and elderly residents all turned up. It was the responsibility of each of the 36 *shuraku* to source materials for the poles. As Matsubara Kimiko had indicated in our chat, these handmade posts were made from various materials depending on what resources each

³² Wa ga ai suru midori no machi 1973

³³ *Senden* car = publicity or advertising vehicles fitted with megaphones.

³⁴ Matsubara Kimiko had been an employee of the Yakuba since she was 20 years old (for over 35 years) and now worked at the Hita City Oyama Regional Development Bureau.

shuraku had available to them. Some used sturdy cedar or pine; others cut down chestnut trees, or even used *mosochiku*, a species of giant Japanese bamboo. Some *shuraku* had residents with cable running skills learned in the war, others had no one with such experience and the difference showed; sagging cables swung precariously in strong winds in some *shuraku*. In some neighbourhoods every time there was a strong wind or snowfall the line would go down; however, a community member would always be straight out to fix it. The act of participating in the construction together and having a shared goal contributed to community capacity particularly in terms of an enhanced sense of community and increased levels of commitment and willingness to translate this commitment into action.



Image 4.3.5.1: Community members build cable broadcasting infrastructure

Source: Matsunaga 1989, p.162

On 1 May 1957, OYHK began broadcasting. The content of the broadcasts, although also including general entertainment such as repeats of Sumo match coverage, centred mainly on Oyama's own independently produced programming. Content would include such things as:

- Information on local events;
- Agricultural guidance, advice and tips; and
- Daily inspirational talks from Yahata.

A handful of young women were trained and employed as announcers and were soon extremely busy with the frequent broadcasts and programming. OYHK was used, and at the time of writing was still being utilised, to announce upcoming community events and activities such as festivals, sporting events, meetings, working bees, classes, and workshops and to report community news, with a focus on village development progress. The broadcasts served to keep all community members well informed and reminded of communal events and activities at all times and encouraged active participation by every member. Other pertinent information was also transmitted such as information on agricultural produce market prices and trends as well as agricultural technical tips and encouragement, for example, "the weather is good today, so let's get out and prune our plum trees".

For the first 10 years of OYHK, Harumi Yahata gave a three to five minute speech at breakfast and dinner every day, 365 days per year.³⁵ In these twice-daily addresses Yahata spoke of

³⁵ By some accounts Yahata gave up to three speeches per day in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening; however, other sources recall these addresses as occurring only once per day, in the morning. In any case, they happened at least once per day, every day.

his vision for Oyama, his hopes and plans for the future of the community and also often picked up and highlighted recent achievements. Glen Miller's "American Patrol", a swing march of the early 1940s, was played softly as background music to the talks. Yahata obviously enjoyed the music and described American Patrol as being "lively music...it has rhythm – a good song" (Matsunaga 1989, p.163).

Field note 9 February 2008:

Kimiko also told me that Yahata would give a talk on the radio for 3 – 5 minutes at dinner time every day. She said this lasted for five or 10 years before the *Bucho* or *Kacho* started taking over for him. Kimiko described the talks as being about Yahata's vision or ideals or current developments in the town. Kimiko said he purposely made the talks not go for more than five minutes because people would grow bored or lose attention if the speeches went for longer.

As Matsubara Kimiko had mentioned, after 10 years of conducting the twice daily addresses, Yahata decided to delegate the role to Nokyo employees. His reasoning for doing this was that he wanted to avoid "Yahata colour" becoming too strong in Oyama (Matsunaga 1989, p.163).

Apart from receiving the cable radio broadcasts, the receivers also worked as a village intercom or telephone system. Calls were free between houses with the receivers (and all houses in Oyama were fitted with a receiver). Most villagers did not have telephones in their homes and a good percentage of them would have never had the opportunity to use a telephone before. "Well, telephones were such a novelty back then that heaps of people would just make calls without any reason," remembers Kawanobe Yaeko, who was in the first group of young female announcers employed by OYHK (Miwa 1987, p.25). Among some of the villagers who were experiencing telephones for the first time there also appeared a kind of "telephobia". Initially some people were also holding the handset upside down. Kawanobe recalls a time when after picking up the receiver and hearing a voice saying: "I can't hear anything, I really can't hear anything!" an OYHK announcer requested over the radio "The person at number X you see the line coming out of your telephone handset? Please make sure you are holding it so that the end that the line is attached to is pointing down" (Miwa 1987, p.25).

My field note sketch shown in Image 4.3.5.2 summarises the introduction of OYHK based on a community lecture delivered by Nishihashi, who was section head of OYT at the time of the lecture. The Nokyo purchased studio equipment and receivers for each house, while the inhabitants of each of the 35 shuraku built their own poles and cooperated to hoist up the cables. The Nokyo collected a range of information and disseminated this to every household via the broadcasts. Yahata also imparted his vision and shared his knowledge with his twice daily three to five minute addresses. The OYHK hardware also provided villagers the ability to make telephone calls between households. The objectives of OYHK included increasing the *chishiki*, or knowledge, of individuals in the village and also served to better connect households.

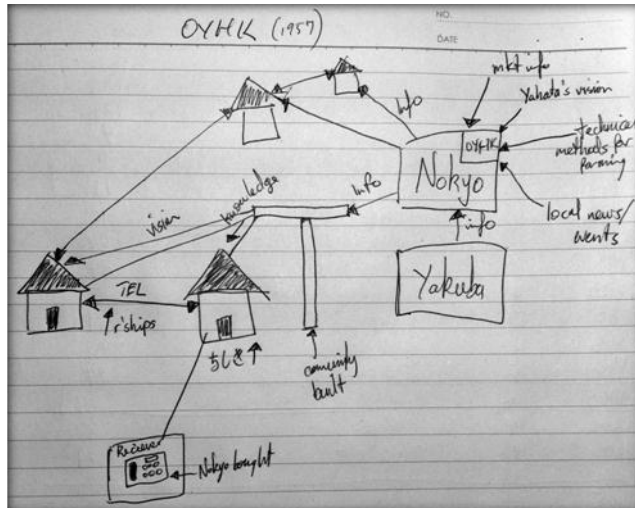


Image 4.3.5.2: Fieldwork sketch of OYHK

Source: author's field notes

The cable radio receivers, depicted in Image 4.3.5.3, are still evident in Oyama households and announcements can still be heard three times or so per day. However, the effectiveness of the cable radio may have been diminished by the introduction of alternative entertainment options such as television. In response to this, later on the Oyama Cable Television (OYT) station would also be introduced.

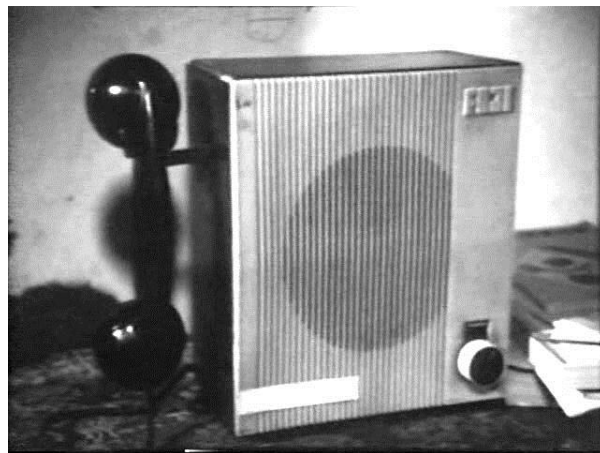


Image 4.3.5.3: OYHK receiver in 2012 (left) and in the early 1970s (right)

Source: left taken by author May 2012 and right still from Wa ga ai suru midori no machi 1973

The introduction of OYHK resulted in a number of implications for community capacity. Most importantly it became an effective tool for leaders to transmit their values, goals and vision to all in the community resulting in a strengthened sense of community as residents grew to share the same values, goals and vision for their town. Through his daily speeches Yahata, as a leader, was able to pass on his own values and vision to every other individual in the community, resulting in the formation of a shared culture and identity as well as underlying shared values and vision for the

town. Shared values and vision contribute to an important aspect of community capacity, a well developed sense of community (Miyoshi and Stenning, 2008).³⁶ Values are an important part of the definition of knowledge offered in Stenning and Miyoshi (2008), therefore, OYHK proved also to be a tool for knowledge sharing and was effective in a way that a written newsletter could never be particularly due to the charismatic and effective speaking skills of Yahata and the lack of entertainment media such as television in the majority of households at the time.

As mentioned, information transmitted through OYHK included information about upcoming community events and collective activities. The effectiveness of the delivery of this information resulted in higher participation of community members in community activities. This in turn increased the quantity of opportunities for interaction between community members and therefore built bonding social capital. Thus cable radio effectively became a tool for building social capital in the town. The increased instances of person-to-person interaction resulting from the effective information dissemination of the radio system also led to increased opportunities for informal, spontaneous knowledge sharing. An example of this might be a farmer seeing another farmer from a different danchi at the local sporting event and, after hearing that the other farmer was having a problem with a certain insect or other agricultural issue that he himself had resolved on his farm recently, sharing his experience with tackling the problem. In this way, the social capital built contributed to both community capacity development, in terms of an increased sense of community and commitment due to knowing many other community members, and also lead to increased knowledge sharing. These processes and impacts are elaborated on further in Chapter 5.

A sense of pride and achievement would have also accompanied the completed OYHK system as it was not just the Yakuba that was responsible for its installation. As mentioned above, all residents helped erect the cable lines in their own neighbourhoods – this was something that they achieved together and would have increased their confidence and *yaruki* simply because of that. This would have been especially pronounced as *yusen hoso* was considered very advanced and Oyama could now lay claim to the prestige of being the first village in Kyushu to successfully install such a system and indeed only the second in Japan.

4.4 CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on early Oyama during the post-war period to the end of the 1950s, a summary of which is presented in Table 4.4.1. The broader context during this period included Japan entering the post-World War II period of high economic growth fuelled by its support of the Korean War; however this growth, and its benefits, were largely concentrated in the major cities such as Tokyo and Osaka and not equally distributed to rural areas and small villages such as Oyama. Some impacts of this and technological change did however impact adversely on Oyama – the introduction of nylon fishing nets as well as the machination of the logging industry caused Oyama farmers to lose important cash diversification opportunities in the hemp and cedar logging industries. At the time, the national government was concerned with food security and agricultural policies encouraged increased rice cultivation and the rearing of livestock such as cattle for meat. Under the influence of the US Occupation, the newly written Japanese Constitution of 1947 and a number of national laws reformed the role of local government and promoted decentralisation and a degree of local autonomy.

At this time, Oyama did not really recognise itself as a whole community; rather community definition was limited to the *shuraku* level and based on traditional ties and isolated mountain geography. Post-war Oyama was also characterised by severe poverty and a distinct lack of community capacity as well as very simple community policy structures. Oyama's community policy structure was historically simple consisting of only relatively basic and traditional-based collective

³⁶ See Schein (2004) for more on the role of leaders in shaping organizational culture (also highly applicable in the case of the community).

activities mostly at the shuraku level such as annual religious festivals, collective roof-thatching or rice harvesting. Production activities were rudimentary and mostly for subsistence involving long hours, hard work, seasonal migration and logging. Animals were used to plough fields, which meant that the care of animals was added to the work day, which often began well before dawn. Apart from rice which was sold through government regulated channels via the Nokyo, produce was sold by each household individually to a merchant or middleman who then sold the products on at market. Culturally, leisure was looked down upon and there were only a couple of “no work days” per year.

Oyama’s people (the community’s human resources), who were mostly farmers, were described as being “emotionally and materialistically impoverished” and generally had low levels of education due to farming children being needed to work or help out in the household. Sense of community was lacking, and there was little willingness or ability to participate in community level activities due to being worn down by poverty and having little free time due to the intensive and laborious nature of agriculture. Women encouraged their daughters not to marry in Oyama, but to try to leave so that they would have an easier life than their mothers and both men and women frequently left Oyama for seasonal work.

There were however important foundations of community capacity that existed and emerged during this period. These foundations included the existence and emergence of community organisations. Firstly the Yakuba, which provided a legitimate vehicle for the exercise of leadership, a convenient organisational structure for the development of human resources and shaping of future leaders, and also presented an opportunity to harness resources through the village budget and administrative staff. Secondly, establishment of the Nokyo, which, similarly to the Yakuba, provided another vehicle for leadership as well as a structure for human resources development and leadership promotion. The Nokyo also secured community access to individuals’ savings through a savings facility.

A transformational community leader in Yahata Harumi emerged during this period (whose leadership was given formal authority and legitimacy through both the Yakuba and Nokyo). Yahata effectively introduced new values to the village and set about communicating a shared vision, which would result in an increased sense of community as well as increased commitment by residents as well as organisations such as the Yakuba and Nokyo. Yahata also introduced initiatives to develop human resources in Oyama including a scholarship program for farming successors. With the right motivation people were encouraged to participate by withdrawing their meagre savings from the usual Post Office accounts and depositing them in the Nokyo savings facility, as well as in the construction of the OYHK system.

Initially, community members had little ability to organise collective activities and set or achieve collective objectives. However, with the strengthening of community capacity this began to change, for example, with wider community leadership and the setting and achievement of collective goals under the Dam Action Committee in response to a proposed dam in the community. Another important initiative which began to build on the community policy structures of Oyama was the introduction of a cable radio station as a mechanism to share information, instil shared community values, and encourage participation in community activities. These elements set the foundations of community capacity which allowed for the successful introduction of a new and higher value added community policy structure, the New Plum and Chestnut movement (which is covered in the following chapter).

Table 4.4.1: Summary of Post-War period

Oyama during the period 1945-50s (pre-NPC)	
Element	Description
Broader context	Technological change adversely impacting cash income sources such as hemp and logging industry
	Japan entering period of high economic growth, but this is concentrated in cities and not equally distributed to rural areas
	National government policy promotes rice production and cattle rearing
	Decentralisation and increased autonomy of local government
Community definition	Traditional based isolated rural and mountain hamlets (<i>shuraku</i>)
Community capacity	Organisations – Yakuba and establishment of Nokyo including savings facility
	Leader – Yahata Harumi becomes Kumiaicho and Mayor
	Networks – isolated small hamlets, little interaction between farmers, the Yakuba and Nokyo, establishment of OYHK (cable radio)
	Individuals – emotionally and materialistically impoverished, low levels of education as a rule due to farming household children required to work, introduction of scholarship for farming successors
	Sense of community – people are distrustful and envious of each other
	Commitment – little willingness or ability to participate in community level activities due to being worn down by poverty and having little free time due to nature of agriculture; women encouraged their daughters not to marry in Oyama, but to try to leave so that they would have an easier life than their mothers; however, with the right motivation people were encouraged to participate in the construction of the OYHK system
	Ability set and achieve objectives – community members have little ability to organise; however this began to change with the leadership of Yahata
	Access to resources – no access to information, autonomy over town budget, Nokyo savings facility and successful encouragement to utilise it meant access to household savings for development initiatives including establishment of OYHK, which in turn resulted in increased access to information
Community policy structures	Quality of life: Low incomes, poor housing/living conditions, brink of despair, all work, no time for cultural enrichment or leisure
	Collective activities historically concentrated at <i>shuraku</i> level for example religious and harvest festival, roof thatching and rice planting/harvesting
	Oyama negotiated favourable conditions with national government regarding dam construction through the Dam Action Committee
	Agricultural production: labour-intensive “hard” farm work mostly for subsistence, long hours, seasonal migration and logging to supplement income, used animals to plough fields
	Distribution of produce for market: Niwasaki – merchant collected goods from each household and dictated price
	Leisure: Fun looked down upon and only a couple of “no work days” per year

Source: created by author

CHAPTER 5 WORK, LEARN AND LOVE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The period prior to the introduction of the whole of community development movement in Oyama saw the establishment and strengthening of pivotal organisations in the village including the Nokyo and the Yakuba, as well as the Dam Action Committee. These allowed for the emergence of local leadership, in particular the visionary and influential Yahata Harumi, who became both the Kumiaicho (chairperson) of the Nokyo and Mayor. The introduction of Oyama Yusen Hoso meant that there was an effective mechanism for knowledge and information sharing, which meant that new shared vision, values, and norms could be promulgated and sense of community and commitment enhanced. Without this foundation level of community capacity it is unlikely that the higher value added policy structures subsequently introduced in the form of the NPC movements would have had the success they experienced, or even have ever been thought up or introduced in the first place.

In order to break the miserable state of “No money, no human resources, no leisure time, but envy,” the leaders drew up a vision for their village; first raise incomes through agricultural promotion, next acquire intellect and develop human resources, then improve the rural environment (Ogata 2008). In this way it was believed they could improve and enrich the then “materialistically and emotionally impoverished” existence of Oyama’s people by “aspiring for a comfortable income that was nurtured within wholesome human relationships where people could enjoy an affluent living environment” (Hibiki no Sato, 2008, pp.1-2). Development in Oyama began to really take off after the introduction of the NPC movement in the early 1960s. The first NPC, the New Plum and Chestnuts (NPC I) movement, involved a drastic and sudden change in the way agriculture was organised and approached in the village with the aim of making work lighter and less laborious whilst also increasing farmers’ incomes. The first NPC was followed by the introduction of two more NPC campaigns, which would run in parallel to the first NPC. These were the Neo Personality Combination (NPC II), which was focused on learning and developing a cultured people, and the New Paradise Community (NPC III), which aimed at creating a liveable environment that retained community members who were too often migrating to larger cities and regional centres. Under these three broad streams a number of higher value added policy structures were pursued and it is some of these key initiatives that are described in this chapter. The discussion is organised around the three NPC campaigns and is roughly in chronological order.

5.2 NPC I: HATARAKU

The New Plum and Chestnut movement (NPC I) was introduced in 1961 and centred on the concept of *hataraku* (work). The campaign focused solely on the agriculture sector since a majority of Oyama households were engaged in agriculture. Some Oyama residents engaged in other sectors such as commerce grumbled about being left out, but were told firmly by the Mayor that once the farmers were doing well, it would naturally impact favourably on them as well since the growth of their businesses would depend largely on other villagers, most of whom were farmers, being able to afford to purchase goods or services. The main aims of the policy were to improve incomes, reduce hours worked and make farm work less difficult/lighter to improve the quality of life of farmers.

An NPC promotion outline based on the research of the Agricultural Youth Study Group and included in Yahata (1988, p.37-38) lists the objectives and principles of the initial New Plum and Chestnut movement – these are listed below.

Objective

1. To secure the required income levels to enable every single one of Oyama's citizens to lead healthy, bright and rich lives as a member of the region's society.

Basic principles

2. In the context of all those engaged in production activities utilizing each organisation, enhancing modernised equipment, labour-saving and light work, in principle apply the labour standard of eight hours per day, 180 days per year, and pursue income that is sufficient to live a culturally rich lifestyle.
3. The purpose, produce and the pursued income should evolve and develop in response to current affairs and the times.

Agricultural development

4. Progress the clearing of forest as well as conversion of paddies and fields in order to plant plums and chestnuts as a main crop, before expanding to other fruit trees and specialty product production, distribution, processing and marketing. Based on a series of collective organisations, increasing and broadening agricultural incomes by adding secondary and tertiary industries in addition to the income earned through primary industry activities (Yahata 1988, p.38).

5.2.1 AGRICULTURAL REFORM – SWITCHING FROM RICE TO PLUMS AND CHESTNUTS

Under the leadership of Yahata Harumi, the Agricultural Youth Study Group, which was made up of key youth supporters from both the Nokyo and the Yakuba, as well as young farming successors searched for a way to increase incomes while reducing the workload of farmers. Surveys on production, distribution, and consumer trends on domestic agricultural production as well as research on potential resources in the villages were simultaneously carried out in order to identify a way forward. As a result of this two year investigation, a rice acreage reduction policy was implemented to develop farming focused on orchards, namely plum and chestnut orchards. This involved the development and implementation of full-scale agricultural reform in the town to switch the agricultural basis from a focus on rice to plums and chestnuts.

They selected plums and chestnuts because they considered, "In Oyama, there is only a limited amount of arable land. To ensure that farmers in Oyama can make a decent living we had no alternative but to increase the yield per 10 ares. By encouraging farmers to grow plums, which were up to ten times more profitable than rice at the time, we could substantially increase their income" (quoted in Ogata 2012, p.136-7). Additional advantages of growing plums and chestnuts included their ability to be grown on sloped land, market growth potential as healthy food products, labour-saving cultivation, an alternating busy season for each crop, the fact that they were well-suited to Oyama's geographical conditions, and a high income ratio (Ogata 2012, p.136).

This reform was formulated and implemented within a broader context of national and prefectural policies that encouraged increased rice production³⁷ and rearing of livestock such as cattle for beef. Defying the directives of the national and prefectural governments meant that Oyama forewent the subsidies that accompanied the policies; however this was deemed a necessary sacrifice in order to secure a prosperous future for the village.

5.2.2 WORKING LIGHTER AND LESS

Light, manageable, and labour saving were the three required working conditions proposed by the reforms. The labour standards for farmers were defined as an eight hour working day, 180 working days per year, and an income of 2,000 yen per day. Each of these targets was almost like a dream to the farmers who were used to performing hard labour from morning to night every single day to maintain an income of around 80,000 yen per year (Hibiki no sato, 2008).

³⁷ See Fukuda, Dyck and Stout 2003.

In order to make manual labour less strenuous and take up less hours of the day, agricultural processes and policies were modified or engineered. For example, plum trees were grown with frames to dwarf their height so that picking could be done with more ease, even by the tiniest *obaachan* (see Image 5.2.2.1). A policy to cease raising livestock in the community was introduced. This is because livestock require tending and feeding, which means manual labour, twice per day every single day of the year. If cattle and horses had traditionally been used for labour, they could be substituted with agricultural machinery, which had begun to become available.



Image 5.2.2.1: Women picking plums at Marukin Farm

Source: Marukin Farm

The NPC I encouraged farmers to aim for a four-day work week with manual labour limited to the first half of each working day. As outlined in the field note below, this did not necessarily entail three full days of no work.

Field note 9 Feb 2008:

Kurokawa Teruko told me that Yahata Harumi encouraged people to work diligently and efficiently until 3pm each day and then use the rest of the day to pursue personal development activities. She said the four day work week did not mean that people worked four days and then did nothing for three days, but the added up hours of work if one worked hard each day until 3pm resulted in the same number of hours as a four day work week.

5.2.3 A COMMON GOAL

Setting a common goal that was shared and understood by all community members was instrumental in enhancing the sense of community and commitment of residents to the community including a willingness to participate and take action for their own and the community's betterment.

As mentioned above, the average income of Oyama's farmers at the time was only around 80,000 yen per year. The NPC I set a specific goal for gross household income at 1 million yen within ten years time. Despite this concrete goal, to some of the older and less educated farmers, numbers did not mean a great deal and stating this income amount goal alone would not have given them a vision that motivated them to commit to the cause and take action. They were also worn and weary from their poverty stricken post-World War II lives. In order to motivate them there was a need to present this goal in another way, firstly so that they could comprehend what the goal would mean

for them personally and secondly so that they would commit to the objective and participate fully in the initiatives.

An alternative presentation of this goal of earning a relatively high income through switching crops to plums and chestnuts came in the form of an ingenious catch phrase: “Ume, kuri uete, Hawaii ni iko!!” roughly translated as: “Let’s plant plums and chestnuts and go to Hawaii!!” This phrase encapsulated a specific image of the rich life that people could aim for. In the early 1960s, as a rule Japanese farmers did not holiday in Hawaii. This was the holiday destination of only the richest and most famous people like movie stars and elite politicians. Koda Kazumi elaborated that farmers being told that they would be able to afford to holiday in Hawaii was such a fantastic notion that it would have been similar to “us being told now that we can go to the moon for vacation.” Thus the farmers were given an exciting dream to strive towards. In order for them to further own their dreams a slogan-making campaign was initiated whereby each neighbourhood came up with their own catchphrases, which were painted on signposts and erected around the communities as seen in Image 5.2.3.1. This post reads: “We’ll work hard and go, too, to that Hawaii”.

And go to Hawaii they would; even before farmers could afford to send themselves on holidays the Nokyo made the dream a reality by offering no interest loans to a group of farmers to travel together to Hawaii. The first group went to Hawaii in 1969; this act made the dream more real and motivated the rest of the farmers to commit to the movement so that they, too could holiday in Hawaii.



Image 5.2.3.1: We’ll work hard and go, too, to that Hawaii

Source: Hibiki no Sato 2008

5.2.4 RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Some farmers, particularly the more senior farmers who also held family decision making powers as heads of households, were strongly opposed to the reforms. They believed it was unnecessary to go against the national and prefectural governments’ policy of increased rice production, which involved the payment of subsidies to farmers. There was also the social stigma that farmers were not really farmers unless they cultivated rice, “Farmers grow rice.” They felt that they would not be real farmers anymore if they gave up rice as their main crop. The farmers also did not agree with the abolishment of livestock such as cows and horses that needed daily care (Hibiki no sato, 2008).

In order to implement the reforms, Oyama would have to defy the established concept of agriculture, which was supported as policy by the national government's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Oita Prefecture government. However, this decision was pursued due to Yahata's certainty that there was no future for the town in rice cultivation and the recognition of the disadvantages of rice production given the local conditions of Oyama. Yahata and his supporters did not heed the concerns of the older farmers, but continued to spread their message and enthusiasm to the younger generations. The reason why the "Plum and Chestnuts" project was renamed with "NPC" using English alphabet initials was because the leaders wanted a trendy image for the project to attract the younger generations. It is said that Yahata even enlisted the help of school teachers who passed the Mayor's message on to farming children who would then bring that message home to their parents and grandparents.

5.2.5 NPC I IMPLEMENTATION

The NPC was implemented jointly by the Yakuba and Nokyo effectively making it a whole of community development initiative. The involvement of the Yakuba in agricultural reform and assisting farmers constituted quite a drastic change in the traditional role and relationship between this actor and farmers. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.1, prior to Yahata Harumi becoming Mayor and beginning the reforms, the Yakuba was quite distant from normal farmers. Apart from administrative matters such as registering births and deaths they felt that the Yakuba literally had nothing to do with them. Koda Kazumi explained that the Yakuba did not intervene whatsoever in farmers' production activities before this time. However, this began to change with the introduction of the NPC campaign.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Once the NPC campaign began the distance between the farmers and the Yakuba decreased greatly. According to Koda, the Yakuba assistance for farmers was most concentrated around Showa 38 – 40 (1963-65). After this the assistance was reduced. The approach was to give them intensive assistance initially to help get them on their feet, while at the same time preparing them to be able to "do it themselves".

Likewise, the role of the Nokyo also changed – although this change was more permanent and continues to this day (and rather has become more pronounced and an important a role more recently).

Field note 15 June 2012:

In Koda's opinion the role of the Nokyo has gotten broader and more important since the town amalgamated with Hita City. He said that the Nokyo is the only organisation left that can organise all of Oyama's farmers.

In order to effectively implement the NPC, a number of measures were taken by the Oyama local government. These included securing finances/resources for the project, developing infrastructure, and providing support to participating farmers. Firstly, finances for the initiative had to be secured. The NPC was first proposed to the town assembly, which supported the proposal. The three year plan for the NPC I included prioritising local government funding for three years; the village government terminated all new projects and invested most of the village budget to procure young trees, improve infrastructure, develop sales channels, and organize technical training sessions. Funding and human resources for the Yakuba's other responsibilities such as education, infrastructure and disaster response were kept to the absolute minimum required for maintaining the status quo while the rest of the budget was allocated to the NPC movement. During the NPC

campaign, the town government stopped all other new projects, allocating most of the town budget to procuring seedlings, developing infrastructure, promoting sales and providing technical instruction for farmers (Ogata 2012, p.137). Oyama was able to do this as local governments in post-war Japan possessed a certain degree of discretion and flexibility in the way that they expended their budgets, thanks to the Constitution of 1947 and reforms that promoted decentralisation and local autonomy (MacDougall 2001).³⁸

Secondly, infrastructure development was required (hard support). The Yakuba invested in road building machinery and constructed access roads to farmers' fields – farmers did not need to pay for these. The Yakuba also subsidised plum and chestnut seedlings – two thirds of the cost of each seedling was borne by the local government rather than the participating farmers. In order to provide more incentive for paddy conversion and subsidise the cost of converting fields, the Yakuba also covered the remaining third of the cost of any seedlings planted in converted rice paddy fields, which means that farmers received these seedlings for free (Ogata 2012, p.137). The Yakuba also provided the required pesticides and fertilizers for the first three years of the initiative and purchased backhoes, which farmers were allowed to use free of charge – they were only required to pay for the cost of fuel (Ogata 2012, p.137).

The Yakuba also provided intensive 'soft' support which was concentrated during the first three years of the movement. To help farmers cover living expenses during these first three years while their plum trees were maturing the Yakuba offered farmers no interest loans. Some farmers were also able to secure additional income through being engaged as labourers in the construction of Matsubara Dam.³⁹ More than half of the Yakuba employees were also moved into the Department of Industrial Promotion, which was responsible for progressing the NPC movement. All other departments were allocated the bare minimum number of staff necessary. Staff of the Department of Industrial Promotion provided technical assistance and general farm work assistance in addition to their more normal duties of clerical work. Many of them at some point or another ended up working in the fields or operating heavy machinery – tasks that were generally out of the scope of office-based public employees.

Technical support was provided from the prefecture in the form of two agricultural extension workers embedded in the Yakuba. These resources were fully utilised by Yahata, becoming right-hand men to the Mayor and remembered fondly by Koda Kazumi as integral members of the movement despite not being 'native' Oyama residents. Indeed, one of Yahata's key supporters was Ikenaga Chitose, one of the agricultural extension workers deployed to Oyama from Oita Prefecture. Ikenaga was an agricultural expert and took an active role as Yahata's right hand man, providing him with valuable technical support (Ogata 2012). His work included providing technical guidance to farmers, finding solutions to overcome technical problems and organizing the Oyama Youth Agricultural Study Group. Together with Mr Mitoma, another prefectural officer deployed to the Yakuba, he also served as a kind of interpreter to fill the gap between the progressive leader and farmers (Ogata 2012).

Field note 15 June 2012:

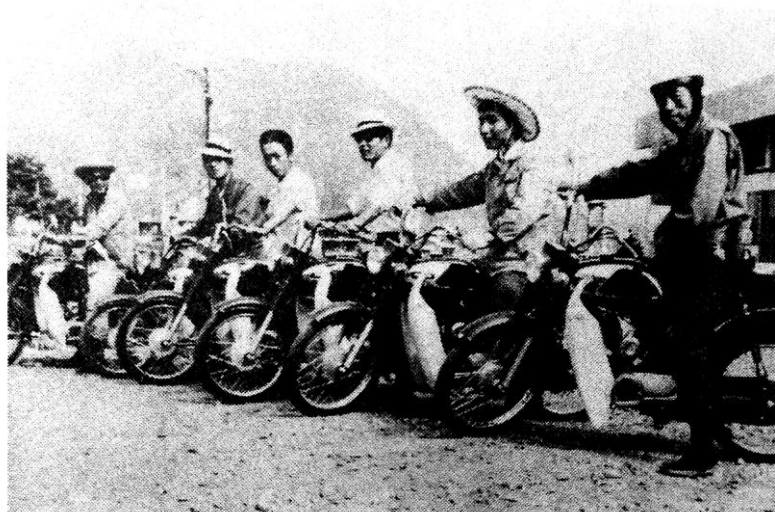
Koda talked a bit about the extension workers from the Prefecture, Ikenaga Chitoshi and Mitoma Keinosuke. He described Ikenaga as being quite serious while Mitoma was quite the

³⁸ Some of this autonomy would be later clawed back in a process of administrative re-centralisation which had begun even before the end of the Occupation when Japan's conservative national politicians began to reassess the utility of the newly decentralized institutions. They were sceptical about local administrative skills, concerned that autonomous local institutions might be unduly influenced by opposition groups, and convinced that Japan's economic recovery depended on establishing greater central administrative controls. Although the most politically explosive aspects were legislated by the mid-1950s, the recentralisation process continued in other areas during the next two decades (MacDougall 2001, p.38).

³⁹ See section on Dam Action Committee for more detail.

entertainer (so much so that he was nicknamed “Geinosuke,” which is a composite of his given name and the Japanese word for performer).

The level of technical assistance and support provided was boosted further with the creation of a special technical support taskforce called AgriPartners (known widely as AP) as well as the appointment of assistant instructors for each hamlet from the Agricultural Youth Study Group. This group of a total of 31 instructors and assistants made up of AgriPartners and Agricultural Youth Study Group members provided intensive support and technical guidance to participating farmers.



緑のオートバイで勢揃いしたアグリパートナー

Image 5.2.5.1: AgriPartners on their standard green motorbikes

Source: Matsunaga 1989

Koda Kazumi, second from left in Image 5.2.5.1, was one of the original AgriPartners and told JICA trainees about this specialised technical assistance unit in June 2012.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Part of the reason that this intensive support was required was due to the construction of the Oyama Dam. According to Koda, a number of farmers took up construction jobs because the pay was better than what they were used to earning while engaged in agriculture. This resulted in a shortage of labour on a number of farms and a potential threat to the success of the movement as farmers could not devote the time required to properly care for their young plants.

Thus the AgriPartners group was formed. This consisted of four staff from the Nokyo and four staff from the Yakuba. Koda was one of the Yakuba staff engaged as an AgriPartner and he worked in this role for six or seven years. Koda told us that APs did not do any clerical or office work. They were each given a green motorbike and red work shirt (Koda could not remember the colour of the pants), and a belt with the tools necessary to tend plum trees. Koda said that there were two main purposes of the AP's role. These were to:

- 1) Explain to the more reluctant farmers why it was important that they participated in the movement and planted plums and chestnuts. Some other farmers supported the movement but were not hardworking, so the APs encouraged them to work

harder and also provided a role model for them. [A kind of leading by example as well as knowledge sharing role].

- 2) Provide physical labour and technical advice in terms of pruning, harvesting, and pest control etcetera. [Technical assistance and manual labour].

Koda told us that APs worked from early in the morning until evening Monday to Friday working out in the fields of the farmers in their respective allocated territories. On Saturdays the eight APs would meet with managers and specialists to discuss and plan. Koda said it was hard work especially during the cold winter months and in the heat of summer; however, he said he had a lot of fun in the role as well. Often he would drink sake together with farmers from the daytime onwards. For six or seven years he interacted very closely with Oyama farmers and was able to build good relationships with them.

The AgriPartners met every Saturday to share knowledge and information, troubleshoot or workshop technical and other issues and plan the week ahead – one of these said meetings was captured on film in the documentary, *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi*, of 1973 a still of which is presented in Image 5.2.5.2. This specialised technical assistance unit served to further consolidate the values promulgated by Yahata in his daily addresses through OYHK, develop skills of farmers by sharing technical information and farming techniques, and also promoted an understanding of the situation of farmers in the Yakuba and Nokyo administrative staff. The direct and regular interaction between these Yakuba and Nokyo staff members and the farmers themselves also resulted in increased social capital in terms of a closer relationship between the Yakuba and Nokyo and the farmers that made up the majority of the constituents that their organisations served.



Image 5.2.5.2: AgriPartners meeting

Source: still from film: *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi* 1973

By forming an Agricultural Youth Study Group consisting of up to 40 young farmers the Yakuba and Nokyo were also able to access a valuable latent resource available in the village in the form of bright, young and motivated farming successors, most of whom had attended agricultural high school in larger regional centres of Oita Prefecture on the Nokyo scholarships that were introduced in the 1950s. These youth contributed greatly to the operationalization of the grand ideas introduced by Yahata, often utilizing their past experiences, for example as trainees in the kibbutzim in Israel, in their proposals. This group was another method by which Yahata could have a direct influence and shape future leaders of the community. The establishment and functioning of the group also served to build social capitals/networks, both between farmers and the Yakuba and Nokyo as well as among the farming successors who hailed from each of the 36 *shuraku* in Oyama.

During a community lecture delivered for JICA trainees in June 2012, Koda Kazumi shared his knowledge of the Agricultural Youth Study Group.

Field note 15 June 2012:

The Agricultural Youth Study Group was formed by gathering 30 or 40 youngsters (agricultural heirs and former recipients of the agricultural study scholarship). Most of the hamlets of the village were represented. These young farmers supported the goals of the NPC movement particularly because they found the idea of less hours spent working and more leisure time quite attractive. Approximately 30 of the study group members were appointed as assistant instructors in their own and surrounding *shuraku*. Their first objective was to ensure that their own plum and chestnut trees resulted in good harvests. Secondly, they provided technical assistance to the other farmers in their respective territories. There were extension workers (AgriPartners) from the Nokyo and Yakuba as well, but their number was limited. Therefore the assistant instructors were appointed to boost the level of support. Koda said that they sometimes ended up working on their neighbours' land. Study group members were paid a modest allowance from the Nokyo for their trouble, but it seemed they were more motivated by belief in the movement and a desire to see it succeed. These were values and beliefs instilled in them through direct contact with Yahata Harumi.

With such intensive support, cultivation of plums and chestnuts appeared to take off smoothly; however, there was an unexpected pitfall. The plum seedlings purchased by the town government included a variety that would bloom but never bear fruit. Farmers, who were looking forward to harvesting plums, became distrustful, saying they were deceived by the Yakuba and Mayor. An intolerant disposition, said to be traditionally inherent in the region, quickly turned into envy and jealousy of the farmers who were lucky enough to succeed in harvesting plums. One Oyama resident recounted a story of one farmer during this period even going so far as to collect and spread destructive pests on his neighbour's trees. This deeply distressed the extension worker, Ikenaga, who was probably partially responsible for the blunder and knew more than anyone that the future of Oyama rested on the success of the campaign. Mayor Yahata was also affected personally by the non-fruiting trees in his own orchard, but did not lay blame or yield in the face of failure. He coped with the problem by grafting fruit bearing trees onto the non-productive ones and he rallied his supporters to continue pushing the initiative to success.

5.3 ENOKI MUSHROOMS

The introduction of enoki production into Oyama is an example of how an increased level of community capacity can result in the introduction of new and higher value added community policy structures, specifically a production-based collective activity. Oyama farmers beginning enoki production was a direct result of community capacity building activities. These included the enhanced human resources and new knowledge and ideas gained as a result of kibbutz training program and the formation of the Agricultural Youth Study Group which was made of up intelligent, determined and inspired youngsters hungry for an affluent life for themselves and their neighbours. A good sense of community and a high level of commitment to the community was also important in terms of the willingness of those young farmers who first introduced enoki to share unconditionally with their peers (although Yahata Kinji did say that he benefited from the time he spent sharing with other farmers by drinking sake at those farming houses that he helped with enoki). While Chikuma Kasei purchased sawdust to use as mushroom compost; Oyama identified a latent resource in the sawdust by-product of forestry in the town. The existence of the Nokyo and recognition that enoki

production could greatly benefit the town as well as the financial capital and political will to invest in the enoki centre to absorb risk and safeguard individual farming households was also instrumental in the widespread adoption of enoki farming in Oyama. Later on, access to capital to further invest in research and development resulted in the creation of Oyama's own enoki, Mashiruku. Oyama's enoki was then widely marketed and established as a recognisable brand of enoki. The case of enoki in Oyama is representative of systematic value addition.

The Oyama method for the production of enoki mushrooms allocates the difficult and risky process of creating the mushroom beds to the Mushroom Centre of the agricultural cooperative, with the farmers then taking over the cultivation, harvesting and packaging of the mushrooms. Through this sharing of functions in the production process, it was possible for farmers to engage in enoki production without the need for high levels of technology and capital. In addition, enoki mushrooms are shipped year-round in order to maintain the Oyama enoki mushroom brand, but since summertime production is not particularly profitable, enoki mushroom farms are cooperating by supplementing the summertime producers.

5.3.1 *DIVERSIFICATION AND THE SEARCH FOR REGULAR INCOME*

Diversification of products produced by Oyama's farmers continued with the introduction of *enoki* mushroom cultivation in the early 1970s. The idea of enoki mushroom production is said to have been introduced by four core members of the Agricultural Youth Study Group. These were Yahata Harumi's son, Yahata Kinji, Yano Seiji, Yano Yukio and Kurokawa Hirofumi.

Yahata Kinji had worked at the Yakuba for seven years when he suddenly decided to leave his job. Kinji was also growing plums and chestnuts, but they were only harvested once per year and therefore so were the profits gained from them. "Well, I quit because getting income only once per month, the same as a salary man, was annoying. I thought it would be good to produce something that would get income coming in every 10 days or even weekly," said Kinji (quoted in Miwa 1987, p.89). Also, although the income was stable and there was job security as a public servant, Kinji realized his income would always be set at a certain level, no matter how hard he worked. By this time, Oyama's farmers had indeed increased their incomes exponentially in line with Yahata Harumi's objective of 1 million yen per year, yet Kinji was not satisfied. "By the time the 10 years had passed, that goal of '1 million yen incomes by 1970' didn't really fit anymore as there had been high rate of economic growth," explained Kinji (Miwa 1987, p.88). Kinji had set his heart on earning a much higher income than 1 million yen.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Kinji told us that, at the time he quit his Yakuba job, he had calculated that in order to have the kind of lifestyle he desired he would need to earn 30 million yen per year. This included 10 million yen to take care of his family and 20 million yen to spend. Kinji figured that it would be possible to achieve this as a farmer, but that he would need sales of at least 100 million yen per year in order to achieve his desired 30 million yen after tax income.

After figuring out what he wanted and setting his income objective, Kinji then had to find a way to achieve it. "Actually," Kinji confessed "I had no idea how to achieve such sales". So he visited the office of an agricultural expert in the Oita Prefecture government and asked for a list of all of the individual farmers in Japan achieving sales of over 100 million yen per year.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Oita Prefecture prepared a list of 40 farmers located all over Japan. Kinji travelled extensively all over the country to visit each and every one of them. He told us that his aim

was not necessarily to copy what they were doing, but to learn about their mindset and what kind of a way of thinking was required to achieve such high sales figures through farming activities.

To begin with the four Agricultural Youth Study Group members, who were also close friends, piled into a car and travelled all around Kyushu, visiting every kind of farm and studying all different kinds of produce (Miwa 1987, p.89). However, they could not find the inspiration they were looking for in Kyushu, so they ventured into Honshu. In Nagano Prefecture, the foursome came across enoki mushrooms for the first time at Chikuma Kasei. All four of them felt instantly that mushrooms could suit Oyama. After leaving Nagano they also visited Kanda Market in Tokyo where the following caught their eye: citrus from Saitama, plums (*sumomo*) from Shizuoka, and ginkgo from Sobue Town in Aichi Prefecture.



Image 5.3.1.1: young enoki mushrooms

Source: taken by author February 2008

Essentially, Kinji and his three friends picked the brains of all of the highest earning farmers in Japan, as well studied the most prominent and profitable potential agricultural products. They conducted this research over a two year period. They paid special attention to the relationship among the market, the product, and production area.

The group also took a closer look at the existing environment in Oyama – this was something that could not be changed and they decided that it should be utilised as much as possible as an advantage/resource in production. The group also decided that they needed to select a kind of agriculture that would provide income regularly; on a daily basis, rather than only once or twice per year like the plums and chestnuts. This would minimise the risk of one off harvests that can fail due to disaster or climatic conditions resulting in major consequences for the farmer relying on the harvest as their single source of income.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Kinji told us that he had decided that he needed to adopt a kind of agriculture that provided income on a daily basis rather than just once or twice per year. He reasoned that he could continue to produce plums and chestnuts, but that the income from them should be treated as a twice yearly bonus rather than the main income source. Kinji also took into account the natural state of the village. He accepted that things like average temperatures, rainfall, and the hours of daytime cannot be changed by man and should be utilized to their best. He noted that in Hita there was a long history of logging (the area is quite renowned for cedar),

and with logging and mills comes much sawdust as a by product. Sawdust can be used to grow mushrooms.

Because mushrooms are grown inside in a climate controlled environment they can be produced all year round. They also mature quickly, in as little time as one month. Mushrooms can be harvested every day, so they provide a regular income stream for farmers – unlike the once or twice per year harvests of fruit trees.

5.3.2 INTRODUCTION OF ENOKI

Yahata Kinji began growing enoki mushrooms on his own, using his land and investment. As Yahata explained in a lecture to JICA trainees in June 2008, it was not too long before other farmers noticed his success with the mushrooms and wanted to try it themselves.

Field note 26 June 2008:

When he was 30 years old Kinji began to grow enoki mushrooms. He said that at the time he had absolutely no skills in mushroom cultivation but his attitude was that if you make an effort skills can be acquired eventually. He said that the first three years were difficult, but after that he began earning much more income. This was noticed by seven other young farmers who each came to Kinji's house bringing sake and saying "teach me how to make mushrooms!" Kinji relented and spent every day (Monday to Friday) at their houses teaching them how he grew his mushrooms (and drinking their sake while he was there).

I also heard about the introduction and early days of enoki production in Oyama from Koda Kazumi and Kurokawa Teruko.

Field note 16 May 2012:

Koda Kazumi never grew enoki he just worked at the Yakuba, but he knew a bit about the story. He said it was basically Yahata Kinji's idea. But that he had had some help from the Agricultural Youth Study Group and in particular from Yano Seijiro and Kubo-san, who had been to the kibbutz with Kinji and Kurokawa Hirofumi. Kinji started producing first on his own land and with his own investment. Yano also made his own factory. I remembered I had also heard from Kurokawa Teruko in Ogirihata on 17 May 2012 that her husband, Hirofumi, had set up his own enoki factory early on and that this had involved the whole process from spores to end product without any help from the Nokyo. Kurokawa was having problems with the mushrooms and travelled to Nagano to study and learn better skills, which he shared with everyone else in Ogirihata when he returned.

The initial group of seven farmers also started to do very well due to their enoki operations. They began to earn income regularly and treated their plum and chestnut harvests as yearly or twice yearly bonuses.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Before too long another 30 farmers came to Kinji saying "Teach us, too!!" This was when he asked his father and the Nokyo to help him. After 10 years, there were 100 farmers cultivating enoki mushrooms in Oyama with 1 billion yen in total annual sales; after 15 years there were 150 enoki mushroom farmers and sales of 1.5 billion yen.

5.3.3 MUSHROOM CENTRE

Mushroom production can be delineated into two distinct phases; the first is very technical and quite difficult and the second is a much less difficult stage. During the first stage there is a much higher risk that the mushrooms will fail. Based on what they had learned about the merits of conducting production activities collectively in the Kibbutz in Israel, the young men proposed a central mushroom facility to conduct the more technically complicated aspects of enoki production. Thus a system was established whereby farmers purchased pots of activated mushroom spores from the Nokyo's central mushroom facility. Farmers then continued to cultivate these in their own small scale facilities, where they also packed them ready to deliver back to the Nokyo. This production system was dubbed the "Oyama method."

Field note 8 February 2008:

Teruko took me to the enoki factory run by the Nokyo. There I met the *Bucho*, Mr Yano and *Kacho*, Mr Kazutoshi Kawanobe. Yano gave me a brief lowdown on the facility. It was established about 33 years ago [around 1975] in order to reduce the risks to farmers involved in enoki production. He said that at the peak there were up to 150 households producing enoki in Oyama; however, due to the aging population and depopulation in Oyama this number is now only 65 households.

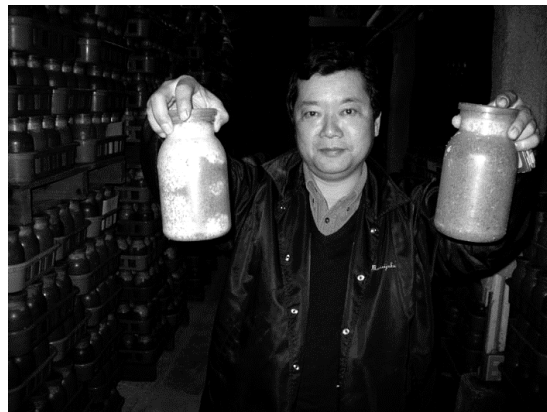


Image 5.3.3.1: Kawanobe walks me through the enoki production process

Source: taken by author February 2008

Field note 8 February 2008:

Kawanobe gave me a tour and explanation of the facility. Enoki spores are first cultivated in the scientific mushroom research facility up the road from the factory (they also produce shiitake and eringi spores). According to Kawanobe, the scientist is a relatively young female expert. The spores are then planted into small pots containing a sawdust, corn and rice bran mix and water. These are activated in a hot room (120 degrees) before being moved into progressively cooler rooms. At a certain stage in the process, the pots are picked up by farmers who pay 30 yen per pot and finish the cultivation process at their own farms. Most farmers pick up 500 pots per day although some pick up as many as 2000 per day. Pots that are not picked up go through the entire process at the factory ending in packing and being shipped to the supermarket. After harvesting, the sawdust mix is removed from the pots with a special air-compressor type machine and sent to another factory where it is used to make organic fertilizer. The fertilizer is sold to Oyama farmers and commercially elsewhere.

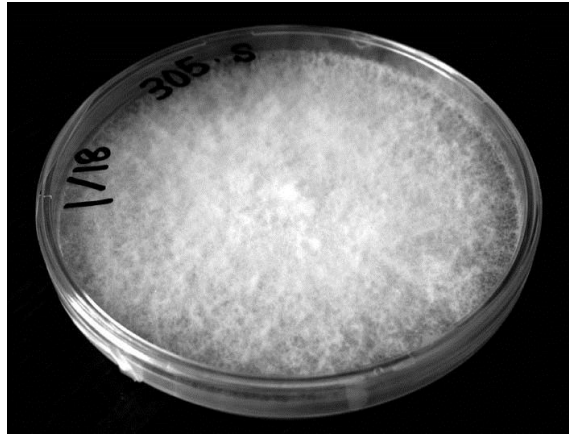


Image 5.3.3.2: Research and development at the Nokyo's mushroom research facility
 Source: taken by author February 2008

Oyama focused on producing high quality mushrooms as they believed they were unable to compete on a quantity basis. Research conducted in Oyama led to the development of the Silk Mushroom variety of enoki. Oyama enoki are patented and marketed as “Mashiruku”, which is a combination of the words “mushroom” and “silk”, but also conjures up “*masshiro*” (completely white) in Japanese. Oyama has since become renowned for Mashiruku, which is longer, has a smaller head and a silkier texture than other enoki.



Image 5.3.3.3: Oyama's 'Mashiruku' enoki mushrooms on sale
 Source: taken by author May 2012

Ogata Hideo mentioned that there had even been reference to the Mashiruku on a nationally broadcasted quiz show (Ogata 2008). If one conducts a Google search on “Mashiruku” in Japanese, a number of web pages with reference to the variety and its Oyama origins are brought up including on foodie and lifestyle type blogs. One such blog, called Oita Lovely Life, mentions Mashiruku in an entry about a visit to a café in Oita City in January 2011; describing a spinach and enoki dish they were served the blogger adds at the end “*Mochiron enoki wa mashiruku desu*” (“Of course, the enoki were Mashiruku”).⁴⁰ A trip to any one of the supermarkets in Beppu City will normally result in a sighting of Oyama's enoki mushrooms, too. The photograph in Image 5.3.3.3 was taken during a grocery shopping trip the Max Value supermarket in Mochigahama in Beppu in mid-May 2012. I was

⁴⁰ www.lovelylife.junglekouen.com/e362366.html

also able to buy Mashiruku from a mobile vegetable seller at the front of the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University on-campus dormitory, AP House.

Field note 9 February 2008:

Before I left the Kurokawa household Kurokawa Hirofumi took me to see the enoki production at his neighbour's house. It was similar to what I had seen at the Nokyo enoki factory, but on a smaller scale. The farmer told me he picks up 600 pots of cultured enoki spores from the Nokyo facility every day except for Sunday, which is his day off. Three women (possibly relatives) were working in a small workshop packing harvested enoki ready to be sent back to the Nokyo and on to market.



Image 5.3.3.4: Kurokawa Teruko's neighbour shows me around his enoki production site
Source: taken by author February 2008



Image 5.3.3.5: Enoki packed by women in an Ogirihata workshop
Source: taken by author February 2008

At the time of writing, enoki mushrooms constituted one of the main sources of steady income for farmers in Oyama with income from plums and chestnuts treated as “twice yearly income bonuses”.⁴¹ In the fiscal year of 2005, sales of enoki mushrooms through the agricultural cooperative amounted to over 7.4 billion yen (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2007, p.10). Despite

⁴¹ In FY2005 sales of enoki mushrooms through the agricultural cooperative amounted to 7,412,500,000 yen (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2007, p.10).

the good income possibilities associated with enoki production, many producers have discontinued enoki production. At the peak there were up to 150 households producing enoki in Oyama and now there are just over a third of this number of households. This is due to the process being quite labour intensive – most enoki farmers work six days per week. Many farmers are getting older as well and some are facing a lack of successors so have no one to help them with the farm work. The field notes below from February 2008 and May 2012 illustrate examples of this.

Field note 8 February 2008:

The Kurokawa household used to cultivate enoki mushrooms as well, but have quit the mushrooms because they feel they are too old and enoki are quite a lot of work. Also their two grown up children did not become farmers. Their son owns his own pharmacy (possibly in Hita City) and their daughter is married with two children and lives in Yokohama. Without a successor they have no-one to help them with farm work.

Field note 16 May 2012:

Kurokawa Masateru of Marukin Farm began his lecture by showing us around his farm and various workshops. In one workshop, where he had his *umeboshi* pickling operations he mentioned that previously it had been an enoki production facility, which explained the insulation sprayed on the walls. Kurokawa told us that after his son married he decided to stop producing enoki. He said the reason for this is because the rooms holding the enoki are so cold – they are kept at 4 degrees – he believed it not to be particularly good for health to work in such a cold room all year long. He said he did not want his son's new petite and pretty wife to have to work in such a cold room, so he began processing plums into *umeboshi* instead.

5.3.4 YODOGEN

The use of spent mushroom bedding as fertiliser is another example of Oyama's ability to recognise and harness resources within the community. If not used in this way, this would not only be a wasted opportunity, but the extra waste would probably have become a burden for the Nokyo and potentially costly to dispose of. Yahata wrote about something that struck him in the kibbutz and that was their ability to minimise waste, for example, in the saw mill not even a speck of sawdust could be found on the floor – it was all treated as a precious resource, swept up and used for something or another (Yahata 1988). This suggests that the idea for Yodogen may well have been an outcome of the relationship with Megiddo region in Israel and the kibbutz training program for young farming successors.

Enoki mushrooms are grown in sawdust-based mushroom bedding, as sawdust is an abundant by-product of the Hita cedar industry. Due to the cleanliness and controlled environment required to successfully cultivate mushrooms this base cannot be reused for mushroom cultivation. Instead, the Nokyo uses the spent mushroom bedding to make compost called Yodogen that is sold and used as organic fertilizer. The daily production of Yodogen is currently 300 packs of 40 litres, a total of 80,000 packs per year. Oyama farmers purchase and use 70,000 packs per year (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2010).

Yodogen is sold to farming households at 200 yen for a 40 litre pack. This cheap price results in a 4-5 million yen annual deficit for the Nokyo's compost plant; however, the Nokyo views this as an investment in the health of Oyama's soils and it is also in line with their policy of using as little harmful chemicals as possible. Oyama farmers have been using Yodogen for about 30 years. The Nokyo claims that this has resulted in less need to use pesticides as well since the soil in Oyama has

been nurtured over the past 30 years and as a result has become very healthy (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2010).

5.4 MUKADE AGRICULTURE

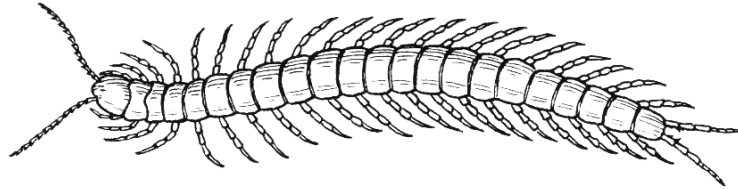


Image 5.4.1: Mukade

Source: Wikipedia

New and higher value-added community policy structures continued to be introduced into Oyama with the progressive introduction of various and ever more higher value-added agro-processing.

While the production of ume and Western style plums was recognised as premium revenue for farmers, they can only be harvested once per year and these harvests are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions such as typhoons and abnormal rain. The addition of enoki mushrooms assured a stable monthly income for farmers. In addition to this, farmers diversified even further by harvesting watercress on a daily basis, which also resulted in an additional regular income source. Grapes and Japanese pears were also recognized as a premium revenue production in autumn. Crops have also been extended to yuzu, nameko mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, shimeji mushrooms, green beans, strawberries, asparagus, citron, various herbs, vegetables and more (Ogata 2008). In total, over 120 kinds of produce are produced in Oyama. In a 2004 Yakuba publication, it is proclaimed that Oyama's version of One Village One Product is "One Village, One Hundred and Twenty Products" (Oyama 2004, p.21).

Oyama has coined this approach to agriculture, which includes the production of these varied and many kinds of agricultural products, "Mukade Agriculture." Mukade is the Japanese word for centipede and in Japan the centipedes are particularly large and fearsome-looking with a sting to match.⁴² The term, Mukade Agriculture, originated from a poster that Yahata had pasted on the walls of both the Yakuba and Nokyo in the early 1970s. The poster consisted of a drawing of a mukade with the pictures of various agricultural products drawn onto its legs and the writing, "Hyakusho wa hyakuashi de nakereba naranai". This was a clever play on words – hyakusho is one term for farming (or peasants) and is a composite of, hyaku, the Chinese character for 100, and sho (also pronounced sei), a Chinese character meaning nature or temperament. Roughly translated Yahata's phrase reads "Farming must stand on 100 legs". The mukade is said to have had a couple of longer legs – these represented the main crops (plums and chestnuts) while the many shorter legs represented the many smaller supporting crops. This analogy also conjures up an image that this kind of agriculture mitigates risk, if one leg breaks off, the centipede will not be too badly affected as it still has a lot of other legs to stand on. This kind of agricultural production system increases the choices of the farmers and adhering to this rather than a strict philosophy of, for example, "I am a

⁴² I had never come across a Japanese mukade until May 2012 when I witnessed a Professor at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University being attacked by one that had apparently been hiding in his shoe when he put it on in the morning. The scary looking insect was well over 10 centimetres and very fast and angry looking.

farmer, therefore I farm rice” allows farmers to easily select and implement the agricultural management system that best suits their situation.

5.4.1 HIGHER VALUE ADDED PROCESSING – SECONDARY INDUSTRIES

Oyama is also engaged in a number of processing activities. The Nokyo established a processing section in 1972. At age 28, Kurokawa Masateru was appointed the first section chief of the processing section and was charged with figuring out how to establish the Nokyo’s first processing activities. Kurokawa said that the Nokyo began processing partly to relieve farmers from the impact of falling *ume* prices. If the price of *ume* fell under the guaranteed price of 100 yen per kilogram, the Nokyo would buy all of the plums at the set price and process them into higher value-added products.

Kurokawa ensured that the Nokyo processing workshop was busy almost all year round. From November to February they produced jam with frozen strawberries and *ume*. Bamboo shoots were canned in April. The primary processing of *ume* into *umeboshi* (pickled plums) and other related products occurred in April to June along with the processing of tea leaves in May. June and July also saw the processing of eggplant, cucumber and various other vegetables. Chestnuts were processed by boiling them in syrup in September and October.

According to Kurokawa, the strawberry jam and *ume* jam products were also commercialised and sold at the Tokiwa Department store in Oita City as well as at Iwataya Department store in Fukuoka along with free samples. A consumer questionnaire survey was also conducted to receive feedback on the taste and consistency of the jams. Products were improved based on the results of the survey. Kurokawa talked of his first experience travelling to a department store in Osaka to set up the distribution of pickled vegetables – he noticed that everyone in the city seemed to be wearing suits, so he purchased an ill fitting cheap suit and carried the bad smelling pickled products in to the department store. Kurokawa said he was very self conscious of the smell and noticed well dressed female customers looking at him with questioning stares.

More recently, many farmers in Oyama are also engaged in making their own higher value added products from their farming produce. The National *Umeboshi* Contest, the establishment of the Konohana Garten direct sales outlets, as well as Hibiki no Sato and Oyama’s *michi no eki*, Mizobe no Sato, and associated satellite store have all contributed to the growing amount of processing operations in Oyama. Both Kurokawa Teruko and Mori Tamiko also spoke of a Prefectural level program that has encouraged them and enabled them to sell more of their processed products. The One Coin Competition awards prizes for excellence in quality and design to small local producers for products that can be sold for less than 500 yen (hence the term “one coin”). Prizes are awarded and winners are then easily connected with department store and supermarket buyers searching for unique local products to stock. Kurokawa’s *Karukan Manju* and a kind of processed plum dish that she invented both won prizes as did Tamichan’s *Nama Yuzukosho* produced by Mori Tamiko (both shown in Image 5.4.1.1).



Image 5.4.1.1: Kurokawa’s (left, middle) and Mori’s (right) products in brochure

Source: all taken by author February 2008

5.4.1.1 Mori Shokuhin

Mori Tamiko’s cottage industry business called Mori Shokuhin at her property in Ogirihata in Oyama is a particularly good example of what might be called “Mukade Processing” or “Mukade Value-adding”, in addition to the established concept of centipede agriculture. As is evident in the author’s field note from May 2012, Mori makes and sells a range of different products.



Image 5.4.1.1.1: Tamichan’s yuzukosho at Mizobe no Sato

Source: taken by author February 2008

Field note 16 May 2012:

I asked Tamiko to list all of her products and where they are sold. She told me about the following products (which are listed in no particular order):

1. Yuzukosho dressing
2. Yuzukosho
3. Ponzu
4. Tami rayu
5. Tsubu-tsubu shoga: Tamiko said she invented this one because she had grown way too much ginger and needed to use it up
6. Yuzu shoga
7. Yuzukosho vinegar
8. Shiitake, shoga no tsukudani

9. Shiitake, kombu no tsukudani
10. Shiitake and dried mushroom tsukudani
11. Yuzu marmalade
12. Shoga no shiso tsuke
13. Shoga no amazuke
14. Umeboshi
15. Ko umeboshi
16. Rakkyo
17. Togarashi miso
18. Ume extract
19. Various pickled vegetables

Tamiko said that she makes all of these processed products herself, except for the yuzukosho dressing which she has made a recipe for and her staff member, Kyoko, usually makes it. Kyoko also seems to do much of the packaging and labelling work, which is understandable considering Tamiko also grows most of the ingredients in her products as well as other agricultural produce. Tamiko let me experience working in her workshop alongside Kyoko labelling some packets of *umeboshi* that she was going to take to Konohana Garten the following day.

The channels through which Mori's goods are sold are almost as numerous as her processed products; perhaps this could be dubbed "Mukade Marketing."

Field note 16 May 2012:

I also asked Tamiko to tell me where she sells her products. She listed:

1. Konohana Garten and its antennae stores
2. Mizobe no Sato (another direct sales outlet in Oyama)
3. Tokiwa Department Stores
4. Daimaru Supermarkets
5. Iwataya Supermarkets
6. Wakuwakukan Oita
7. Beppu wan Service Centre
8. Direct sales outlet in Fukuoka
9. Hita City bus centre and Kusu bus centre etc (distributed by Hita City)
10. Mameda-machi souvenir shop⁴³
11. Yuseikyo – Kampo
12. Fumon in Yufuin
13. Kakuchiya in Tokyo etc
14. Mail (fax) order

I asked Tamiko how her products are distributed and she said that she takes them herself to the places that are close like Konohana Garten, but for places like Fukuoka and Tokyo she sends them by post. Tamiko also posts her products to around 200 customers who place orders by fax machine. She said that many of these customers had first received one of Tamiko's products as an *omiyage* from a relative or friend who had been to Oyama or Oita and then called to order more because they liked the product so much.

⁴³ A little store that I had visited with Tamiko when I stayed in 2010.

5.4.1.2 Marukin Farm

Kurokawa Masateru, the owner of Marukin Farm, worked at the Nokyo from 1962. In 1972, he became the section manager of the Nokyo's new processing section, which as mentioned above produced jams, canned bamboo shoots, umeboshi and other plum products, tea leaves, processed vegetables and chestnuts. Kurokawa left the Nokyo in 1998 at the age of 53 and farmed fulltime.⁴⁴ He began to process his own raw *ume* into umeboshi in 1998 in order to gain more income after ceasing his enoki production operations.

Kurokawa's wife, Yuriko, won first prize in the fourth National Umeboshi Competition in 2003, five years after they had begun to produce umeboshi commercially.⁴⁵ This resulted in a massive increase in umeboshi sales. Marukin Farm also produces a number of other processed products including ume vinegar, ume soy sauce, ume miso, ume extract, yuzukosho, karikari ume, pickled garlic and pickled vegetables. Sumomo (western plums that are eaten fresh) are also produced and sold fresh for a premium price. When visiting the farm with a group of JICA trainees, Kurokawa showed us a workshop where three women were working to remove the seeds from spent yuzu flesh as shown in Image 5.4.1.2.1. "These are sold for use in cosmetics," explained Kurokawa. Kurokawa participates in Green Tourism activities and encourages visitors to come to Oyama and pick fruit or enjoy other hands on activities on his farm. Kurokawa has a minpaku license which means that he can accept paying guests in his home.



Image 5.4.1.2.1: Kurokawa shows us a processing workshop at Marukin Farm

Source: taken by author

5.4.1.3 Kurokawa Teruko's Karukan Manju

Teruko makes and sells a kind of steamed sweet bun called "Ume Karukan Manju" at Konohana Garten, department stores and for mail orders. She uses rice, *ume* and shiso⁴⁶ that she has produced. She also employs some of the elderly ladies in her neighbourhood to help hand-make the steamed buns. She said it takes the load off her a bit and also gives the older ladies who are too old to perform heavier farming work some extra income. In Image 5.4.1.3.1, Teruko holds up her product displayed in Konohana Garten, "See? There's only one packet left. These sell very well here".

⁴⁴ Kurokawa was also elected as an Oyama Town Assembly member in 1999.

⁴⁵ See section on the National Umeboshi Competition in Chapter 6 for more detail.

⁴⁶ Shiso is called Beefsteak plant in English and is related to the mint family. Purple shiso is used in *ume* and lends its bright colouring to the pink pickled plums.



Image 5.4.1.3.1: Teruko's Ume Karukan at Konohana Garten

Source: taken by author in February 2008

5.4.2 SERVICES – TERTIARY (AND QUATERNARY AND QUINARY) SECTOR

In addition to the secondary sector of processing agricultural products, Oyama has also forayed well into the tertiary, and arguably the quaternary and quinary, sector. The Organic Restaurants go one step further than simply processing the produce by serving customers in a restaurant setting. The Ogirihata Green Tourism Association is serving the tourism industry, providing both entertainment and education to consumers. The Nokyo's mushroom research facility is undertaking advanced biotechnology research. All of these activities far surpass the usual domain of the primary industry of agriculture indicating that Oyama has steadily built up a robust and ever sophisticated and complex community policy structure.

5.5 NPC II: MANABU

Cultivating plums and chestnuts differed from crop farming as sophisticated techniques were required for fertilisation, pest control, and pruning. Extensive farming knowledge was particularly indispensable when considering the distribution and sales of the end product. Just as industries depend on the skills and knowledge of people, so does farming. The NPC project not only needed to develop products but also needed to further develop Oyama's human resources. Thus Oyama was faced with a new stage of the NPC project which focused on developing these human resources. In 1965, the second stage of the NPC movement, Neo Personality Combination campaign (NPC II), was added in parallel and simultaneously to the existing NPC I. NPC II focused on "*manabu*" (learning).

Field note 15 June 2012:

Ogata told us that Yahata wanted local people to become self reliant and able to solve problems on their own without relying on the local government. To this end he emphasised education. Ogata ended up going back to school and gaining a qualification in social education before returning to the Yakuba as manager of the social education section.

Residents were encouraged to take tours around Japan, and networks were consolidated for exchange activities overseas to study agricultural and community development techniques (for elementary and secondary students to U.S.A. and Korea, for farming youth to a kibbutz in Israel, and for adults to China). Scholarships were also continued to be provided to young people who were expected to become involved in agriculture in the community.

Prominent professionals were invited to Oyama to deliver lectures for the benefit of various study groups. Events, such as classical music concerts, were also planned for residents to participate in and cooperate together in order to “refine their personalities.”

5.6 SISTER CITY AND KIBBUTZ TRAINING PROGRAM

Oyama’s fascination with foreign countries and overseas travel dates back to the introduction of the first NPC movement in 1961, for which the slogan, “*Ume kuri uete, Hawaii ni iko!*” (Let’s plant plums and chestnuts and go to Hawaii!), was designed to motivate people to invest their support in the movement and a better life.⁴⁷ In Oyama there is much emphasis placed on “learning through experiencing” or experiential learning. The kibbutz training program is a good representative example of Oyama’s approach to *hitozukuri*⁴⁸ (human development) and is outlined in some detail in this section.

Oyama was first introduced to the idea of a kibbutz when a young university student from the village ended up visiting a kibbutz through his studies. Koda Kazumi told me what he knew of how the idea of sending young agricultural heirs to study in a kibbutz came to be in May 2012.

Field note 16 May 2012:

Koda first heard of the kibbutz from Yahata Harumi; however, he believed that it was Yahata Kinji’s younger brother, Takumi, who first brought the idea of the kibbutz back to Oyama. Takumi was a university student when he somehow ended up in Israel and visited a kibbutz, through some kind of study related trip to Europe. After this he told his father all about his experience in the kibbutz. Yahata then decided to send some young people to experience as well. He selected Nokyo and Yakuba employees, as they would be able to receive their income anyway – they weren’t reliant on being in a field all day for their livelihood. Koda was 23 years old and single, Kinji was around 28 years old and married but without any children yet, and Kubo was around 30 years old, married with children. Koda remembers being more excited than anything before leaving (he was a little *fuan*⁴⁹ as well, but mostly just excited).

Megiddo is located in the northern part of Israel, approximately 100 kilometres from the capital city, Tel Aviv. Megiddo was deemed a match as Oyama’s sister city because it was similar to Oyama in that the environment made agriculture quite challenging. Megiddo had to overcome the obstacle of a harsh desert environment whilst Oyama, surrounded by mountains, possessed very little arable land. Both communities required ingenuity, innovation and a strong community if they were to survive and thrive on agriculture. Yahata was impressed by the rich lives that the small agricultural villages enjoyed in this arid and harsh landscape and despite the country itself having only been established for 22 or 23 years (Yahata 1988, p.184). The sister city agreement itself was formed not through the usual formal channels of the foreign affairs departments or embassies of either country, but rather directly from individual interactions between the leaders of each community (Yahata 1988, p.183).

In December 1969, the first group of three trainees, all young male employees of either the Nokyo or Yakuba, left Oyama for Israel to live, work and study for four months in a kibbutz. This first

⁴⁷ Oyama people proudly assert that their town has the highest per capita rate of passport holders than anywhere else in Japan at over 70 percent; however, this figure might be slightly exaggerated or perhaps an outdated figure quoted from Oyama’s heydays of Hawaii group travels and Kibbutz training programs as the figure is quoted as more like 24.1% in a 2004 publication of the Yakuba) (Oyama-machi 2004, p.3).

⁴⁸ *Hitozukuri* = (literally people-making) human development

⁴⁹ *Fuan* = anxious/afraid

group of young men included Yahata Kinji (son of then head of the Nokyo – Yahata Harumi), Koda Kazumi and a young fellow named Kubo Akikuni, who was employed as an AgriPartner.⁵⁰ In a 1992 article Koda recalled the send off that the three of them received from the community on their departure:

“The people of the village saw us off with cheers of ‘banzai, banzai’, it was almost like a send off for the boys being sent to the frontline”

For Oyama to continue surviving on agriculture, it was necessary to establish a set of values that appreciated active participation for the benefit of the community and to carry out extensive agricultural rationalization (Ogata 2012). Oyama considered the kibbutz, an Israeli farming cooperative, as a kind of model of which the elements could be studied and applied in Oyama.

It was decided to formalise the sister city relationship with Megiddo on the one year anniversary of Oyama Village becoming Oyama Town (Matsunaga 1989, p.224). Thus in February 1970, the head of the Nokyo, Yahata Harumi, travelled to Israel for a ceremony to officially sign the sister city agreement between Oyama and Megiddo. Yahata was joined by the incumbent Mayor of Oyama as well as his close friend, Dr Kawahara (Matsunaga 1989; Ogata 2012). Image 5.6.1 depicts Yahata and officials from Megiddo during the ceremony.



Image 5.6.1: Sister city signing ceremony, Megiddo, Israel

Source: Matsunaga 1989, p.225

The three trainees from Oyama including Yahata’s son, Kinji, had already been living in a kibbutz in Megiddo for two months or so and also joined the ceremony. Yahata had decided that he would give his opening address at the ceremony in English and Kinji advised him to start his speech with the Hebrew greeting, *shalom*. According to Yahata, the crowd got very excited when he said this (Matsunaga 1989). Throughout his speech Kinji sat at his father’s feet and whispered advice. Kubo busily filmed the proceedings with an 8mm movie camera while Koda recorded the sound. Yahata later recounted that there were about 2,000 Megiddo townspeople gathered for the ceremony (Matsunaga 1989).

In order to share their experience with the rest of Oyama when they returned, the three young men took a camera and 8mm video camera with them and took photographs and video on slide film. After returning they did write a report, but they also went around to every single shuraku and showed the slides and video and talked about their experiences – Image 5.6.2 is a frame taken from the *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi* documentary of the early 1970s and shows Koda Kazumi recounting his experiences to a group of farming household wives. Most people in each shuraku attended these talks, which were conducted in the evenings and often ran late into the night.

⁵⁰ AgriPartners were a team of extension workers employed by the Yakuba to train and assist farmers during the transition from traditional agriculture to orchard farming.



Image 5.6.2: Koda Kazumi shares his stories until late into the night

Source: frame taken from film: *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi*, 1973

5.6.1 *LIFE IN THE KIBBUTZ*

The kibbutz visited by Yahata Kinji, Koda Kazumi and Kubo Akikuni had a population of around 800 people and a total of 150 households at the time. Through collective agricultural based activities the income of the kibbutz in the early 1970s was around 1 billion yen (Matsunaga 1989). Whilst agriculture was the basis of the kibbutz economy, only around 30 per cent of income was earned through primary industries with the remaining 70 per cent from manufacturing or secondary and tertiary industries. Sales were conducted communally through a kibbutz industry cooperative, which handled the whole process through to distribution. Positions within the cooperative could only be held by an individual for one year at a time, meaning that there was no one “boss” and everyone had the opportunity to be involved.

All of the collective kibbutz activities were conducted through various associations, not only the collective economic activities – this included the hospital and school as well as leisure activities. The kibbutz lifestyle not only focused on collective production, there was also great importance placed on members living an enjoyable life. During *Shabbat*⁵¹ – from Friday evening and for the whole of Saturday – everyone removed themselves completely from work as is Jewish tradition; however, even on normal working days, the work day finished by 3pm. After work had finished for the day members were encouraged to pursue various leisure and culture activities such as music, the arts, and sports.

Koda Kazumi recounted a usual day in the kibbutz from his experience there:

A usual day for a kibbutz member went a bit like this:

- 6am: wake up and have breakfast
- 8am: start work
- 12nn: have lunch
- 3pm: work finishes
- From 3pm: free time – play sports, cultural activities, and play with children etcetera

Kawazu Yoshikazu quoted in *Oyama Agricultural Cooperative* (1998, p.28) recounted his kibbutz work day:

⁵¹ *Shabbat* is the Jewish Sabbath or rest day.

“I wasn’t treated as a guest at all. For everything, I needed to seek it out for myself, there were also times where I couldn’t communicate effectively in English, but anyway there was no other option but to apply myself and be proactive. My work included things like avocado cultivation as well food preparation and dishwashing. In the mornings I was up at 4 or 5am and worked until 8am, ate breakfast and then worked from 8:30am to 12noon. The afternoons were free...I was worked pretty hard”

5.6.2 TRAINEE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 1974, four years after the sister city relationship was solidified and the pioneers of the kibbutz training experience returned, the second group of trainees left for Israel. Two to four trainees would be sent to the kibbutz each time every year or so – the last group of trainees were sent in 1996 due to the deteriorating security situation in Israel. A total of 53 trainees were despatched in 19 separate groups over the 27 year lifespan of the scholarship program (Oyama Development and Promotion Bureau 2011). A number of other representatives, including town council members have also travelled to Israel, so that to date, a total of around 80 representatives from Oyama have travelled to Megiddo (Ogata 2012). Some Oyama residents have visited the region in Israel a number of times; one Oyama character, who appeared to be working or volunteering as a guide at Hibiki no sato, introduced himself using his nickname ‘Shalom’ to a study tour group of JICA trainees visiting Oyama in June, 2008. The reason he was called this, he said, is because he had visited Israel so many times.

The trainees were provided food and shelter in the kibbutz in return for working for one month or so. The training was not classroom-based; rather it was experience-based. Trainees just participated in normal daily life in the kibbutz and through this were able to learn and make new discoveries. The time spent working in the kibbutz was usually followed by another month or so travelling around Europe. During their travels trainees were encouraged to experience and see many different things in the hope of expanding their minds and also picking up interesting ideas for community development.

The scholarship program seemed to generally cover at least the return airfares to Israel, while the trainees also contributed in some way. In an interview recorded in a Nokyo publication, Kawazu Yoshikazu noted that the association in the Nokyo that sent him paid for the return travel fares and the rest was self-supported (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998, p.28).

Oyama Television filmed the farewell party for the fourteenth group of young trainees who were deployed in March 1988.⁵² The trainees received words of wisdom and well wishes from their seniors including Yahata Harumi, who at the time was head of the Nokyo, which was sponsoring their training and travel. The three new trainees were also given the opportunity to say something. They talked about what they hoped to gain from the experience as well as expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to participate.

One of the trainees confidently announced:

“During this three months of training, which starts from now...I’ll go and walk the kibbutz in Israel and after that the countries of Europe with my own feet and see with my own eyes. Obviously, because I’m an Oyama shokuin (employee), I will be in particular looking at what kind of community development they are implementing and also their way of thinking. Then, after I come back, I think I will be able to use this knowledge in my work – it will be good evidence for decision making and form a basis for my approach and thinking about development in Oyama.”

Another trainee, who was clearly much shyer and not as confident in terms of speaking in front of the group at the farewell party, said:

⁵² OYT list number 32, March 1988.

“I don’t know whether or not I really have the ability to be a good trainee, but since I have been given this opportunity I want to work hard at the training. I think if I can find even one thing that is useful for me and also useful for Oyama, it will be good. I also want to have a great trip and come back thinking “I’m really glad I went to Israel.”

Obviously, trainees were well aware of their purpose for going to Israel and also travelling around Europe. The purpose was to have new experiences and learn new things whilst always keeping in mind how these could help Oyama. Just as important as experiencing and learning themselves was the trainees’ responsibility to relay their experiences to friends, family and the wider community upon their return.



Image 5.6.2.1: Kurokawa⁵³ travelling in Europe after kibbutz training in 1977

Source: The Kurokawa Household

Kurokawa shared his experience informally with his immediate family and during *nomikai* with friends; however, Kurokawa and the other trainees also shared their experiences and insight through more formal channels, such as returned trainees’ *happyokai*⁵⁴, interest pieces in Oyama’s local newsletter (such as the one on Kurokawa Hirofumi in Image 5.6.2.2), as well as broader coverage in Prefecture or Kyushu wide newspapers, interviews and pieces written in other Oyama publications such as books produced by Yahata, the Yakuba or Nokyo and formal reports prepared and submitted to the Nokyo. These informal and formal mechanisms ensured that the knowledge that Kurokawa and other trainees gained from their overseas experiences was shared as widely and utilised as fully as possible. This meant that the human resources development effects were multiplied and not only was the trainee educated and cultured by his experience, but so were a good number of other community members.

⁵³ Sadly, Kurokawa Hirofumi passed away after an extended period of battling illness a year or two after I chatted to him for the last time. He was a well respected and great leader who contributed much to Oyama and his neighbourhood of Ogirihata.

⁵⁴ *Happyokai* = presentation



Image 5.6.2.2: Kurokawa Hirofumi in Oyama's local newsletter
Source: The Kurokawa Household

After the introduction of OYT, sharing of the kibbutz experience became easier and more instantaneous. As soon as returned trainees landed in Fukuoka Airport, an OYT reporter and cameraman were there catching the moments the trainees reunited with their families and interviewing them about their experiences and impressions. Image 5.6.2.3 is a screen shot of returned trainee, Kawanobe Kazutoshi, answering questions from OYT reporter, Ogata Hideo, on the bus back to Oyama from Fukuoka Airport in 1988. Below is an excerpt of the transcript of Kawanobe and Kawazu Yoshikazu (21 years old) being interviewed by Ogata on the bus trip back to Oyama.



Image 5.6.2.3: Kawanobe Kazutoshi being interviewed by OYT on the bus ride home
Source: OYT 1988

Ogata: Otsukaresamadeshita. How do you feel now having arrived back?

Kawanobe: Well, to begin with I'm glad to have arrived back safely. Also, I feel much gratitude to everyone for giving me such a valuable experience as this.

...

Ogata: During your training, what made the biggest impression on you?

Kawanobe: Firstly, the main objective of the trip, that is the kibbutz training, more than anything first of all having been able to experience actual life in the kibbutz was a great

outcome...if I go into detail there are various things, but one thing I came to understand was why the kibbutz kind of community has such an important meaning, you know, to Israel. I was also able to feel why Oyama has modelled itself on this.

Ogata: I see. So, do you think you will be able to use the outcomes of this training to progress your own dreams that will also promote Oyama’s development?

Kawanobe: Yes, well, now I haven’t quite finished thinking about that yet, but later while I’m thinking about it slowly I’m sure an idea will come.

...

Kawazu: Well to begin with, the days really dragged on – by the end of each day I was like “Finally one day is over, finally another day is over,” like that. But after about one week had gone by and I had gotten used to it, every day went really fast and I felt like “It’s evening already, it’s evening again already,” like that, right.

In Israel, it’s on the news in Japan that even now there is a war going on, but when you see it in reality, it’s really very peaceful and makes you wonder where that kind of thing is going on. The news there is really different from in Japan. It was completely different from what I had imagined Israel would be like. Well, obviously I guess you have to go for yourself to understand.

Ogata: So how about it, the outcomes of this training? Do you think you will be able to find a dream?

Kawazu: Yes, well, now that I’m back, I do want to turn it into something.

5.6.3 IMPACTS OF THE KIBBUTZ TRAINING PROGRAM

Those who were sent overseas for training learned cooperation and the spirit of taking on challenges without fear of failure, thus the program was an effective human resource development initiative, which resulted from a network strategy (sister city relationship). The lessons the trainees learned from their overseas training helped to introduce new industries, promote product processing and distribution projects, and form new autonomous organizations in Oyama. It is obvious that the program had significant implications for both community capacity development and the introduction of new collective activities and the augmentation of community policy structure in Oyama.

Table 5.6.3.1: Sister City and kibbutz training impact

Strategy	Type of Social Capital Built	Knowledge Outcome	Community Capacity Development (CCD)/Policy Structure (PS) Outcomes
Sister city and overseas study scholarships	<u>Bridging</u> : by forming a relationship with a town and people in another country	<u>Creation</u> : by introducing new ideas into community from outside	<u>CCD</u> : ability to assess current situation; organize; obtain resources; act; commitment
Networks and Human Resource Development Strategies	<u>Bonding</u> : through shared experience between small groups of trainees	<u>Sharing</u> : by encouraging returned trainees to share their experiences and ideas with families and neighbours	<u>PS</u> : new products (<i>enoki</i>); value-adding to produce; <i>Yattsu no Danchi</i> concept; community centres; <i>Seikatsu Gakko</i>

Source: adapted from Stenning and Miyoshi 2008

Based on their observations and discoveries during the four months in the kibbutz, the first group of trainees submitted reports on a range of topics. These included such things as the mechanisms of cooperative work, individual-society relations and mutual support, the ideal state of rural factories, and ways that local communities could achieve independence. Their reports gave fresh impetus to Oyama's community development. A number of new ideas resulted from the young trainees' experiences living in the kibbutz and many of these were implemented.

One such idea involved introducing a new type of produce that could be harvested continuously all-year round to provide a stable base monthly income for the farmers rather than relying solely on the risky two harvests per year of plums and chestnuts. Enoki mushroom production was introduced and soon became the main source of income for over 150 households in Oyama. The trainees had been exposed to collective production activities in the Kibbutz and the centralised enoki centre that served to mitigate the risk involved in producing enoki for individual farmers likely resulted from this exposure.⁵⁵ Returning trainees had also been impressed by the various levels of agricultural processing taking place in the kibbutz and advocated for the processing of agricultural products in Oyama to add value to produce and further increase farmers' incomes. Ideas for higher value added agriculture and processing raw materials into higher value added goods also resulted from the kibbutz experiences.

Kurokawa Hirofumi was among the fifth group of trainees sent to Israel in 1977. After his group's experience in Israel, they came up with the idea of introducing a kibbutz-style conceptualization to Oyama, which resulted in the *Yattsu no Danchi* concept.⁵⁶ Kurokawa told me about his experience for the first time in February 2008. Kurokawa Hirofumi was 35 years old when he participated in the kibbutz program with three other young men. Kurokawa said that the kibbutz' collective society was fresh and new to him and he found it completely different from his life and the focus on individual freedoms. As we looked at photographs that he had taken in the kibbutz, Kurokawa recalled that the cafeteria depicted in Image 5.6.3.1 had leisure facilities on the second floor. Kurokawa said that his experience in the kibbutz changed his way of thinking; he decided that he should not just work all the time, but that leisure and culturally enriching activities were also important. After returning from his travels Kurokawa began in earnest to learn to play the shakuhachi, a Japanese bamboo flute. He would also end up teaching taiko, Japanese drums, to Oyama's primary school students.



Image 5.6.3.1: Cafeteria, Kibbutz Ramat HaShofet, Israel 1977

Source: The Kurokawa Household

⁵⁵ See section on the introduction of enoki mushroom for more detail on the introduction of enoki production in Oyama.

⁵⁶ See section on *Yattsu no Danchi* for more detail.

Kawazu Yoshikazu, who was mentioned being interviewed on his return from Israel in the previous section, was inspired to do something new after his experience in Israel. Before being sent to Israel, Kawazu had graduated from agricultural high school with the intention of becoming involved in agriculture, studied for two years at an agricultural university and then a further six months at a skills training centre in Usa, Oita Prefecture. He said that his father had gone to Israel in the fourth group of trainees, so he had been brought up hearing about the kibbutz from a young age. Kawazu also became a member of the Agricultural Youth Study Group affiliated with the Nokyo (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998, p.28).

Three years after returning from the kibbutz, at the age of 24, Kawazu decided to set up his own shiitake mushroom bed factory, which he called “Herushiikun” – a play on the English word healthy and shiitake mushroom. At the time, Kawazu’s father had his own business to run, so told him “Te wa dasan, kuchi mo dasan, kane mo dasan.” This meant that basically he would not help him with labour, advice or money for his venture – he was on his own. Kawazu borrowed money by himself from the Nokyo and also applied for funding from the prefecture to start the business (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998, p.28). According to Kawazu, his experience in the kibbutz and travelling around Europe changed him, making him more independent and confident and able to do things like start his own business without assistance from his father (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998, p.28).

Ogata Hideo, a former Yakuba employee, was also sent overseas when he was in his late twenties; he went to United States, Europe and the Kibbutz in Israel. Ogata said that he could not speak any foreign languages, so he had to use gestures and draw pictures to make himself understood. He said that this experience helped to make him more sociable and enjoy overcoming challenges. Ogata said he was told to utilise the outcomes from overseas experiences in local government planning. In this context, Ogata mentioned that he had thought Cable TV would be a good idea and make the conveying of information easier – perhaps this idea was partly an outcome from his overseas experiences.

Forming a sister city relationship with Megiddo represented building bridging social capital at the town level and the continued exchange activities arising from the relationship resulted in significant community capacity development and knowledge creation effects for Oyama-machi. Community capacity development took place in the form of human resources development due to the training and overseas experience gained by the trainees. This contributed to increased abilities to formulate and achieve community objectives as well as identify and access latent resources within the community. The experience of living in another community also contributed to the ability to critically assess the situation in Oyama by providing a kind of ‘benchmark community’ to compare with. Knowledge creation took place as the trainees observed and participated in various Kibbutz activities gaining new ideas and experiences and applying these to their own situations in Oyama-machi. The yearly small group training in Megiddo also represented a form of bonding social capital between the trainees who developed close relationships lasting a lifetime.

A number of new ideas resulted from the young trainees’ experiences living in the kibbutz and many of these were implemented. Returned trainees that had been impressed by the various levels of agricultural processing taking place in the kibbutz also proposed the processing of agricultural products in Oyama to add value and further increase farmer’s incomes. Thus, community capacity developed particularly in terms of able to critically assess the community’s reality, organize, access resources, and act. Young Oyama farmers’ kibbutz experiences resulted in the introduction of a number of important new community policy structures.

5.6.4 OTHER EXCHANGES

Convinced of the merits of learning through overseas travel experiences and wanting to ensure other farmers in Oyama, not just young farming successors, could access opportunities to travel overseas, a group of the returned kibbutz trainees formed an association under the umbrella of the

Nokyo. The Sekai wo Shirokai (Let's know the World Association) helped organise group trips overseas I heard about the Association from Kurokawa Hirofumi, who was one of the founding members, when staying at the Kurokawa's minpaku in February 2008.

Field note February 9 2008:

From our chat I learned of the "Sekai wo Shirokai" (Let's Know the World Association) that was formed to organize trips overseas for its members. If members did well and worked hard at their farming they would become eligible for loans from the Nokyo to travel overseas. The loans could then be paid back at their own pace without pressure or having to pay high interest.

The group of young people collected funds by doing part-time work and conducting fundraising activities in order to assist in sending successive groups of Oyama residents overseas. At one point they even chartered a Korean Air aeroplane and organised a study tour to South East Asia for approximately 180 Oyama community members. Many people's trips were only made possible due to the existence of no interest loans issued by the Nokyo.

In an interview transcript included in a Nokyo publication from 1998, Koda Yoshitomo, who is identified as a ginkgo producer and was 62 years of age at the time of interviewing, was asked if he had ever travelled overseas. Koda answered:

"I was in the seventh group to visit Hawaii. After that was Australia I think...Then I went to Mexico, and I went to Malaysia. And Hong Kong and South Korea - that's about it I'd say...I didn't have the cash for the plane tickets, so I borrowed it each time from the Nokyo and went. I still have one payment left on that last trip. It's because it's no interest. If it wasn't like that, I wouldn't have been able to go" (quoted in Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 1998, p.38).

Later, Oyama would form another sister city relationship with a town in China. This resulted in a joint venture, whereby Chinese honey was sold directly to Oyama. The honey was used along with a by-product of *ume* processing to produce *Umemitsu*, a health drink. The Nokyo began importing honey in 1975 and finally set up a joint venture with Wuxian in 1988. Oyama also launched overseas training programs for women and elementary and junior high school children. Junior high school children participate in a trip to Idaho in United States every year.

Field note 8 February 2010:

I asked Tsuruno Go if he could tell me about current community activities and he chose to talk about sending school students for study tours overseas. From primary to high school there are study trips to China, USA and South Korea. When he told me this I asked him if there was a large emphasis on education in Oyama and he responded that "in Oyama people are encouraged to have lots of different experiences outside of Oyama".

Many group trips to Hawaii have also been organised with the first group of farmers realising their dream to holiday in Hawaii in 1966. In the late 1980s, Oyama is said to have had over 1,500 passport holders for the town's total of 1,000 households (Miwa 1987, p.80). Image 5.6.4.1 shows a souvenir letter holder that I spotted being used in one of the farmers' workshops – evidence of a trip to Hawaii at some point in the past.



Image 5.6.4.1: Souvenir from Hawaii holiday in farmer's workshop

Source: taken by author at Yano Noen 2009

5.7 OYAMA TV

In 1987, cable radio broadcasts were complemented by the introduction of the Oyama cable TV station, Oyama Television (OYT), established by the Yakuba. Financial support for the initiative was obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Local Government. The proposal for cable television in Oyama met the ministries' objectives at the time which involved the seeking out of new ideas for rural development policy formulation (The Machizukuri View 1991).

The specific target was those who were not able to easily acquire knowledge and information from printed media. For these people a more appealing communication tool was required. The addition of visual images makes television easier to understand and a more powerful tool to convey information than the audio of cable radio. Similar to OYHK, OYT centred on Oyama's own independent programming providing agricultural information as well as local news with a focus on the positive aspects of and events in the local area. OYT channels were broadcast from the broadcasting station on the ground floor of the Yakuba building, which is a very professional TV studio as shown in Image 5.7.1 below. Similarly to OYHK, OYT further contributed to sense of community, commitment, networks and social capital, as well as continuing to work to develop human resources within the town.



Image 5.7.1: OYT station (left) and studios (right)

Source: taken by author during JICA Laos training 2009

Interview with Mr Mori in Ogirihata, Oyama⁵⁷

An example of an OYT program showcasing light hearted and entertaining happenings in the local community is that of a 1 minute 40 seconds long interview with Mr Mori in Ogirihata on the topic of an unusually large *konnyaku* yam that he had discovered and dug up.



Image 5.7.2: Mr Mori being interviewed for OYT

Source: OYT 1988

Reporter: So, we have come here today to take a look at this extremely large konnyaku that Mr Mori has managed to find.

Mori: Ah yes, this is the first time I've dug up such a big one as this.

Reporter: There are some normal regular-sized konnyaku lined up next to it and looking at that, it is very large indeed... and you dug it up?

Mori: Ah, yes, I dug it up. I didn't think it was going to be quite this big...

Reporter: About how long did it take to dig it up?

Mori: Yes, well it probably took me about between 10 and 15 minutes, but it was a bit deep... I dug it up with a trowel.

Reporter: Before now, had you ever dug up one as big as this?

Mori: No, this is the first time. Usually, if the konnyaku is around one kilogram or so that's already considered big...

⁵⁷ OYT list number 49, September 1988



Image 5.7.3: Mr Mori's giant konnyaku

Source: OYT 1988

Women's singing group performance⁵⁸

This one minute and 30 second clip (see Image 5.7.4) was advertising a musical performance to be held at the Oyama Nokyo Hall on a Sunday in early December 1987. The group appears to be a travelling performance that had been travelling all around Japan since their formation in 1981. Entry to see the performance is advertised as free and the information is cited as coming from the Nokyo, so the performance may have been sponsored by the Nokyo.



Image 5.7.4: Event information broadcast on OYT

Source: OYT 1987

1988 Enoki Mushroom Trade Conference⁵⁹

Another film clip also from 1988 records the opening and keynote speeches of the annual Enoki Mushroom Trade Conference held in Oyama. The footage reveals a room of 40 or so people, mostly men. The conference is opened by Yahata Kinji and another man mentions that unfortunately the head of the Nokyo, Yahata Harumi, could not make it due to being ill.

⁵⁸ OYT list number 1, December 1987

⁵⁹ OYT list number 45, September 1988

Kibbutz trainees' farewell party⁶⁰

Another program presented footage from the farewell party of the fourteenth group of trainees that the Nokyo sent on training scholarships to the kibbutz in Israel in 1988. This included speeches from seniors including the head of the Nokyo, Yahata Harumi and other senior figures offering the new trainees words of encouragement and advice. The three trainees selected to participate in the training of this year also each gave a speech outlining what they hoped to gain from the experience and expressing their gratitude for the opportunity.

Regular event information

The screen shot in Image 5.7.5 exemplifies the kind of information OYT disseminates on regular events and community activities. This particular notice gives the scheduled weekly activities of the Happy Kids Club (probably a kind of toddler's/pre-kindergarten playgroup), which appear to include 'Rhythm Play', 'Chatting Square', 'Let's Draw Pictures', and another 'Chatting Square'.

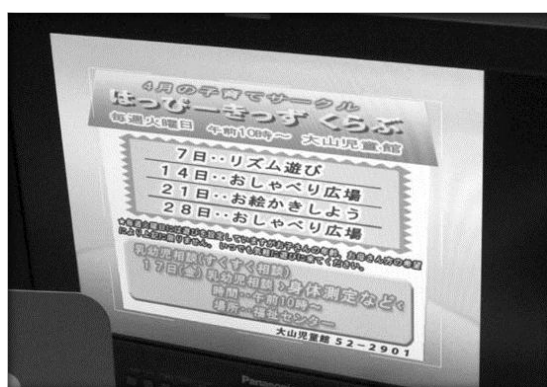


Image 5.7.5: OYT information on Happy Kids Club activities for the month

Source: taken by author during JICA Laos training 2009

From 2011, due to the consolidation of Oyama into Hita City, OYT is now called Hita TV and coverage includes the whole of Hita's outer fringe areas (mostly other towns and villages that were amalgamated with Hita in 2005). Subscribers have increased from around 1,000 to approximately 9,000 households.

5.8 NPC III: AISHIAU

Despite the achievements of the first two NPC movements, more and more young people were leaving the rural community of Oyama for the opportunities and excitement of the city. The next addition to the community responded to this phenomenon. The New Paradise Community (NPC III) introduced in 1969 centred on "aishiau" (love) and aimed for an enjoyable and comfortable living environment for the residents of Oyama. The campaign sought to construct the perfect environment for living in order to retain residents, particularly young people, who were moving away due to lack of entertainment, amusement and cultural facilities. Under this campaign, Oyama was divided into eight cultural zones with one cultural centre in each, local sporting tournaments such as the Ohayo Softball league were introduced, and the Seikatsu Gakuen, a kind of community cultural learning institution was established. In Oyama, these efforts are perceived to have been somewhat successful in slowing the rate of depopulation. This perception is corroborated to some extent by the population statistics provided in Table 6.7.1 in Chapter 6, which show that population

⁶⁰ OYT list number 32, March 1988

had actually increased slightly from the mid-1970s to mid-1980s compared to the long-term trend of a decreasing population within the community. However, as demonstrated by Hayashi (2011), outcomes of successful rural development model experiences such as that of Oyama are difficult to quantify and, although it is quite reasonable to posture that depopulation in Oyama would have been at a higher rate during the earlier decades than what was actually experienced without the NPC movement and various efforts under the movement, it is quite evident that the long-term trend of a decreasing population has not at all been reversed.

The reasons for this decreasing population are similar to what they were before, but also slightly different. In the past Oyama farmers migrated to urban areas for work as they were unable to support themselves or their family with agriculture alone. These migrant workers would normally secure employment as low-skilled labour. On the other hand, these days much of the younger generation is literally too skilled and educated for full-time farming and instead have often left Oyama to work in professional capacities (apart from some, like Tsuruno Go, who work in management positions in the Nokyo and Hibiki no Sato for example).⁶¹ Oyama farmers and residents like Kurokawa Teruko and Mori Tamiko are proud that their children and grandchildren are well-educated and are pursuing professional careers as doctors (like one of Yahata Kinji's daughters), pharmacists (like Kurokawa's son) or criminal psychologists (like Matsubara Kimiko's son, Kozo, who studied to Masters level in Europe and the United States and now works with the police in Fukuoka) – even though this means that they are unlikely to ever return to Oyama to live or to succeed their farming activities.

5.9 YATTSU NO DANCHI

The *Yattsu no Danchi* concept was an idea proposed by young trainees who had participated in the kibbutz scholarship program.⁶² *Yattsu no danchi* literally means “eight neighbourhoods”. These young men found that the living environment in the kibbutz in Israel was better in comparison to Oyama, in part this was due to the cultural, sporting and entertainment facilities that were available and easily accessible by every member of the kibbutz.

Under this concept, each of the 36 shuraku of Oyama was aggregated into one of eight geographic zones referred to as cultural precincts (*bunka danchi*). Each of the *danchi* was conceptualized as a kind of individual kibbutz and was delineated based on the locations and catchment areas of existing fire brigades and temples. The area of each “kibbutz” was larger than any individual shuraku, but still fell within the broader umbrella of the Oyama community – this effectively created another level of community between the town and shuraku.

During the mid-1960s to the 1970s, Oyama had seen a slight decrease in population (Oyama 1995, p.352). In an attempt to prevent further depopulation, bond issuance was permitted to construct infrastructure to support rich cultural lifestyles of the villagers (Ogata 2012, p.139). With these bonds, Oyama constructed roads, community centres, gymnasiums, swimming pools, water supply and sewerage systems, a plaza, an administrative wireless communication system for disaster control, a cable television station, and a small supermarket to supply food, daily necessities and luxury grocery items.

⁶¹ Although rural depopulation is not an ideal outcome and indeed Oyama residents are sad about this phenomenon, on the other hand it is perhaps also an inevitable outcome of community development efforts that have been too successful. Further discussion on this is reserved for future papers.

⁶² See section on Kibbutz exchange program.

Eight Cultural Precincts of Oyama

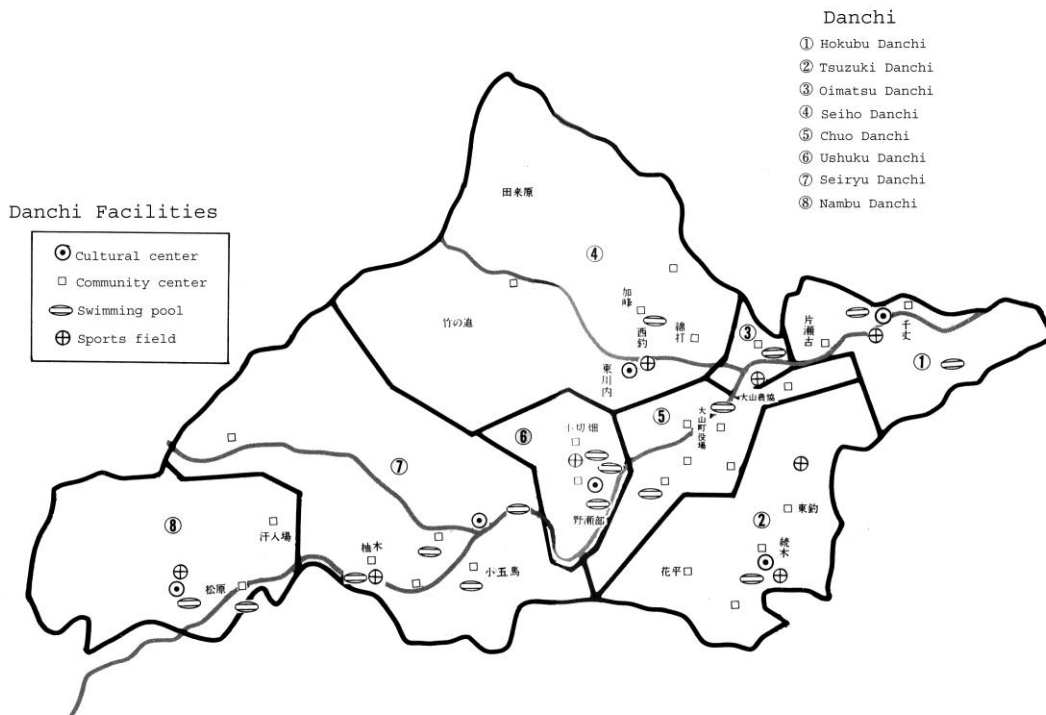


Image 5.9.1: Map of Oyama's Yattsu no Danchi
Source: translated by author based on Miwa 1987

The new cultural and sporting facilities were constructed within each danchi so that every resident could easily walk to a community centre from their home. A map of Oyama showing the delineation of the danchi and also community centres and sporting fields is provided in Image 5.9.1. Kurokawa Hirofumi, one of the earlier returning trainees indicated that it was their aspiration to construct not only community centres but also a cooperative store and health clinic in each danchi; however, the idea did not quite come to full fruition.

Field note 8 February 2008:

Kurokawa Hirofumi told me that he was a member of the group who wanted to import the kibbutz style system in Oyama. He said their vision was to have at least one good leader in each of the eight communities, as well as a community centre, coop or supermarket, and health clinic. He said it was not possible to realize all of their expectations due to the small populations in the *danchi* but they did manage to introduce the community centre and cultural/sporting facilities.

The construction of neighbourhood cultural and sporting facilities increased opportunities for interaction among neighbours and therefore would have impacted positively on bonding social capital and enhanced the sense of community. The facilitation of inter-*shuraku* sporting events like the Ohayo Softball league, which is outlined in more detail in the following section, also strengthened social capital by providing increased opportunities for socialising between the small

groupings of houses, bridging divides that had historically been enforced by isolating geography and culture.

5.10 OHAYO SOFTBALL



Image 5.10.1: Softball training in Oyama

Source: Advance Oita 1982, p.134

The Ohayo Softball tournaments began as a bridging and became a bonding social capital building mechanism resulting in both knowledge sharing and creation. The activity contributed to a stronger sense of community, levels of trust, and higher commitment levels in terms of community capacity. The increased interaction among community members spawned a number of endogenously formed community groups and activities.

Table 5.10.1: Summary of Ohayo Softball impacts

Initiative	Social Capital Effects	Knowledge Outcome	Community Capacity Development (CCD)/Policy Structure (PS) Outcomes
Ohayo Softball	<p><u>Bridging</u>: opportunity for people from different neighbourhoods to interact</p> <p><u>Bonding</u>: increased quantity and quality of interactions between neighbours through being in a team of varying ages</p>	<p><u>Sharing</u>: through increased person to person interaction and higher levels of trust</p> <p><u>Creation</u>: through increased informal person to person interactions especially at the after game <i>Nomikai</i></p>	<p><u>CCD</u>: stronger sense of community; higher commitment</p> <p><u>PS</u>: community groups; beer garden; cooperative insect spraying; buying a mountain etc</p>

Source: adapted from Stenning and Miyoshi 2008

After Oyama's agricultural reform of the early 1960s (NPC I) that included the end to the use of working animals in farming in the village, Oyama's farming households possessed more free time to

pursue leisure and cultural activities. Capitalizing on this, the town administration introduced strategies to turn Oyama's residents into refined and cultured human resources (NPC II) and to transform the environment of Oyama to become a fun and liveable community (NPC III). Sports fields and cultural facilities were constructed in each *danchi* as part of the *yattsu no danchi* (eight neighbourhoods)⁶³ initiative so that every resident was able to walk from their home to play sport or participate in cultural activities. This facilitated the easy participation of community members in collective cultural pastimes including a number of sporting and cultural events that were introduced. The Oyama Ohayo (Good Morning) Softball tournament was one of these initiatives and is the focus of this section.

The Ohayo Softball tournament was introduced to Oyama in 1969 by Ogata Hideo, who at the time was a young official working for the town administration. He had discovered the sport while on a training program in Kumamoto Prefecture, where a small scale morning tournament was being held and enjoyed by community members participating in the sport. Ogata submitted a proposal to the town administration to organize a morning softball league in Oyama similar to what he had witnessed in Kumamoto. Ogata's proposal outlined three main objectives of the project:

1. To improve the competitive sporting abilities of Oyama people
2. To promote Oyama as one "community" (community building)
3. To close the generation gap between older and younger generations

At that time, Mayor Yahata had a policy of summoning all officials proposing plans to the mayor's office to talk directly with them, regardless of their positions. Yahata summoned the junior official and said to him:

"This proposal sounds interesting, so let's give it a go. However, I'm going to ask you to come to my office again after one year has passed and ask you this question: What resulted from organizing the softball league? I won't accept the outcomes like increasing competitive abilities, community building or closing the generation gap that are described in your written proposal...I will ask you to identify fourth and fifth outcomes" (Ogata 2010, p.110).

Although Ogata did not fully understand what Yahata was talking about at the time he said this to him, once the Mayor's approval was obtained the Ohayo Softball league was launched. The competition that Ogata designed had some unusual rules. People aged between 20 and 60 were eligible to join the usual tournament; however, the total sum of ages on a nine player team was required to add up at least 261 years.⁶⁴ Each team was also required to have at least one woman player. In every game at least two players in their 30s, two over 40 and at least one woman were required to play (Advance Oita 1982, p.136).

In its first year, 14 teams participated in the league. The sport quickly gained great popularity in the town and soon there were teams from all of the different shuraku (neighbourhood or group of houses) participating in the competition. In shuraku that did not have sufficient players residents from other small shuraku joined them to make a team. At its peak, 32 teams would be registered with a total of over 600 players (Ogata 2012, p.138).

⁶³ A *danchi* refers to one of the eight cultural precincts of Oyama – refer to Section 5.9 on *yattsu no danchi*.

⁶⁴ This figure is reported as 400 years in Advance Oita (1982); however, Ogata reported over 260 years during his presentations.



Image 5.10.2: Middle-aged woman pitches during Ohayo Softball game

Source: still taken from OYT footage of August 1989

The Ohayo league ran from April to November each year. Teams gathered at 5:30am and games were played and won early in the morning before the day's work began. Players had varied occupations and backgrounds – fresh-faced youths, *jikatabi* (traditional style shoe) and *hachimaki* (headband) wearing fathers, barefoot farmers, town hall employees, and company employees alike participated in the tournament. Due to its popularity, the tournament continued for decades.

In February 2008, I had the pleasure of staying a few nights at Kurokawa Teruko's minpaku in Ogirihata.⁶⁵ One morning we chatted about Ohayo Softball over breakfast this was captured in the following field note.

Field note, 9 February 2008:

Somehow the conversation turned to the subject of Ohayo Softball. I asked Teruko's husband if he had participated in the tournaments. "Yes, of course!" he said. "EVERYONE did!!" added Teruko. Mr Kurokawa told me about how he and the *ojiichan* (grandpa) next door had played softball barefoot, not knowing which end of the bat to hold and sometimes batting left-handed – "even though we were right-handed!" Mr Kurokawa seemed to take great enjoyment in telling me a story of one player in his team who had hit the ball and, instead of heading for first base, ran straight to third – "of course, OUT!!" he exclaimed excitedly. He then went on to describe how, after being informed that he was out, the wayward batter then held on to the third baseman and wouldn't let go.

Teruko elaborated that this was the first opportunity that people like her husband and the *ojiichan* next door had been given to play a sport like softball since they had not progressed very far in school. She said others in the community would have; for example, those living near the *Kokudo* (national road/highway) or working at the Yakuba probably had played the sport before and for them the competition became quite serious, but it was a really new and very exciting experience for the farmers living up in the mountain like this *shuraku* of

⁶⁵ *Minpaku* = home stay

Ogiri-hata.⁶⁶ For them the competition element never became that serious, she added, it was just good fun.

Image 5.10.3 shows an Oyama resident playing the position of catcher barefoot similar to the scene that Kurokawa Hirofumi had conjured up during our breakfast conversation.



Image 5.10.3: A batter strikes and a ball is caught by a barefooted catcher

Source: Advance Oita 1982, p.135

At its peak the Ohayo Softball league had 32 registered teams covering each of Oyama's *shuraku* (hamlet/neighbourhood) and more than 600 community members participating in teams as players. In 1970, this would have amounted to around 12 per cent of the total population of 5,118 or at least one person from every two households, of which there was a total of 1,070.⁶⁷ A mother's competition, *Kombanwa* (Good Evening) Softball, and the Kids Softball Tournament were also introduced. Eventually, middle-aged and elderly groups were also formed in a number of *shuraku*, so that for a time many community members were somehow involved in the sport.

A film produced in the early 1970s, *Wa ga ai suru midori no machi* (Our beloved town of green), includes a section of footage of scenes from the Ohayo Softball tournament in the early 1970s. This section of the film begins with a scene of community members walking across the bridge in the early dawn light. The two teams line up on either side of the batting plate and greet each other while a rooster crows in the background somewhere not too far away. A throng of supporters seated on benches cheer on their respective teams as the sun rises over the mountains.

The film also depicts a final championship game being played on the dirt grounds of the junior high school. There are rows of excited supporters seated on the steps of the junior high school clapping, cheering and laughing as balls are pitched and hit and batters slide onto bases. The narrator describes the spectators as being very diverse and representative of the entire town – farmers, chemists, shop owners, carpenters, and school students. Participants in the actual game included a pharmacist as pitcher, Oyama's young Buddhist priest as umpire, a carpenter batting, and the town's automobile mechanic as the opposing team's pitcher and so on.

⁶⁶ There seems to be some (at least perceived) historical difference in socio-economic status between those households located on the flatter areas next to the river and national road and those living on the steeper mountain slopes like Ogiri-hata with the latter generally being from poorer and less educated farming roots than the former.

⁶⁷ Population figures from Oyama Regional Promotion Bureau (2008)

The game was also being filmed by a Nokyo employee, Ogata Hideo, who then in a small team of three edited the footage in order to hold an evening showing so that everyone could relive the excitement of the game. The black and white footage was complete with narration commenting on the “bright faces of the spectators” including “fresh faced 18 year old youth and 62 year old ojiichan” and noting that “through softball they are united”. Those watching the film laughed and joked loudly together as they saw themselves and their friends and family members projected on the screen in front of them.

Teams practiced hard in the hope of winning games and team members often drank sake together at nomikai after every practice. Over drinks, they talked about things like how to find a wife who was good at playing softball (because league rules required each team to include at least one female player) (Ogata 2012). Day in and day out they talked only about softball, and these conversations focused mainly on how to strengthen their teams in order to win tournaments.

One year after Ohayo Softball had been introduced, Yahata asked Ogata to report on the outcomes of the softball initiative. Ogata found that he could not report anything other than what he had originally written in his proposal. This was not the answer that Yahata was looking for; however, he allowed Ogata to continue the softball project for another year, saying “It may have been unreasonable to require you to come up with this after just one year. However, if you still can’t answer my question after the second year, then it might be better for you to quit working as a public servant” (Ogata 2012, p.110).

After Ohayo Softball had been running for 18 months, Ogata noticed that a change had started to take place. He finally understood what Yahata had wanted to hear. He noted that the interaction between community members involved in Ohayo Softball had changed over the 18 months since the activity had been introduced. In the beginning, as mentioned above it seemed everyone was completely focused on softball and winning games. During nomikai, all they talked about was the game and winning. Gradually, they started talking about other things related to their daily lives as well. For example, farmers discussed problems they were having with their crops, issues within and aspirations they held for their shuraku, and ideas for other social activities or new economic ventures.

Ogata noted also that this did not stop at conversations; team members’ common interests in softball had transformed into common goals and a range of collective activities were starting to come about endogenously, without any input or direct encouragement from the local government or Nokyo. These included things like:

- Collective insect management and pest control of orchards within a *shuraku*;
- Bringing back a cultural practice or festival of their forefathers that had not been observed for a long time;
- One team identified that maintenance of their neighbourhood *kominkan* (community centre) was wanting and decided to run a weekend beer garden in order to raise the funds necessary to renovate;
- A team decided to restore their local shrine; and
- Others tried investing in and managing mountain forestry or other parcels of land together.

Ogata reported the kinds of interactions he was witnessing and the results of these to Yahata who was pleased to hear the young official’s report on these new activities, saying, “You did well. It seems like you finally understand,” adding that, “If “softball” began and ended with the softball project, it would be a complete waste. At the very least, softball has become a subject of conversation that people have in common. It is important that this popular common interest be transformed into a shared consciousness for *machizukuri* (community development)” (Ogata 2010, p.111). Or in other words “the project does not end with the consumption of the event” (Ogata 2009).

Ohayo Softball was essentially a social and cultural activity. The logic model of the activity as it was proposed by Ogata in 1969 is outlined in Figure 5.10.1 below. Inputs would have included sports equipment, flat fields for playing on, volunteers to referee and manage games, willing players

to sign up and participate in teams, spectators and resources to manage the administration of the league including the registration of teams and organization of matches. Another input that is not so obvious is the time in people's days required to participate. As outlined in more detail in the section on the NPC movement, this would not have been possible if agricultural reform had not taken place and people still relied on animals and farmed traditionally as they would have had to be spending the time tending their animals rather than playing softball. The change in Oyama's approach to farming brought about by the New Plum and Chestnut movement resulted in extra hours in the day being available for leisure activities like Ohayo Softball.

Outputs included the number of teams registered, the number of players participating and the number of softball games played. The expected outcomes were improved health and wellbeing, enhanced social cohesion and a fun time had by all involved. The bold boxes (outputs, activity, and inputs) are those elements of the initiative over which the town administration would have had at least some amount of direct control over through implementation, whereas the dashed box (expected outcome) would have relied on sound theory or logic between outputs and outcomes.

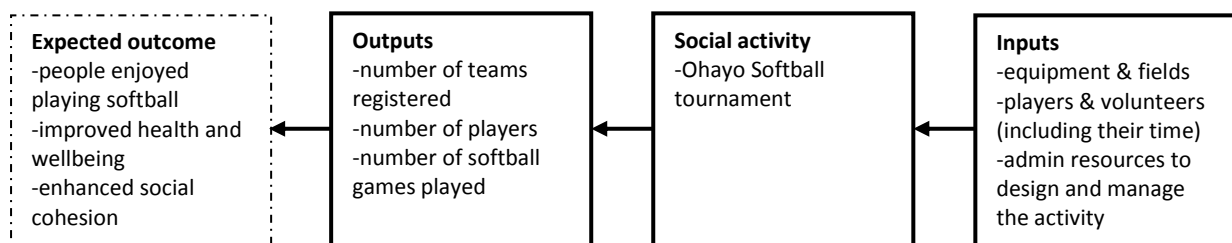


Figure 5.10.1: Ohayo Softball policy structure (expected)

Source: Created by author based on Miyoshi and Stenning 2008

When Ogata first proposed the initiative, he did so with the objectives of improving the competitive sporting abilities of Oyama people, promoting Oyama as one "community" (community building), and to close the generation gap between older and younger generations in Oyama.

Indeed these objectives were achieved; however, unbeknownst to Ogata at the time he proposed Ohayo Softball, the initiative would also result in benefits beyond these with broader implications for community capacity and development in Oyama. Ohayo Softball effectively provided:

- A topic of common or shared interest and mechanism to gain shared experience among community members;
- Opportunities for quality and quantity of interactions between community members; and
- Team organizational structures.

These dimensions of the activity resulted in more immediate outcomes that in turn resulted in further outcomes. Intermediate outcomes refer to changes in the target group; changes in behaviour, mindset or other qualities of the community members either individually and/or collectively. The key aspects of the activity, that is that it provided members a shared interest and opportunity to create shared experiences, opportunity for interaction, and team structures, resulted in some key intermediate community capacity outcomes that would form the basis for further outcomes:

- Social capital built;
- Increased sense of community and commitment; and
- Human resources and leadership development.

These in turn increased the community's ability to recognize and mobilize resources and to define and set about achieving collective objectives. The increased level of community capacity resulted in end outcomes, or societal changes, with new organizations and associations being formed naturally

and higher value-added policy structures being introduced endogenously or without further intervention by government or external actors.

Opportunity for interaction and social capital

Arguably the most important aspect of the Ohayo Softball activity was that it provided opportunity for interaction among community members by bringing people together at a particular location at a certain time producing social capital as a by-product of this interaction.

Although Oyama has always been a small community, with a population peak of just over 6000 in 1961⁶⁸, because of the geography of the village with 36 small pockets of houses separated from other neighbourhoods by mountains and rivers, in the 1960s people often still did not know many other Oyama residents from neighbourhoods other than their own. According to one community member and avid softballer who had participated in games from their beginnings, one of the most meaningful results of the softball tournaments was that “almost everybody in the village ended up at least knowing each other’s faces” (Oyama 1987, p.132-33).

Due to the regularity of games and the cross age groups make up of teams and the widespread participation in the sport, Ohayo Softball entailed regular interaction across a range of members with different ages and from different *shuraku* – what could be called ‘quantity of interaction’. Softball also involved interaction that was fun and positive in terms of the actual games and also allowed for informal and spontaneous interactions at practice sessions and *nomikai* or post-game debriefs; this can be referred to as ‘quality of interaction’. The kinds of interactions that occurred through Ohayo softball included:

- Interaction of team members from a single *shuraku* in organizing and practicing for, as well as playing in, matches;
- Interaction of team members with other team members from different *shuraku* while playing;
- Interaction among individuals and teams at *nomikai*; and
- Interaction between spectators/supporters on sidelines.

Ohayo Softball brought about an increase in both bonding and bridging social capital in Oyama. Bonding social capital was enhanced through increased quantity and quality of interactions among neighbours within each *shuraku*. Bridging social capital was established through the provision of opportunities for people from different *shuraku* to meet and interact – some of whom had never even seen each other’s faces before.

Social capital developed through the softball tournaments impacted upon community capacity not only in terms of the creation and strengthening of interpersonal networks, but also by:

- Contributing to improved sense of community and commitment by increasing levels of mutual trust, solidifying shared values and promoting shared identity.
- Contributing to human resource development through knowledge sharing.

Social capital involves increased levels of trust, sharing of values and norms, and resultant mutual understanding. Forming networks with others in the wider community outside of one’s own *shuraku* helped people to develop an awareness of the broader community and understand that they themselves were a part of this community (a stakeholder). In this way social capital developed also contributed to an increased sense of community. The development of social capital also influenced human resource development through knowledge sharing which accompanied interactions (see Stenning and Miyoshi 2008).

Common interest and a collective activity, and sense of community and commitment

Evidenced by Kurokawa Teruko’s conviction that everyone in Oyama played, softball quite naturally became a central point of common interest across virtually the entire population of the town. It was as though community members had been infected with a kind of ‘softball fever’. This shared

⁶⁸ Figure from Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative (2007).

interest in the sport meant that there was always something to talk about. The sport also represented a collective activity for members to participate in together. By participating in the sport together members were able to build a new set of shared experiences. No doubt team achievements also became a source of pride in each *shuraku* and contributed to the formation of stronger *shuraku*-level community identities.

Thus the common interest formed and the shared experiences gained through participation in the activity worked to strengthen sense of community and commitment. The increased levels of trust and shared values and norms resulting from increased bonding and bridging social capital also contributed to enhanced sense of community.

Team structure and leadership and human resource development

A team is basically a group of people working together to achieve a common goal, in this case to play against and try to beat opposing teams in softball matches. As mentioned above, Ohayo Softball provided the opportunity for over 600 community members to be formed into teams and receive the benefits of participating in an activity as a team, which include leadership skills development. Teams also promote feelings of belonging and self worth and confidence that come from being responsible for contributing to something and being valued as a contributor by others.

Teams, similar to organizations, provide vehicles through which leadership skills can be cultivated and exercised. Membership in a team can result in the development of an individual's skills and knowledge sharing through the close connections made between individuals within the team – this can include strong and highly influential sempai – kohai (senior – junior) or mentor relationships. Thus providing opportunities to participate in team-based activities can and does result in human resource development.

The introduction of Ohayo Softball, a collective activity that provided opportunities for community interaction, ultimately resulted in changes in the community of Oyama. The creation of social capital and interrelated increases in levels of sense of community and commitment as well as leadership and human resources development in turn contributed to improved abilities to recognize and mobilize resources as well as define collective objectives and set about achieving these. This enhanced community capacity ultimately resulted in the introduction of new higher-value added policy structures such as the beer garden organised to raise funds for the maintenance of the local community centre or the team committing to look after a mountain forest together.

Summary

This section has presented the intricacies of how the introduction of Ohayo Softball, a community sports tournament, in Oyama in 1969 contributed to the development of community capacity.

Important points that can be taken from Oyama's experience of Ohayo Softball include:

- Identification of prerequisite enabling factors to facilitate participation – in this case particularly in regards to available hours in the day not spent working and easily accessible community sporting facilities.
- Careful design of the activity for maximum interaction including across age groups and to avoid potential for unintended social exclusion effects.
- The development of social capital, through providing opportunities for quantity and quality of interaction among community members, is the most important element of this story; however, social capital itself is in fact a means to other ends and has wider community capacity and development implications.
- In the case of Oyama this social capital building activity resulted in the introduction of new policy structures in the form of collective activities carried out by teams.

5.11 SEIKATSU GAKUEN

The *Seikatsu Gakuen* (Lifestyle School) system was established in Oyama to provide more culturally enriching, and therefore entertaining, activities for Oyama people to spend their newfound leisure time doing as well as another method to develop human resources in the town. This involved Oyama being able to first recognise a valuable latent resource; that is the skills and knowledge of its own community members. Secondly, the system was set up to harness these skills and knowledge and disseminate them in a way that both resulted in the learning of other community members and also provided them with a variety of stimulating and entertaining activities to choose from within their own *shuraku* or town. This included not only the regular classes, but also concerts and exhibitions showcasing the talents of *Seikatsu Gakuen* students. These regular classes and occasional concerts and exhibitions also provided opportunities for informal and intimate face to face interactions between community members with common interests thus further building social capital.

After the Matsubara Dam construction was completed in 1970, the Dam Construction Office building located in the centre of Oyama was turned over to the Oyama administration. A recently retired Yakuba employee who was quite active in community activities for the older generations at the time suggested to Yahata that the building be used as a place of study for social education (Miwa 1987, p.76-77). This is how the *Seikatsu Gakuen* began. The idea would on the one hand help to develop Oyama's residents into cultured people, but also provide enjoyable and entertaining activities that farmers could spend their new found free time undertaking. Thus *Seikatsu Gakuen* was in line with both the NPCII which focused on learning and NPCIII which focused on an enjoyable living environment.

Seikatsu Gakuen can be translated as "Lifestyle Academy" in English. Learning programs were held in the *Seikatsu Gakuen* offering various classes related to people's everyday lives, hobbies and interests as well as production activities. These cultural classes became very popular with the entire population of Oyama. Regardless of age, both adults and children participated in a range of courses such as calligraphy, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, folk singing, English conversation, pottery, kimono wearing, traditional dance, traditional instruments, judo and kendo. I first learned of the *Seikatsu Gakuen* when staying with Kurokawa Teruko in February 2008. Teruko explained how the concept of the four day work week introduced with the first NPC movement had freed up time for farmers to pursue leisure and cultural activities.

Field note 9 February 2008:

In the afternoons, people were encouraged to and took classes at the Lifestyle Schools or formed groups or played sports. It was about having a more fulfilling life and educating themselves in the process. Teruko called it "*hitozukuri*" (development of people) and both Teruko and her husband seemed to value this element of development more so than products or production processes. She seemed to think that *hitozukuri* was an important requisite for successful agriculture and economic/town development. She said that Harumi Yahata had told them that uneducated/undeveloped or uncultured people could not be expected to contribute or perform well.

These community classes were run by the students themselves, who also determined the course fees (Ogata 2012, p.139). Curriculums were designed to enable students to take lessons for about six hours per month. Most of the instructors were also town residents with special skills; however, occasionally teachers in certain arts were also invited from Hita City. When *Seikatsu Gakuen* was first introduced, fees were around 300 yen per month and increased to 1,000 yen by the late 1980s (Miwa 1987, p.76). An annual event showcasing the skills of each course was also held. Japanese dance and folk singing students performed, entertaining the rest of the town. Image 5.11.1 shows

Kurokawa Teruko singing a folk song at the tenth anniversary of the annual *Seikatsu Gakuen* event in the early 1980s.



Image 5.11.1: Kurokawa Teruko singing at a *Seikatsu Gakuen* event
Source: The Kurokawa Household

Mori Tamiko also participated in folk singing classes as well as a kind of traditional Japanese fan dance. Mori enjoyed showing the author home movies of her dancing and singing performances. There were also many still photographs of her performances hanging on the walls and sitting on shelves in the lounge room of her home including in pride of place next to photographs of her grandchildren as shown in Image 5.11.2. Her skills acquired through *Seikatsu Gakuen* appear to be a great source of pride for Mori and she said that she very much enjoyed participating in classes and performances.



Image 5.11.2: Video (left) and photographs (right) of Mori Tamiko performing
Source: Taken by author at the Mori Household January 2010

After the establishment of community centres in every *danchi* and most *shuraku* under the *Yattsu no Danchi* concept, classes were also held in each of the *danchi* and many of the individual neighbourhoods as well. This made participation very easy for community members including farmers living in the hillside communities like Ogirihata where Kurokawa Teruko lives. For a number of years, Kurokawa Teruko ran a *kitsuke* (art of kimono wearing) classroom. She held classes in the small community centre in Ogirihata, which is practically next door to her house and within a three minute or so walk from each of the other households in Ogirihata.



Image 5.11.3: Kurokawa Teruko's *kitsuke* class photograph

Source: The Kurokawa Household

During a community lecture she delivered to JICA trainees in May 2012, Kurokawa showed photographs taken of her with her *kitsuke* classroom students (see Image 5.11.3). These photographs were also brought out when I stayed in Kurokawa's *minpaku* in February 2008 when Kurokawa talked of the community classes that she had taught.

Field note 8 February 2008:

The "*Seikatsu Gakko*" or Lifestyle School involves residents with skills offering other residents classes. The frequency of classes is usually once or twice per month and the fees per class are standardized at 1500 yen per person. Teruko has taught a *kitsuke* (kimono wearing) class for many years and showed me photographs of her and her students. I noticed Matsubara Kimiko in one of the photographs as well as a German lady who had apparently lived in Oyama for about one year, possibly for research.

5.12 CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY

This chapter described and examined some key events and activities in the 50 years or so of development experience in Oyama from community capacity development and community policy structure perspectives. In order to break the miserable state of "No money, no human resources, no leisure time, but envy," and free Oyama's people of the material and emotional poverty that they were experiencing the leaders drew up a vision for their village: first raise incomes through agricultural promotion, next acquire intellect and develop human resources, then improve the rural environment. This vision was implemented through the introduction of the NPC movement in the early 1960s.

The broader context within which this movement was introduced included strong national economic growth in Japan, protectionist agricultural trade policies, and a strong market price of ume, so much so that they were referred to as “Green Diamonds”. These conditions continued well into the 1970s, after which economic growth began to slow slightly and ume prices began to fall. The national government introduced a rice paddy reduction policy from the early 1970s, reversing the increased rice production policies of the previous couple of decades.

The first NPC, the New Plum and Chestnuts (NPC I) movement, resulted in a drastic and sudden change in the way agriculture was organised and approached in the village with the aim of making work lighter and less laborious whilst also increasing farmers’ incomes. This involved switching to ume and chestnut production and included such policies as a four day work week and promotion of the use of machinery instead of beasts of burden. Intensive support was provided by the Yakuba and Nokyo to assist farmers through the difficult transition to such a different new crop. Through the introduction of a whole of community development initiative, residents of Oyama were given a shared vision and shared goals, which promoted a stronger sense of community. Commitment was also increased by community members understanding their roles in the community and being motivated to participate actively in these capacities, for example through the Agricultural Youth Study Group.

The first NPC movement was subsequently followed by the introduction of two more NPC campaigns, which would run in parallel to the first NPC. The first of these was the Neo Personality Combination (NPC II), which focused on learning and developing a cultured people. This flagship initiative of this policy was the kibbutz training program for young farmers, which resulted from a sister city relationship with Megiddo, a region in Israel. The training program worked to stimulate knowledge creation and sharing in Oyama, resulting in a number of new collective activities and initiatives being added to Oyama’s policy structure. A number of other exchange activities would also be introduced.

The New Paradise Community (NPC III) aimed at creating a liveable and enjoyable environment in the town in order to retain community members who were too often migrating to larger cities and regional centres due to increased entertainment and other opportunities. Introduction of the Yattsu no Danchi concept and subsequent construction of community centres and sporting and recreation facilities along with the popular Ohayo Softball league and Seikatsu Gakuen worked to curb population decline in Oyama during the 1970s and 1980s when other rural towns and villages were experiencing high rates of population decline and outward migration to cities. These activities also worked to further strengthen sense of community, commitment (evidenced by people choosing to stay in Oyama), and social capital while contributing to the development of human resources and facilitating a good quality of life for residents. As a result of this increased community capacity particularly networks (bonding social capital), sense of community and commitment, residents began to proactively organise their own collective activities both informally and as formally structured associations (independently and without encouragement from the Yakuba or Nokyo) to advance towards collectively set objectives. Through continued mentoring and leadership under Yahata Harumi, and the various human resource development initiatives, a cohort of community leaders made up from farming successors, farming household wives, Yakuba staff and Nokyo staff was also being nurtured.

Thus, under these three broad streams a number of higher value added policy structures were pursued and community capacity was developed, resulting in further new higher value added collective activities being added to the community policy structure.

Table 5.12.1: Summary of NPC movement era

Oyama during the period 1960s onwards (NPC movement)	
Element	Description
Broader context	Ume enjoyed “Green Diamond” status in market until 1970s
	Strong economic growth in Japan and protectionist agricultural policies, growth slowing in 1970s
	National government encourages rice production until early 1970s
	National government introduces rice paddy reduction policy from early 1970s
Community definition	Definition of Oyama as community emerges and is continuously strengthened through the progressive introduction of more social capital building strategies
Community capacity	Networks – Israel sister city and kibbutz training program
	Leaders – satellite leaders in <i>shuraku</i> , farming successors and Nokyo and Yakuba staff groomed as leaders
	Individuals – change to become more trusting, hopeful, cultured, motivated and committed to contribute to community; focus on experiential learning for all ages and nurturing a cultured people
	Organisations – Yakuba and Nokyo implement NPC together and offer high support to farmers, new citizens associations begin to emerge and conduct activities independently
	Sense of community – increased sense of community due to shared vision, values and mutual participation in collective activities including social activities
	Commitment – members more fully understand their roles and are willing to participate/take action in these roles
	Ability to set and achieve objectives – community members identifying what they want for their community and organising their own collective activities and introducing new ideas including for agricultural production (e.g. enoki)
Access to resources – ability to identify local resources heightened and ability access to resources outside of Oyama also enhanced through strengthened linking and bridging social capital	
Community Policy Structures / Collective Activities	Whole of town and increasing in sophistication for example Nokyo absorbing risk in enoki production
	Quality of life: increased incomes, improved living conditions, hopes and dreams for the future
	Agricultural production: labour-saving “light” farm work, four day work week, use of machinery instead of animals, introduction of multidimensional / mukade agriculture and move towards more commercialised and value-added agriculture (rather than subsistence farming)
	Distribution of produce: collectively through Nokyo which increased bargaining power for farmers
	Leisure: farmers encouraged to pursue fun and cultural activities daily with their newfound free time and take holidays, focus on leisure activities that are also learning experiences such as overseas and domestic group travel

Source: created by author

CHAPTER 6 LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Image 6.1: Scene of modern Oyama

Source: Miyoshi 2012

Development of community capacity and the introduction of new policy structures in Oyama has continued over the decades. Some of these changes have been in response to external forces such as the impacts of a freer international trade in agricultural produce, or influenced through national and prefectural government policies and programs. Even the very definition of Oyama as a town has quite recently changed. These events show that communities are indeed in a continuous state of flux. A specific and static goal in terms of community capacity and type of policy structure will never be the answer, rather communities are required to adapt and change, redefine themselves and always look to the future, while building on and learning from the past. This chapter demonstrates how Oyama has continued to transform itself over the years.

6.1 NATIONAL UMEBOSHI COMPETITION

In the introduction of the National Umeboshi Competition, Oyama as a community demonstrated an ability to recognise and access resources within the community. This included recognising that members of the community had valuable input to community planning, as the idea for the event came from an elderly woman, and actively soliciting this input through the mechanisms available (a special interactive program run through OYT). Believers in the idea were able to give it more legitimacy through the national ideas competition, another resource that would be instrumental in securing broader community support for the idea. This resulted in the effective use of an available external resource, the one-off grant from the national government, for community development. In the successful introduction and implementation of the event, Oyama demonstrated effective functioning of community capacity in the ability to plan, evaluate and implement such a large scale event, which was so big that it would be known as the “Umeboshi Olympics”.

The competition resulted in the recognition of umeboshi and umeboshi production skills as valuable community assets within Oyama. It increased commitment to develop better quality

umeboshi by harnessing the competitive spirit of farming housewives who strived to perfect their techniques increasing their confidence in processing produce. This recognition and commitment, as well as the national publicity of the event and consumer responses to information received on the Oyama-branded event and the winners of the competition greatly increased income opportunities in ume processing. Sense of community was further strengthened by further affirming Oyama's identity as an ume producing region.

The National Umeboshi Competition is also an example of the importance of the ability to create criteria in order to achieve a goal. Historically, the standard criteria for umeboshi were set by the region of Kishu in Wakayama Prefecture, which was well known for mass producing umeboshi. Generally, consumers perceived umeboshi from Kishu as a kind of signature product and therefore were more likely to purchase Kishu umeboshi than umeboshi from other areas. Oyama used the National Umeboshi Competition to create new criteria for umeboshi. That is that "umeboshi must be made with only plums, salt, and shiso leaves," which developed into a criterion of evaluation different from Kishu style umeboshi. The contest brought various styles of umeboshi to Oyama, naturally resulting in an accumulation of information and knowledge. Success in plum orchard cultivation in Oyama was achieved by transitioning from selling raw plums to processing them and by branding the Oyama umeboshi.

The Furusato Sosei Undo (Hometown Re-Creation Fund) was initiated by Prime Minister Takeshita Noboru in 1989. The movement consisted of block grants of 100 million yen allocated to every town and village in rural areas to promote furusato zukuri (hometown making). As a participant in furusato zukuri, each municipality could use their grant in whatever capacity they saw fit, for example to create local jobs, address issues related to providing health care to an aging population, or to fund strategies that might draw young people back (Traphagan and Thompson 2006). According to Ogata Hideo, of the municipalities that received the grant only around 25 per cent of them used it effectively, whereas the other 75 per cent used it to engage consultants to draw up plans resulting in very little in the way of outcomes. I have also witnessed the outcomes of the grant in other rural areas of Japan, for example, enormous convention centres plonked in the middle of rice paddies.

After announcement of the Furusato Sosei Undo, a series of special live programs were run on Oyama TV for a public debate on how to best to use the 100 million yen grant from the national government. A number of community development experts/leaders discussed options in a panel.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Because the show was broadcast live, Oyama people could watch from their living rooms in real time and could even participate in the discussion by telephoning in. People were encouraged to come forward with their ideas on how to utilise the money for Oyama and many ideas were put forward.

One local elderly woman phoned in and suggested that the money be used to establish a national umeboshi competition in Oyama.

Field note 15 June 2012:

In those days, most people did not yet value umeboshi in Oyama. Quite a lot of people opposed the idea saying that it was a "stupid idea" that would not result in anything good for Oyama.

Some of the younger people in the town who really supported and believed in the idea submitted a proposal based on the elderly woman's proposition to an "Idea Contest" run by the Ministry of Land and Infrastructure. Their proposal won the contest and was praised as a unique and clever idea in

national newspapers. This recognition caused those who initially opposed the idea to change their minds and be more supportive (Ogata 2012).

The first National Umeboshi Competition was held in 1992. During the first competition, the highest quality umeboshi from all around the country were sent to Oyama to be displayed and judged. Seeing the umeboshi lined up in their town caused Oyama people to change their perception of umeboshi and they began to recognise its value as a commercial product. Many farming households, especially the women of these farming families, were motivated to refine their techniques and produce higher quality and tastier umeboshi. The second contest held four years later resulted in an Oyama farming household's wife winning the first prize. After winning, the winner's umeboshi was in high demand and the price of her umeboshi rose significantly. This raised the competitive spirit and umeboshi producers in Oyama decided to try really hard to become number one in the competition. This resulted in increased skills as well as increased umeboshi product quality throughout Oyama. Another couple of winners from Oyama later and Oyama had established itself as a high quality umeboshi producing area and had become well known for this throughout Japan.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Ogata emphasised how a very simple idea from an elderly lady had resulted in Oyama becoming a famous umeboshi producing town (and all the benefits that come with this, including increased skills, income opportunities and confidence of farmers to try new products). He said that this example shows how important it is to make an environment in which everyone can express their ideas and be heard including the too often forgotten and ignored groups like the elderly and children.

The Sixth National Umeboshi Competition was held in November 2011. There were a total of 1,211 entries from 47 prefectures in Japan, the largest number of entries yet (Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2012). The front cover of the 2012 Nokyō Annual Report with a picture of umeboshi judging is shown in Image 6.1.1.



Image 6.1.1: Nokyō Annual Report 2012 cover shows umeboshi judging

Source: Oyama Agricultural Cooperative 2012

Kurokawa Masateru's wife, Yuriko, won first prize in the fourth National Umeboshi Contest in November 2003, around five years after their household had begun to produce umeboshi

commercially. The result was published in the Mainichi Shimbun, the Yomiuri Shimbun, as well as local Oita and Kyushu newspapers. Clippings from these are presented in Image 6.1.2.



Image 6.1.2: Clippings from Mainichi (left), Yomiuri (above), and Oita Godo (bottom)
Source: Marukin Farm⁶⁹

The headline on the Oita Godo Shimbun reads:

*The winner is Mrs Kurokawa
'Perfect on all points'
Praised by all of the judges*

Similarly, the Mainichi Shimbun's headline reads:

*Tasty Umeboshi Compete
[At the] Oyama Town/Oita National Umeboshi Competition
The winner is Mrs Kurokawa*

NHK also introduced Marukin Farm's *umeboshi*, as did a number of other television stations and newspapers between 2003 and 2008. The publicity has been good for business with production increasing from 1,000 kilograms to 20 tons by 2007. Marukin Farm's *umeboshi* are now sold at department stores and consumer cooperatives in Oita and Fukuoka Prefectures and to customers throughout Japan through mail and email orders. Kurokawa says he has many loyal customers throughout Japan and he proudly asserts that he even receives orders "from as far away as Canada."

⁶⁹ Accessed 23 June 2012 at: marukin-k.net/html/user_data/ecofarmer.php#sinbun

6.2 KONOYAMA GARTEN

The Nokyo established 'Konohana Garten' as a subsidiary organisation in July 1990. The complex is located on Kokudo 212 by the Oyama River. This direct sales fresh produce market allows farmers to sell fresh vegetables and value-added products such as *umeboshi* directly to consumers. This innovation of the market that directly connects producers and consumers was rare in Japan at the time of establishment. When Konohana Garten was introduced there was only one other direct sales store in the country, but this was quite a small store in comparison. During a lecture to JICA trainees in 2008 Yahata Kinji, son of Yahata Harumi, talked about how his idea for the direct sales system had been influenced by visiting different farmer's markets overseas.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Kinji revealed to us that for the past 30 years he has indeed spent 30 million yen per year, every year. With this income he has travelled just about everywhere: Europe, the Middle East, Africa, United States and so on. Although these trips were generally for leisure purposes, Kinji said he makes a point of visiting markets wherever he travels to pick up ideas or hints for his town. Around 25 years ago Kinji proposed a direct sales system that could not be found anywhere else in Japan whereby farmers price products by themselves, receive 80 per cent of the sales price (rather than the 40 per cent they would usually receive when selling through regular markets or retailers), and take responsibility for any unsold goods. Thus 25 years after the introduction of the NPC movement Konohana Garten was established in Oyama. Now Konohana Garten's total sales exceed 1.8 billion yen per year.

Yahata Kinji's tale of being inspired during an overseas trip was supplemented by another story whereby Oyama Nokyo officials travelled to a small town called in another prefecture. This town had a modest direct sales market and the Nokyo was said to have studied this store and then adapted the direct sales model to meet Oyama's needs.

Another story came from Kurokawa Teruko, who had been the head of the Nokyo's Women's Association decades before the introduction of Konohana Garten. As head of the Women's Association, Kurokawa had organised a vegetable growing competition to promote healthy eating among the wives of Oyama farmers. Competition was fierce, as was usual in Oyama, and this resulted in far too many vegetables for the participating households to utilise on their own. Traditionally, farming households offloaded surplus household vegetables by swapping them with other farming households; however, this time they decided instead to hold an open air market in front of the Nokyo – it would come to be known as the Aozora Ichiba (literally Blue Sky Market). To the women's surprise, the non-farming households of Oyama who lived mainly near the Kokudo and along the river bought up the vegetables enthusiastically. They had expected that people passing through, for example Hita City residents, would be the main customer. The women's earlier experience with the Aozora Ichiba may also have had an influence on the establishment of Konohana Garten.

Every morning before 8am, a succession of farmers, mostly women, pull up to Konohana Garten in Oyama in their identical miniature white farm trucks. They bring small quantities of a variety of fresh produce stacked in crates as well as boxes or baskets of homemade processed goods such as *umeboshi*, *yuzukosho*, pickled vegetables and *konnyaku*. They place some of the products on the shelves themselves at Konohana Garten in Oyama as Mori Tamiko is shown doing in Image 6.2.1. They may also choose to send some of their products to one or more of the Konohana Garten antennae stores in Oita, Beppu and Fukuoka. The products have already been packaged, labelled and priced on the farms. In the afternoon, these same farmers arrive again to pick up any fresh produce that has not sold.



Image 6.2.1: Mori Tamiko stocking Konohana Garten shelves with yuzukoshi
Source: taken by author January 2010

Farmers are free to independently decide on the products they will produce for the market, set product prices, and determine the quantities (and quality) of produce they will place for sale. Farmers receive 80 per cent of the sales price, as opposed to the 40 per cent or less that they would usually receive when selling through the conventional Nokyo channels, markets or retailers. Each product has a personalised barcode, which when swiped at the checkout automatically credits the sale to the corresponding individual producer. The sales account of each farmer is adjusted once a week and their revenue is transferred to their account every ten days.

This arrangement is depicted visually in Figure 6.2.1. For every 100 yen that the consumer spends on the farmers' products at Konohana Garten in Oyama or at the antenna stores, 80 yen is deposited straight into their bank account and the remaining 20 yen goes to the Nokyo for administration costs. This results in much higher profits for the farmer per unit than selling through the normal distribution channels, from which they will normally see about 60 per cent of the final sales price.

Konohana Garten does not set any concrete standards in terms of size, shape or general quality of produce. Criteria simply include "agricultural products which are produced by the farmers themselves with reduced amounts of agricultural chemicals and which are fresh and safe". This has also provided farmers with the opportunity to utilize otherwise unmarketable agricultural produce for example odd-shaped, blemished or undersized vegetables as saleable products.

The absence of minimum quantity requirements for products sold through Konohana Garten means that the smallest scale producers in particular can benefit. Those farmers who are elderly or farming household wives who are also busy with raising children or farmers who do not possess enough land for larger scale production can sell even the smallest amounts of whatever products they can produce. Many farming households also produce vegetables and rice for self consumption as well as their commercial crops. Sometimes there is excess production that can not be used by the family – these can also be sold through Konohana Garten, rather than being wasted or given away. Thus the direct sales shop at Konohana Garten provides a place for farmers who can not conduct systematic and standardized shipping of agricultural products.

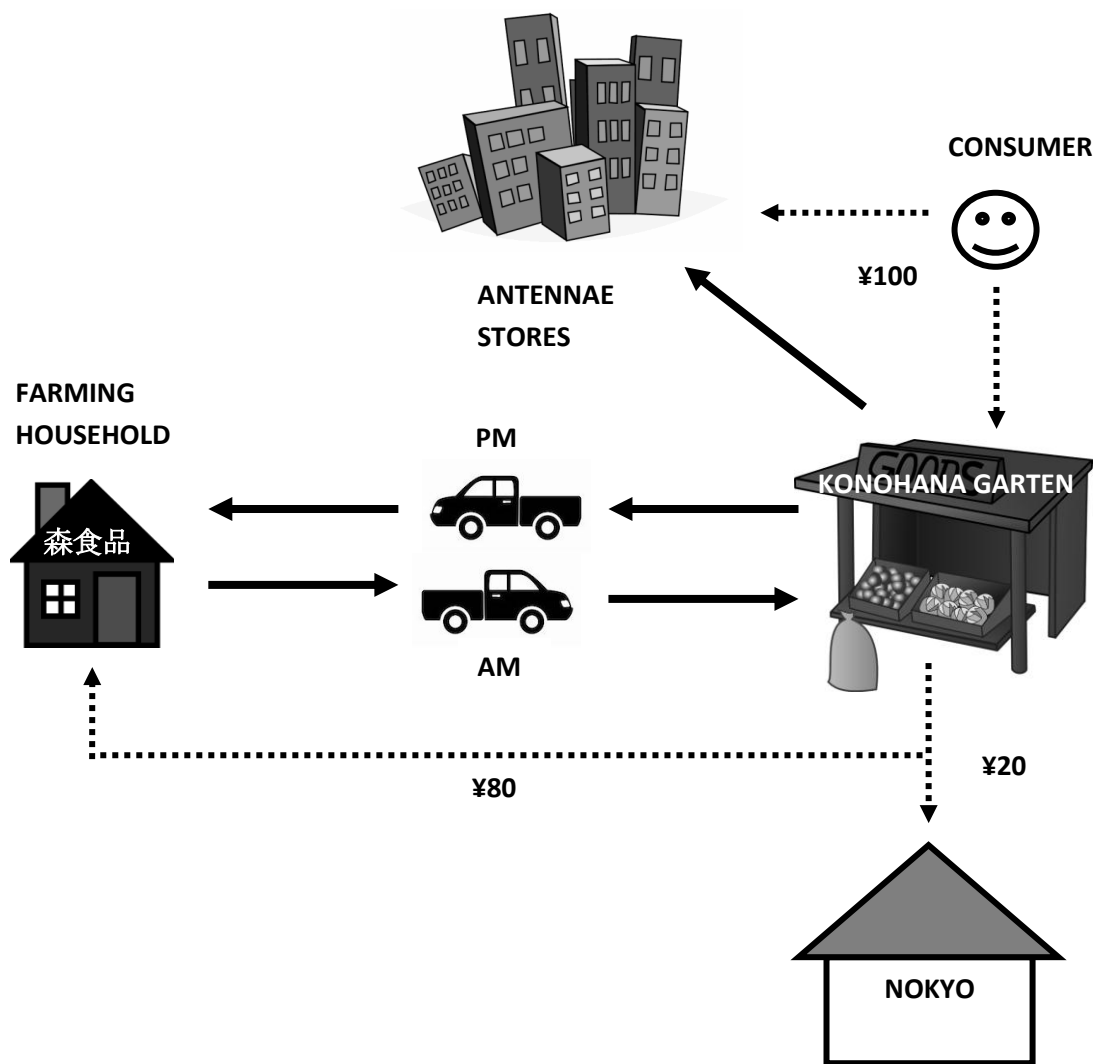


Figure 6.2.1: Konohana Garten sales process
 Source: created by author

Direct interaction with the market through the direct sales facility allows farmers to gain information on consumer tastes and demands and respond appropriately. For example, if the combination of quality and price of a certain product does not please the consumer they will not buy the product, meaning that the product will not sell well and this will be evident to the farmer when she picks up unsold goods that afternoon. She may choose to adjust the pricing of the product for the next day, or work to resolve an issue with quality. Or she may decide to process the fresh produce in order to create a higher value added product.

This innovation has created an alternative market to the big and urban market, which the farmers are able to manage themselves. It has also resulted in producers having direct access to information on consumer needs and tastes and the opportunity to consider these and respond accordingly in their production activities.

Field note 17 May 2012:

As we were leaving Koda and his wife, Yoriko, offered us all a gift of *umeboshi* to take home with us. Koda told us that his wife made the *umeboshi* and they were sold at Konohana Garten. He also proudly explained the stylish label on the containers. Koda had done the calligraphy on the label himself and he had created the name from parts of his own name, both the name of the factory and the name of his *minpaku* are taken from his granddaughters' names. Koda said that the fancy label was a new addition. Previously they only had the Konohana Garten price label, which includes the producers name, product variety, production date, and tax inclusive price. Koda said that as soon as they started attaching the extra label with a brand name for the *umeboshi*, sales increased significantly. "The contents are exactly the same as before, but we're selling much more with this new label that I designed".



Image 6.2.2: Koda Yoriko's *umeboshi* packed for sale at Konohana Garten

Source: taken by author May 2012

Table 6.2.1: Comparison of different distribution channels

Distribution channel	Description	Price set by	Bargaining power of farmer	Quantity	Quality	Branding	Profit to farmer
Conventional	Each farm sells to middle men independently	Middle men	Very low	Large	Standard	No brand	<40%
Nokyo	Collective through cooperative	Market (at auction)	Medium	Large	Standard	Nokyo / town brand	40%
Konohana Garten	Direct sales to consumer	Farmer	High (direct dialogue consumers)	Small	Decided by producer	Individual producer's brand	80%

Source: created by author

The Konohana Garten direct sales system encourages farmers to innovate and produce various new products including processed products. This is because the system allows small producers to test

new products in the market in small quantities prior to committing to larger scale production. This effectively limits the risk involved in trying new products and encourages product innovation. This has led to further entrepreneurialisation of agricultural endeavours in Oyama as farmers become bolder and more creative, often testing products in Konohana Garten before distributing them to other market sectors such as supermarkets. This has resulted in farmers selecting higher value added production activities, making the community policy structure more complex and sophisticated. It is important for a community to establish the ability to design and implement strategies as a community; this equips the community with the ability to design itself.

Field note 17 May 2012:

When Konohana Garten opened, Mori Tamiko started to sell her umeboshi there. According to Tamiko, as soon as Konohana Garten opened, farmers in Oyama became able to earn a lot more income, and a lot easier than before. She said she also finds it fun and satisfying to try making new products and finding out how well they sell at Konohana Garten.

Konohana Garten also sells processed products that are produced by the Nokyo's processing workshops. These are branded as Konohana Garten products and a selection of these Konohana Garten branded processed goods are also available to purchase online, over the telephone or through mail orders. Konohana Garten branded products such as yuzukosho and umeboshi can also be found on the shelves of some department stores, such as the Iwataya Department Store in Fukuoka City as shown in Image 6.2.3.



Image 6.2.3: Konohana Garten yuzukosho (left) and umeboshi (right) in Iwataya, Fukuoka
Source: taken by author in July 2012

Despite being run by the Nokyo, Konohana Garten membership is not limited to members of Oyama's agricultural cooperative. Rather membership is much wider including many small producers from neighbouring towns as well as Oyama's farmers. Also, membership to Konohana Garten is on an individual basis rather than being limited to one membership per household like the Nokyo. Thus one Oyama household might include a number of Konohana Garten members, for example, the head of the household, his wife, their son and/or his young wife, and an elderly household member – depending on who is engaged in production activities. While membership of the Nokyo has been decreasing in line with the shrinking population of Oyama, the membership of Konohana Garten is trending upwards.

Historically, all profit from sales through the Nokyo would be deposited into the account of the male head of the household, meaning that other household members who also contributed to production did not have control over earnings or household finances. With Konohana Garten membership on an individual basis, each individual producer, including women and elderly

producers are required to have their own bank account into which funds can be automatically credited for their sales. The introduction of this system has resulted in the empowerment of non-household head producers who now have more control over their finances.

At 31 March 2012, 603 of the 987 households in Oyama were regular members of the Nokyo (Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2011). This was down from 637 households in 2007 and 667 households in 2006 (Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2007, p.5; Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2008, p.10). This is in contrast with Konohana Garten, which had over 2,500 members by 2003 (Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2007, p.17). This increased to over 3,200 by 2007, and reached over 3,400 by 2008 (Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2009, p.17; Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2010, p.17). In 2012, the number of Konohana Garten members had exceeded 4,000; this was not only around six times the membership of the Nokyo, but well surpassed the entire population of Oyama, which by this stage had shrunk to 3,147 people (in 987 households) at 31 March 2012 (Oita Oyama-machi Agricultural Cooperative 2012, p.4).

Table 6.2.2: Population and membership trends in Oyama

Year	Population of Oyama	Households in Oyama	Regular Nokyo members (households)	Konohana Garten members
1955	6485 (peak)	1098	--	N/A
1965	5755	1125 (peak)	--	N/A
1990	4373	1046	--	50 (households)
2000	3910	1027	--	--
2003	3889	1022	--	2500
2004	--	--	--	--
2005	3790	--	--	--
2006	3688	1021	667	--
2007	3614	1022	637	3200+
2009	3451	1019	626	3400+
2010	3386	1011	613	--
2011	--	--	--	--
2012	3147	987	603	4000+

Source: created by author from various data sources

As mentioned above, Konohana Garten members include many small producers from neighbouring towns as well as Oyama farmers. Many of these small producers, from Oyama and beyond, who sell their products through Konohana Garten are also women. Footage taken by OYT on the first anniversary of Konohana Garten's opening shows interviews with women producers from Oyama and beyond who were selling their products at Konohana Garten as well as doing household shopping there. Now Konohana Garten's total sales exceed 1.8 billion yen per year.

6.2.1 ANTENNAE STORES

Konohana Garten has expanded outside of Oyama with seven antennae stores opened in nearby major cities. These include:

- Hita City – Konohana Garten Hita Store
- Fukuoka City – Konohana Garten Noma Oike Store and Momochihama Store
- Oita City – Konohana Garten Akeno Store, Konohana Garten Wasada Town Store and Konohana Garten Kasugaura Store in Tokiwa Department Store's Food Stadium (pictured in Image 6.2.1.1)
- Beppu City – Konohana Garten Tsurumien Store



Image 6.2.1.1: Konohana Garten antennae shop in Tokiwa, Oita

Source: Miyoshi 2012

Producers may decide to send some of their fresh produce and processed products to these antennae stores. They bring these products to Konohana Garten in Oyama along with the products that they place on the shelves of the Oyama store. These are left in their crates and picked up by a Nokyo truck to be transported to the respective antennae stores.

6.2.2 ORGANIC RESTAURANT

The Organic Restaurant was opened at the Konohana Garten facility in Oyama about 10 years after the establishment of Konohana Garten. The restaurant was established initially in order to help absorb and put to use surplus fresh vegetables from the Konohana Garten direct sales outlet. These are used to produce local dishes presented in an impressive buffet spread.

The 'Organic Restaurant' offers the visitor to Oyama a tasty dining experience of fresh Oyama ingredients and traditional Oyama-style cooking. Growing vegetables and preparing food in Oyama were previously activities conducted only for the self-consumption of households; however, these skills were identified by the community as another valuable resource and possible source of income to be exploited especially those of elderly residents. The buffet boasts more than 100 dishes and Oyama grown mushrooms feature prominently.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Kinji told us how seven or eight years ago he and his wife travelled to China and for two weeks travelled along the Silk Road eating dinner and lunch out along the way. At one pit stop the couple were amazed when a Chinese cook took dried out horrible looking vegetables and proceeded to cook them transforming them into an excellent and tasty meal right before their eyes. This gave Kinji the idea of using unsold vegetables from Konohana Garten to produce local foods and sell in a restaurant.

According to Yahata Kinji, to begin with the idea of establishing a restaurant at Konohana Garten was met with great opposition in Oyama. Those opposing the proposal quoted three main reasons for this opposition 1) it would be expensive to hire a chef; 2) the venture was very high risk; and 3) there were no existing customers. Of these, the biggest issue, as for any restaurant, was finding a chef.

Field note 26 June 2008:

Yahata Kinji told us that there would always be excuses not to take on any new challenge and that what needs to be done is to list all the reasons why something would not work and figure out how to solve each of them individually – and this is what he did. In order to solve the problem of an expensive chef, the Nokyo asked farm housewives to cook for the restaurant.



Image 6.2.2.1: Organic Restaurant buffet in Oyama

Source: taken by author July 2007

In order to solve the problem of an expensive chef the Nokyo asked farm housewives to cook for the restaurant, thus instead of employing a *shefu* (chef) they would utilize the skills of local *shufu* (housewives). They were free to make any dish that they were good at and used mostly ingredients from Konohana Garten. Now there are three Konohana Garten restaurants; one each in Oyama, Fukuoka and Oita. The restaurants have a combined total sales of 600 million yen and employ around 200 part-time staff (mostly *shufu*). The Fukuoka and Oita restaurants actively try to hire Oyama *shufu* who have married and moved to live in the city with their husbands, thus ensuring strong links with the Oyama Diaspora.

By taking the word “chef” and rewording it as “shufu” the Nokyo pointed out the importance of recognizing and utilizing farming household wives as human resources. Although it required some significant initial investment to turn shufu into chefs, their ability to contribute to the development of the community was recognized and their skills and creativity was capitalised on.

6.3 OYAMA YUME KOBO

The burst of Japan’s bubble economy in the early 1990s harked the beginning of the “Lost Decade” and a period of economic recession in Japan. Furthermore, the Uruguay Round was signed by Ministers in April 1994, resulting in the freeing up of trade and an influx of cheaper agricultural imports from China and South Korea in to Japanese markets that had previously been closed to them. These events impacted on agriculture in Japan as prices dropped sharply.

These events affected Oyama's farmers, the price of raw ume dropped to less than 100 yen per kilogram. Ume could no longer be considered the Green Diamonds of the market, as they were called at their peak when fetching up to 850 – 1000 yen per kilogram. This situation contributed to an outflow of young people from Oyama, which in turn resulted in a labour shortage and an increasing amount of farming land to be abandoned. The agricultural cooperative responded by establishing antenna direct sales stores in urban areas; however, according to Ogata these were only barely able to maintain the status quo – they were not enough to improve the situation (2012).

At the time, there were two opposing groups in Oyama. One group were the reformists, who wanted to implement drastic change in order to secure Oyama's future – the Mayor at the time was part of this faction. The other was the conservatives and included most of the town assembly and mostly members of the opposition – they were unwilling to embrace change and preferred to maintain the status quo. For three or four years reformists and conservatives were locked in a stalemate and could not agree on a way forward for Oyama. There was much arguing in local assembly meetings and these were broadcast by OYT for all local people to see. Community members started to realise that if this situation continued nothing would happen for community development and this was putting their town's future in jeopardy. Thus a group of concerned citizens formed a group to discuss and come up with ideas for development in Oyama, they called themselves the Dream Making Committee.

The Committee came up with a number of visions, ideas, policies and plans for community development in Oyama; however, ultimately the decision making powers lay with the town assembly. Each and every idea that was presented, even if it had the mayor's support, was voted down by the conservative majority assembly. This caused much frustration for the Committee members and local people generally. They realised that political change was necessary and 14 of the Dream Making Committee members decided to run for assembly seats in the next local election. From the 10 seats in the assembly, eight were won by Committee members and only two of the incumbent councillors were re-elected. With a clear majority in the town assembly, the reformists' development plans were finally able to be introduced and progressed, heralding a new stage in the development of Oyama.

Mitoma Zenpachiro, the newly appointed mayor of Oyama, and current President of OYKC said, "For community development, we should not focus on negative aspects, but rather how to expand the potential of the region" (Ogata 2012, p.141). He had adopted three strategies in order to do this:

1. The first one was to create a new industry that enhanced the raw materials industry. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to construct and manage visitor facilities, promote product development, and establish a system to increase the amount of visitors to the community, in order to boost the local consumption of locally produced goods.
2. The second strategy was to preserve precious environmental assets for future generations. This would involve increasing the volume of water in the Oyama River, the volume of which had dropped as a result of the construction of dams and hydropower plants upstream, and restoring mountain forests and forests that had been damaged by typhoons.
3. The third strategy would be to establish an organization capable of appropriately managing these projects.

6.3.1 OYAMA YUME KOBO CORPORATION INC.

The establishment of a new organisation, Oyama Yume Kobo Corporation Inc. (OYKC), in Oyama in 1998 was the result of high levels of community capacity including linking social capital/networks. Establishment of OYKC also would result in important community capacity effects in Oyama including the introduction of further advanced new policy structures and further strengthening of these and other new and more sophisticated networks. OYKC was established as a unique public-private partnership model, with the cooperation of local government, private sector big industry

players, and individual community members and effective access to capital from each of these. The organisation benefited from the absorption of human resources including some very highly skilled administrators, many of whom were graduates of the “Yahata University” from the Yakuba after Oyama’s amalgamation with Hita City.⁷⁰ Likewise, with the establishment of this organisation Oyama was able to continue to harness the talents of these Yakuba staff for community development efforts despite the loss of the Yakuba as a strategic component of the community.

OYKC now employs 73 staff including 32 part-time staff and is valued at 730 million yen. The venture was set up as a public-private partnership between the municipal government and private companies including Nikka Whiskey Distilling Co Ltd as well as individual shareholders. In essence, this company was established to function as a community development corporation in addition to the Yakuba, Nokyo and Chamber of Commerce. This recognized that successful future development would require cooperation and partnership beyond the traditional boundaries of industrial categories, between public and private sectors, and among municipal or prefectural jurisdictions, as well as transcending national borders.

As mentioned above in the late 1990s ume farmers were facing rather difficult times due to the reduction in value of fresh plums in the market. Some farmers had started talking about finding a new product to focus on that had a higher value in the market. However, due to the history of the NPC movement in Oyama, the town was already well known throughout Kyushu and Japan more broadly as a plum producing area. “If ume were taken away from Oyama, what would be left?” posited Ogata Hideo, the General Manager of Oyama Yume Kobo, during a lecture given to JICA trainees from Africa in May 2012 at Hibiki no Sato in Oyama.

Thus, OYKC went about devising a way that would both preserve the plum growing tradition in Oyama and ensure that farmers had enough income to prosper. They asked farmers what price per kilo they required for fresh plums to continue growing them. Farmers responded that they would need between 300 and 350 yen per kilogram. OYKC offered to buy fresh plums at 330 yen per kilogram – the idea was to produce high quality and high priced value added products that could support this above-market price (these are presented in more detail in the section on umeshu below). Farmers were also encouraged to produce very high quality plums with fewer chemicals used in the production process to warrant this higher than market value price.

OYKC also decided that instead of just producing and sending these products to far away markets, their strategy would focus on bringing outside people to Oyama to purchase and consume products within the town. Thus, they went about establishing a strong relationship with Fukuoka City, which is about a one hour drive from Oyama and has a population of around 2.5 million.

The mission and purpose of OYKC are presented on their website:

The purpose of our organisation is to create a place that facilitates a melding of the hearts and minds of visitors to Oyama and of those who greet them here.

Our role is to promote awareness and empathy among those visitors and love and pride among the people of Oyama.

From the perspective that in this era rural areas and urban areas are increasingly linked, we are painting a future in this brand conscious and individual-oriented mature society where environmental awareness is re-awakened.

We are building on Oyama’s independent and unique development history and strengthening this further by making efforts to develop new agricultural industries whilst maintaining our commitment to the farming village and agriculture.

⁷⁰ Discussed in more detail in Section 6.6 of this chapter.

Moreover, we aim to be a leader in the fields of “food agriculture”, “environmental agriculture”, “educational agriculture”, and “tourism agriculture”.⁷¹

Oyama requested the Fukuoka City government to dispatch some of its employees to Oyama. The purpose of this request was to have Fukuoka City employees gain first-hand understanding of the actual conditions of a rural mountain village. Eventually, these dispatched employees became intermediaries, encouraging the residents of Oyama and Fukuoka to participate in festivals held in their respective town or city, and facilitating the commencement of exchange programs for elementary school children (Ogata 2012).

It was around this time that the Hakata Yamagasa float was displayed in Oyama. As part of a lifestyle learning program in Fukuoka City, residents of Oyama visited Fukuoka to give cooking seminars on the culture and products of a rural mountain village and also providing reference materials for such seminars. When the Fifth Kyushu Dam Summit was held in Oyama, historic discussions took place between upstream and downstream stakeholders. As a result, Fukuoka City created a fund for dam reservoir area development by allocating a percentage of the water charges collected. This fund is called the Fukuoka City Fund for the Preservation of Water-Source Forests (Ogata 2012).

Through the implementation of an exchange program called “Beautiful Forest Creation” developed in collaboration with Fukuoka City, OYKC realized that there was very little information readily available in Fukuoka about their tiny rural mountain town. To address this problem, Oyama developed a project to set up a centre within the city of Fukuoka to disseminate information on Oyama to people in Fukuoka, encourage interaction and exchange between people, as well as promote increased economic exchange (Ogata 2012).

These exchange promotion efforts helped bring Fukuoka City and Oyama closer together, both in terms of travel time and mental distance, the former of which was realized by development of a high-speed transportation system. However, these exchanges were occurring mainly between very specific groups of government officials and only a limited number of the rural and urban residents. This recognition produced an ambitious idea that it is important to allow an unspecified large number of people to regularly enjoy exchange opportunities. This idea then developed into a plan to set up the Oyama Lifestyle Consulate in Fukuoka. The Consulate was expected to function as a facility for cultural activities to produce entertainment and educational opportunities that could not be experienced in the urban area, in Fukuoka rather than in Oyama. It was also intended to serve as an urban exchange facility where users from Oyama could access opportunities for experiences and engage in activities that are not found in rural areas (Ogata 2012).

6.3.2 OYAMA LIFESTYLE CONSULATE

OYKC manages the Lifestyle Consulate in Fukuoka City. Oyama is located about a one and a half hour drive from Fukuoka City not far from the border of Fukuoka Prefecture. The Consulate was established in order to further promote a growing trend of rural–urban exchange between the residents of the rural town of Oyama and urbanites living in Fukuoka City. The facility was built in Atagohama in Nishi Ward of Fukuoka City in April 1998. The Consulate is located in “Marina Town”, which is considered a high-status area for new urban residents. The Consulate’s address is just a 15 minute drive from the Chinese, American and South Korean consulates in Fukuoka.

The plan for constructing a cross-prefectural facility gained approval from the national and prefectural governments as a project to prevent rural population decline. Approval was backed by the national distribution zone development project and the Kyushu-fu Initiative advocated by Hiramatsu Morihiko, then Governor of Oita Prefecture. Building costs for the facility were covered by state funds for depopulated areas. This was the first time that a state budget allocation for an area in Japan was utilised for construction outside of the municipality for which it was allocated.

⁷¹ www.hibikinosato.co.jp/info/company.html

Also, the Fukuoka City government allowed the Consulate to be treated as a public facility of the city, exempting it from property taxes. A councillor and two staff members actively worked there to facilitate economic exchange with Oyama and visits to Fukuoka City.

During the first three years after the Oyama Lifestyle Consulate was established, Oyama disseminated much information to both individuals and associations in Fukuoka. An economic association in Fukuoka became particularly interested. Through this information exchange, many people in Fukuoka became interested in Oyama and wanted to visit the small town. Thus there grew a demand for a facility within Oyama to accommodate visitors and facilitate further exchange activities.

At around the same time, Oyama residents had started to realise that some of the town's natural environment was not being as effectively utilized as it could be. Based on the responses of people visiting the Oyama Lifestyle Consulate in Fukuoka City, especially those engaged in business, Oyama had also learned that Fukuoka citizens were quite interested in nature, the environment and health (Ogata 2012). It was decided to pursue a development policy whereby the town would make active use of its geographical conditions and environmental and industrial resources to develop an exchange centre in Oyama as well (Ogata 2012). This is covered in the following section.



Image 6.3.2.1: Oyama Lifestyle Consulate (left) now Hita Lifestyle Consulate (right)

Source: Hibiki no Sato and taken by author June 2012

The Oyama Lifestyle Consulate became the Hita Lifestyle Consulate after the town of Oyama merged with Hita City (see the former Oyama Lifestyle Consulate and current Hita Consulate in Image 6.3.2.1). I visited the Hita Lifestyle Consulate in June 2012 and made the following notes.

Field note 8 June 2012:

I caught a taxi to the “Hita Seikatsu Ryojikan in Fukuoka”. It took roughly 15 minutes from Tenjin in the centre of Fukuoka City and cost me 2,200 yen. The facility is located just a few metres up the road from the upper class shopping centre called Marina Town and according to the taxi driver not far from a ferry terminal where one can catch a ferry to some scenic little islands just out from Fukuoka City. On the way to the facility, we passed quite a fancy looking housing development with very nice new looking houses and some very big apartment complexes as well. Some of the beautiful houses lined the waterfront.

The building was an impressive two storey structure of grey concrete and wooden features. The bright and cheerful “Hita Seikatsu Ryojikan in Fukuoka” sign and flags on the front of the building did not seem to belong. I suppose I probably thought this way because I knew that this was once the Oyama Seikatsu Ryojikan. For some reason it made me a bit sad to see that Oyama was not written anywhere on the front of the building. This was one of Oyama's

innovative and unique town development initiatives that could not be found anywhere else. I had heard much about it, but it is now an asset of Hita City because Oyama Town officially no longer exists. I guess these Hita signs on the building drove this reality home for me – Oyama as a town is no more.

Inside the facility there were a number of brochures offering tourist information on the sights, activities and gourmet delights of Hita City. A pile of Oyama Dam newsletters sat among the tourism pamphlets. There was also a sign for an upcoming ikebana (flower arrangement) class that would be held in one of the facility's meeting rooms used for cultural exchange and other activities. There were a number of displays showing off Hita specialty products including processed foods, some of which were from Oyama, and wooden crafts.

There were two female staff and we chatted briefly. They thought it funny that I was taking a picture of Tamichan's *yuzukosho* dressing and they seemed to know Mori Tamiko. They confirmed that yes until quite recently this had been the Oyama Seikatsu Ryojikan. I asked them if they were from Oyama or Hita originally and they laughed saying they were from "here" (Fukuoka). I recalled that my professor had explained to me that it made more sense to employ Fukuoka people, who had networks in Fukuoka and would be able to communicate the information from Oyama easily with locals in Fukuoka.

In the right hand side section of the building I noticed the Italian restaurant that Ogata Hideo from Oyama Yume Kobo had mentioned. According to Ogata the rent received from the Italian restaurant helped to ensure sustainability of the facility. Apparently the national government had not approved of the space being rented out to a restaurant; however, Oyama argued that the facility would not be sustainable otherwise and had eventually convinced the national government to turn a blind eye. I took a peek at the menu to see if the restaurant boasted the use of fresh produce from Oyama or Hita, but it did not seem to be the case. There was also a sign for a *pasokon kyoshitsu* (computer course) on the front upper left of the building – it seems that one of the second floor offices is also tenanted.

6.3.3 *HIBIKI NO SATO*

In order to satisfy the demand that had been carefully cultivated in Fukuoka City and to facilitate the growth of new local industries, Bungo Oyama Hibiki no Sato was established in Nishi Oyama in November 2002. OYKC involved the local residents of Oyama in the planning of the facility's construction as much as possible from the design stage onwards. This promoted local ownership, affection and pride for the facility. Participants in the project planning activities enjoyed the process so much they did not want to finish at establishment of the facility. They also wanted to be involved in management and operation of the facility – they were able to achieve this by becoming shareholders in the company. Hibiki no Sato is a rather large complex, which includes the following facilities:

- Ushuku – a liqueur factory for producing high quality plum liqueur and other types of liqueur using ingredients produced in Oyama;
- Asamoya – high mid-range accommodation facilities offering Japanese-Western and Western style rooms priced at between 11,700 and 14,200 yen per person per night;
- Hibiki – restaurant offering country style cuisine with a set dinner menu for 4,500 yen per person;
- Nagori no yu – plum scented hot spring facility including both indoor and open air baths, a high temperature sauna and a bedrock sauna. Entry to the onsen is 600 yen plus an extra 500 yen for the bedrock sauna;

- Seseragi – an onsen bistro offering light meals and snacks;
- Yumehotaru – training room/meeting facility which can be rented out at 2000 yen per hour;
- Kokoromi – a studio where visitors can participate in hands-on workshops;
- Omiyage Corner – specialty products store where products produced by OYKC and other local products can be purchased (see Image 6.3.3.1); and
- The facility also has a spacious camp ground/sporting field and plenty of parking.



Image 6.3.3.1: Omiyage Corner at Hibiki no Sato

Source: taken by author July 2007

This centre has also served to provide work opportunities for residents whose homes (and land) were in the area of Oyama submerged by the construction of the new Oyama Dam.

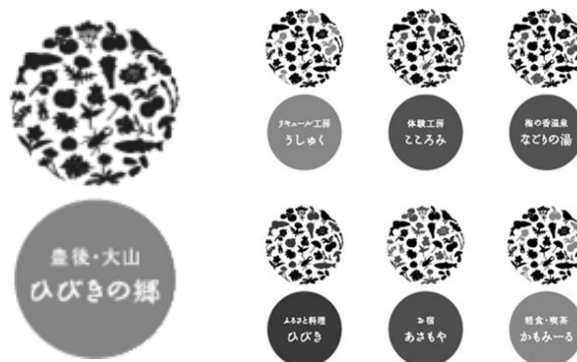


Image 6.3.3.2: Hibiki no Sato logo (left) and branding of facilities

Source: PAOS accessed 7 June 2012 at www.paos.net/english/work/ooyama.html

When Hibiki no Sato was launched, OYKC adopted a marketing strategy using a distinctive symbol and colour to disseminate the corporate image and concept to people both inside and outside of the company. The company employed a leading advertising expert to develop the logo (depicted in Image 6.3.3.2), which helped win a Good Design Award, making it significantly easier to conduct future sales promotion activities.⁷² In addition to this, an Oyama junior high school student

⁷² For more on this see the designer's website at: www.paos.net/english/work/ooyama.html

produced a television commercial for Hibiki no Sato and submitted it to the Furusato CM⁷³ Contest, which was held by a private broadcaster. The student won first prize, which included the right to broadcast the commercial 150 times (Ogata 2012). A housewife recognized as Japan's top *umeboshi* producer at the National *Umeboshi* Contest, and others working hard to revive *Hibiki ayu*, have also played roles in disseminating information on both Oyama and Hibiki no Sato. OYKC feel that it is essential for tourism promotion to enable local residents to be proud of Hibiki no Sato (Ogata 2012). OYKC's plan to bring consumers to the agricultural village has been successful. Annually, 650,000 people visit Oyama, where they directly spend 750 million yen. The economic ramifications of these visitors is estimated at up to 1,800 million yen when taking into consideration labour, and taking into account peripheral industries related to distribution channels, such as retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, raw material dealers, and producers (Ogata 2012).

6.3.4 MICHINO EKI – MIZUBE NO SATO

In 2004, two years after Hibiki no Sato opened, a *michi no eki* (roadside rest area) called "Mizube no Sato Oyama" opened along the Oyama River on the Kokudo 212. Its strategic location on the main road and next to the river makes it a convenient and attractive spot for travellers passing through to stop for a rest. The Kokudo is referred to as the "Golden Route" connecting Mt Aso with the rest of Kyushu and enjoys a large volume in traffic.

Mizube no Sato offers the weary traveller an abundance of car parking, restrooms, vending machines, a buffet restaurant, a smaller curry restaurant, a café, a stall selling salty grilled river fish, a direct sales outlet for local goods including both fresh and processed produce as well as handcrafts, and a park on an island in the middle of the river, which is perfect for stretching the legs or letting the kids or dog burn off some energy.

Field note 15 June 2012:

The bus stopped at Mizube no Sato on the way to our first lecture at Hibiki no Sato. One of the trainees smoked a cigarette in the smoking area at the front of the facility and was chatting to a young-ish Japanese man in English. He looked like a salaryman. I wandered over and joined their conversation. I asked him if he worked at Mizube no Sato as I thought I could informally interview him if he turned out to be a manager or something. It turned out that he was from Fukuoka and was driving through and had stopped for a rest at Mizube no Sato. "It's a good place for a rest," he said, "the sound of the river is very nice." He was right; it was a gorgeous sunny day and despite it being a weekday there were quite a few people following suit and enjoying a few minutes at the rest stop.

In October 2008, an antenna shop, called Oyama Yume Club, started operation in Kashii, Fukuoka City, and in 2010 moved to the Sepia Terrace shopping precinct at the Nishitetsu Kashii station. The Mizube no Sato website encourages customers to visit the antenna store:

Hello, my name is Hara from Oyama Yume Club, the antenna shop of Mizube no Sato Oyama. Every morning, fresh fruit and vegetables and processed products are brought in from Oyama. At this store, we aim to create a pleasant shopping experience that will make customers want to come back again. Please come and visit us when you come to Kashii. We look forward to serving you.⁷⁴

⁷³ Furusato CM = home town television commercial

⁷⁴ www.mizobenosato-oyama.com

There is also a similar greeting on the website of Kashii Chamber of Commerce and Industry's website.⁷⁵

6.3.5 UMESHU AND OTHER PRODUCTS

The General Manager of Hibiki no Sato emphasizes that who you know and your connections with people are important resources that determine whether you can convert the resources at hand into productive activities with higher added value. The high-grade plum wine manufacturing at Hibiki no Sato is the result of a marriage between the high-quality plums of Oyama and the technical skills available through Nikka Whiskey. Valuing network capital as a resource realized this.

Knowledge imported through information exchanges initiated by OYKC has contributed to the creation of new industries in Oyama. Notably, in 2006 a liqueur made of high quality fruit and herbs grown in Oyama was developed using the technology of Nikka Whisky Distilling Co Ltd. The high class umeshu product, Yumehibiki, first hit the markets in March 2006. To begin with, sales were not very good, as the price was set very high and umeshu has always traditionally been a lowly priced and mass produced "peasant" drink. In June 2006, Yumehibiki was taken to the Bordeaux Fete Le Vin (Bordeaux Wine Festival) where it was well received – over 90 per cent who tried Yumehibiki at the festival said they liked the flavour and the design of the bottle; packaging and labels were also highly praised.



Image 6.3.5.1: Yumehibiki's success in Bordeaux (left) and showcasing umeshu (right)

Source: OYKC 2012

As shown in Image 6.3.5.1, the Mainichi Shimbun, a major national Japanese newspaper, ran the story entitled *To the flavour of umeshu "tre bien"* in June 2006. The story was also picked up by Fuji Television's morning program, Special Source. The television program introduced Yumehibiki as a luxury umeshu and showed television personalities tasting it and rating it highly. After this, Yumehibiki became very popular in Tokyo, which has a population of 8 million, and sales picked up tremendously.⁷⁶ This product is now sold to high-end gourmet shops and major department stores in the Kanto market. OYKC have also started exporting the liqueur to United States, Hong Kong and

⁷⁵ <http://e-machikashii.com>

⁷⁶ Population figure from Tokyo Metropolitan Government accessed 21 May 2012 at www.toukei-metro.tokyo.jp

Singapore (Ogata 2012). All Nippon Airways (ANA) now also serves high class *umeshu* produced in Oyama on their international business flights.

OYKC have also developed and are selling a new type of Umeboshi Chazuke (plum seasoning for rice soup) product, by improving on the conventional dry type seasoning. The original Umeboshi Chazuke, which uses raw instead of dried umeboshi, has earned a favourable reputation. Oyama Yume Kobo has been working on developing various products, but especially focusing on products made with Oyama's specialty produce – plums. Specifically, they have developed a kind of confectionery made of liqueur-soaked umeboshi, and commercialized high-quality plum extract and dressings in collaboration with a university and another private company.

Such initiatives have attracted attention from the national government. In 2008, Oyama Yume Kobo was selected as one of the 88 Best Collaborations among Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, recommended by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (Ogata 2012). Currently, Oyama Yume Kobo is working to develop a new beverage using plums, with support from the Japanese government (Ogata 2012).

6.4 OGIRIHATA GREEN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Green Tourism in Japan refers to tours that provide the opportunity to stay in an agricultural, mountain or fishing⁷⁷ village, where travellers can experience the natural environment and culture of rural Japan. There is also often the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities as well as close interaction with local inhabitants.

Due to the results of a study finding that children who are exposed to nature have a higher sense of morality and justice, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has implemented policies to increase Japanese children's exposure to nature (Ando 2002). MEXT and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have collaborated to make the maximum use of the educational qualities of farming and farming communities for children.

Green Tourism has been actively promoted by the Japanese Government since 1994 when the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries introduced the "Law Concerning the Promotion of Enhancement of the Infrastructure for Leisure Activities Involving Stays in Agricultural, Mountainous and Fishing Communities" (Ando 2002). Along with encouraging prefectures and municipalities to develop promotion plans for Green Tourism, the government also set up a registration system for farm stay accommodations (*minpaku* or *nohaku*). Historically, it was cost prohibitive for farming households to apply for a hotel license. The new law removed the cost barriers and allowed rural households to register as certified *minpaku* and legitimately accept paying guests.

6.4.1 OGIRIHATA

Ogiri-hata is one of the small communities (*shuraku*) located roughly in the centre of Oyama, about one kilometre from the Kokudo. The small community is nestled into the hillside and has wide smooth roads connecting the closely huddled group of houses. There are 37 households in Ogiri-hata and many of these households consist of three generation families.

There are only a few rice paddies in this tiny hamlet. On terraced fields, fruit trees are grown including ume, plums, grapes, yuzu, and ginkgo. Vegetables and herbs are also cultivated and there are a number of households that have climate controlled indoor facilities for growing enoki mushrooms are also produced by a number of households.⁷⁸ A number of households in Ogiri-hata produce umeboshi including quite a few that have previously won first prize in the National

⁷⁷ The author has also experienced tours and hands on activities in a couple of fishing villages in Oita Prefecture. One of these villages referred to their program as "Blue Tourism" distinguishing their activities from those of the agricultural and mountain villages and emphasising the connection with the ocean.

⁷⁸ See the section on the introduction of enoki which addresses these in more detail.

Umeboshi Contest.⁷⁹ Due to the amount and quality of umeboshi produced here, Ogirihata is sometimes referred to as the “umeboshi ginza”.

Before the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association was established, the residents of Ogirihata were already quite active. Collective activities centred on the men’s association, the women’s association, the 34 association, the 80 association, the Cosmos association, the Showa association, dancing classes as well as karaoke singing classes. The community hall, which was built in 1987⁸⁰, was generally used for community gatherings. Activities were lively and people interacted with each other on a daily basis.



Image 6.4.1.1: Looking out over the tiny hamlet of Ogirihata

Source: taken by author in January 2010

Field note 8 February 2008:

After dinner and chatting, the Kurokawas took me to Hibiki no Sato to bathe in the onsen (natural hot spring bath). On the way, we passed the Ogirihata community centre and I heard Teruko mutter to herself, “I wonder what they’re doing in there tonight?” as we drove past she peered towards the centre through the car window, “Oh, that’s right, yoga class! They’re having their yoga class”.

After the collapse of Japan’s bubble economy, the community of Ogirihata was experiencing a declining population, an aging population and low birth rate, and agricultural price decreases (due to the liberalization of trade in agricultural produce). Due to these phenomena, an increasing amount of farmland was being abandoned. These worries became the topic of conversation whenever Ogirihata residents met and they complained to each other frequently. Through these conversations they started to feel that they needed to take some kind of action to maintain their community, but what kind of measures would be effective was not apparent to them at the time. Thus commitment to action sprouted from frequent (daily) contact and a high level of social activity between residents through a number of social organisations and collective activities. Due to this social capital and frequent interaction and conversations, Ogirihata residents had an acute awareness of their mutuality of circumstances and knew that their neighbours had the same worries and concerns as themselves. This shows that there was a well-developed sense of community in Ogirihata.

⁷⁹ See section on the National Umeboshi Competition for more on this.

⁸⁰ Information from materials prepared for JICA training program by Oyama Development and Promotion Bureau 2011.

6.4.2 DIRECT PAYMENT SYSTEM FOR HILLY AND MOUNTAINOUS AREAS

In 2001, residents received information on the direct payment system for hilly and mountainous areas through the Yakuba's effective information dissemination. This direct payment system was introduced by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 2000 and aims to close the gap in production costs between hilly and mountainous areas and flat areas in order to make farming in hilly and mountainous areas more sustainable and therefore ensure that farmlands and environments are managed (Saika 2010). The policy targets areas under the less favoured area development laws and included farmland on steep and mild slopes as well as paddy fields on small plots or with irregular shapes, and farmland located in communities with high rates of aged population or high cultivation abandonment rates. Required activities under the system fall into two categories:

1. Basic activities
 - agricultural production activities for at least five years
 - community agreement concerning the management policy of farmland, roads and water channels
2. System development activities
 - Activities relating to productivity/revenue improvement
 - Communalization of machinery and farm work
 - Implementation of high added value farming
 - Processing and marketing of locally produced crops
 - Activities relating to fostering of farming individuals and entities
 - Recruitment of new farmers
 - Fostering of certified farmers
 - Concentration of farmland in the hands of principal farmers
 - Outsourcing of farm work to principal farmers
 - Activities relating to the realization of multifunctional agriculture
 - Interaction with urban residents and others through the utilization of the health and recreational function
 - Coordination with school education etc with regard to the conservation of natural ecosystems
 - Collaboration with non-farm households, other communities etc towards the continued realization of multifaceted functions of agriculture

Communities are paid a flat rate subsidy depending on the type of land, for example, for steep slope paddy field they receive 21,000 yen per 10 ares⁸¹ or for mildly sloped dry fields they receive 3,500 yen per 10 ares (Saika 2010). In 2008, the average scale of community agreements was 23 participants, 23 hectares of land and 1.82 million yen in payments (Saika 2010).

The impacts of the program are reported to be:

- prevention of 33,000 hectares of farmland abandonment;
- enhancement and maintenance of the multi-functionality of agriculture, for example, 41,000 students have participated in farming activities;
- securing continued agricultural activities into the future, for example, 951 new farmers and 7,496 certified farmers; and
- revitalization of community functions, for example, increased opportunities of village meetings (Saika 2010).

⁸¹ One are = 100m²

The households of Ogirihata unanimously decided to participate in the scheme with all of their farmland, even though at the time they did not really have a concrete idea of what their development plans would be. To begin with, all residents participated in the weeding of unused farmland in Ogirihata while they began to consider what measures might be effective in both dealing with management of the land and rejuvenating their community. This showed that not only did they recognise that action was needed to secure their community's future, but also that they were willing and able to take action to this end (there was at least a certain level of commitment). They also had the ability to make a collective decision to participate in the program.

6.4.3 *OGIRIHATA GREEN TOURISM ASSOCIATION*

In 2002, the Yakuba provided information on a course in Green Tourism run by Oita Prefecture; the chair of the Steering Committee for the Direct Payment System in Ogirihata participated in this training. After this, Ogirihata's Steering Committee began to study the potential of Green Tourism as a measure to conserve farmland in Ogirihata and possibly form the basis of future community development efforts.

It was also around this time that the topic of the possibility of Oyama being amalgamated into Hita City started to surface.⁸² This caused community members to believe that they would need to become more responsible for development in their own community as they would not be able to rely on the town administration to give them the same level of support it had provided in the past if the amalgamation eventuated. Thus, at the regular community meeting of the shuraku, the officer responsible for the direct payment system in Ogirihata proposed that the community adopt Green Tourism despite not having any concrete ideas about how to approach it at the time. Thus, residents of Ogirihata possessed an understanding of their own roles particularly with the likely impending disappearance of the Yakuba and a perception that Ogirihata residents would now have to take more responsibility for the future of their community rather than relying on the Yakuba to support and assist them – this commitment was translated into action. They decided to go ahead and try implementing Green Tourism, believing that the activities would be developed through the process of implementation. Figure 6.4.3.1 illustrates how Green Tourism activities came to be introduced in Ogirihata.

A degree of community capacity already existed in Ogirihata, including a strong sense of community and commitment to the community as well as tight social networks amongst residents complemented with bridging social capital and corresponding access to outside information including about national and prefectural government programs. There was also strong leadership ability evident in a number of Yahata Harumi's protégés who lived in Ogirihata including Kurokawa Hirofumi and his wife, Teruko. Individuals in the community had also benefited from the long history of NPC movement initiatives that had aimed at a cultured people, meaning that they were skilled and educated and a valuable resource in themselves with the ability to study, discuss, plan and manage collective activities. This led to the establishment of this organisation, which in turn resulted in the introduction of new policy structures into the community such as the exchange programs for high school students from urban areas and the minpaku system, activities which also constituted income diversification, but also resulted in conservation and utilisation of local resources as well as linking social capital with potential farming produce consumers in urban areas.

⁸² See section on amalgamation of Oyama into Hita City.

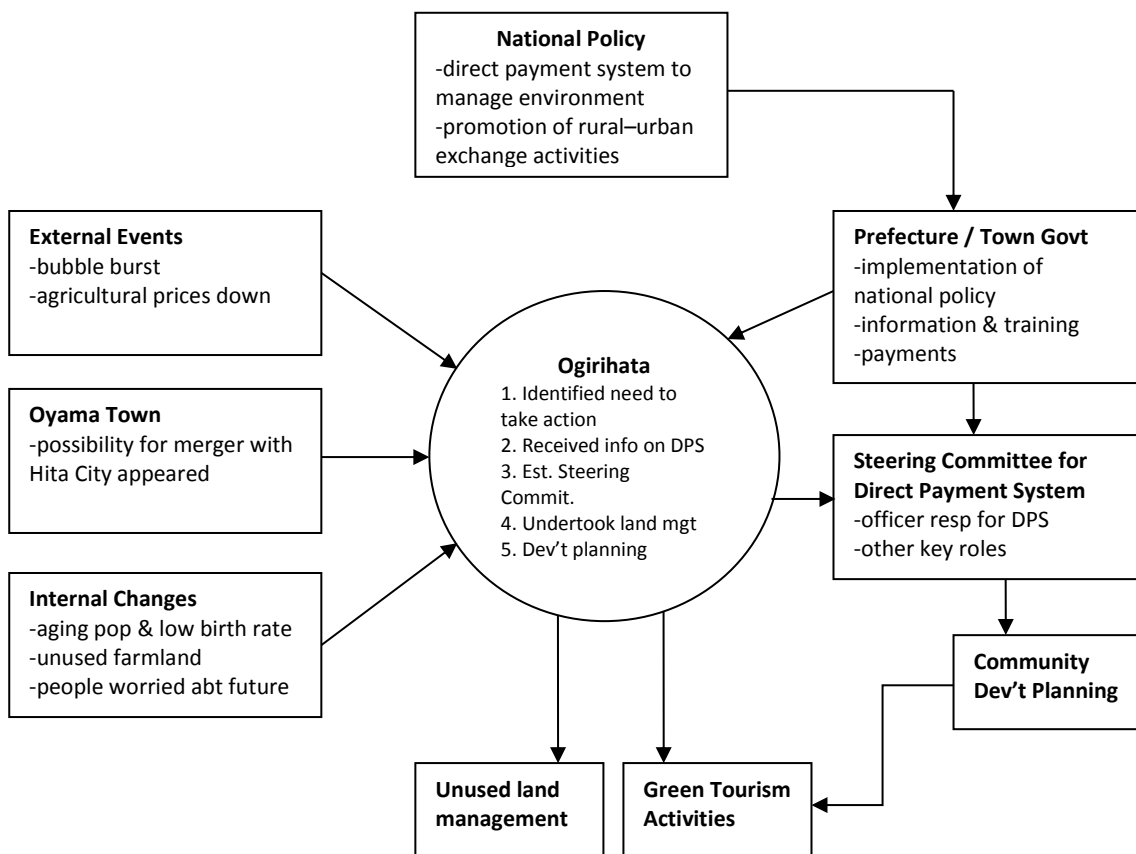


Figure 6.4.3.1: Introduction of Green Tourism in Ogirihata
 Source: created by author based on Ogirihata Green Tourism Association 2009

Officers of the steering committee for the direct payment system assumed core roles for the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association’s activities. Those households that could begin Green Tourism activities immediately gathered and began to formulate plans for the development of the activities. Three groups were formed to develop Ogirihata’s approach to Green Tourism. These groups focused on:

1. Landscape/environment – ensuring an environment conducive to the enjoyment of Green Tourism activities in the community. They decided to emphasize structures of wood and stone for any new facilities to achieve the rustic aesthetic that urbanites might expect and enjoy experiencing in the rural community;
2. Exchange and local specialties – development of activities and products to offer visitors including farm work and product processing, rural cooking, traditional crafts, visiting historic and cultural sites and local events; and
3. Farm stay program – setting up policies and systems and establishing networks to encourage visits to farmer’s houses.

The pursuit of Green Tourism in Ogirihata, as well as in Kabu, has resulted in the community actively identifying, enhancing, conserving and capitalising on a diverse range of local resources from the knowledge and skills of elderly residents to the beauty of the natural environment. This was done purposefully and formally through the formation of a number of groups to learn more about and discover the resources that their small hamlet possessed that could be utilised in Green Tourism activities. A history and culture group studied the history of Ogirihata learning more about the rich history of the community. They studied from books that mentioned the shrines and ancient historical sites located in Ogirihata. As they did so they began to feel prouder of their humble

shuraku. When staying at the Mori's *minpaku*, Mr Mori was very enthusiastic about taking the author for a walk up the mountain to visit Ushuku Shrine (shown in Image 6.4.3.1) and Ushuku Jinja Miike, a kind of rainwater collecting well located just below Ushuku Shrine, the water of which is said to have special qualities. It is said that in the past farmers would travel from far distances to receive some of the water to pour onto their fields, which they believed worked as a kind of pesticide (Oyama 1995). Historically, whenever it rained and the pond filled up, the inhabitants of Ogirihata would have a gathering to celebrate the rainfall (Oyama 1995).



Image 6.4.3.1: Ushuku Shrine in Ogirihata

Source: taken by author in February 2008

Mr Mori also enjoyed talking about the history and significant sites in Ogirihata as shown in the field notes below.

Field note 9 February 2008:

I chatted with Mr Mori for a bit after dinner. He is generally reserved, but seems to get quite chatty after a *shochu* or two. He showed me a book written about the history of Ogirihata by an academic who had been born in the neighbourhood. The book is called *Tambo* by Asai Masayoshi. According to the book, Ogirihata was settled in 705 AD by a monk. Mr Mori told me how the mountain in Ogirihata had been a destination frequented by religious pilgrims. He also told me that there are castle ruins and a couple of shrines in the neighbourhood.

Another group studied rural cooking from an elderly female resident of Ogirihata who possessed much knowledge of traditional ways of preparing food in the area. Different *minpaku* have taken different approaches to the food they serve their guests. For example, while staying at the Mori's or Kurokawa's farm stays in Ogirihata one is served a beautifully laid out meal such as that depicted in Image 6.4.3.2 and home made condiments (sometimes with up to five different *ume*-based products). Both Mori and Kurokawa seemed to take great pride in preparing and offering *minpaku* guests their specialties. At another *minpaku*, while the food was still very fresh and delicious, the lady of the house announced that she purposefully made the food as she normally would for her family without adding anything special because there were guests from the city, or from overseas for that matter, staying. She said that living with a farming family was part of the farm stay experience and it was important for guests to genuinely experience rural life including real farm household food. Her husband added that the philosophy of the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association was that effort

to accommodate visitors should be minimal so that the disruption to busy farming households is also minimised. Another group studied the traditional craftwork of the village, including how to weave straw into traditional sandals and religious totems. They learned these arts from the elderly residents of Ogirihata.



Image 6.4.3.2: Dinner as served by Mori Tamiko

Source: taken by author in January 2010

Koda Kazumi mentioned that he thought one of the best outcomes of Green Tourism was that it forced local people to open their eyes and look at all of the valuable things they have in their community and make efforts to protect them. During an early morning stroll around his neighbourhood of Kabu in May 2012 with a group of JICA trainees, Koda pointed out the rock retaining walls on some of the fields shown in Image 6.4.3.3:

“Take these rock walls for example. These were built by our ancestors. It would be a lot easier for people to just get rid of them and replace them with concrete – it’s not as much work to maintain. But instead we are aiming to keep the farming village aesthetic by maintaining these. This is due to Green Tourism. If it were concrete there would be no point for city people to come here, they can see plenty of concrete in Kitakyushu.”

He did not say it specifically, but Koda alluded that if Green Tourism was not being pursued there would be no argument to keep these relics of history and they would likely have since been replaced by ubiquitous concrete. There were also plenty of flowers planted on the tops of these rock walls, in between their stones and also along the sides of the road. “We are all making more effort with planting decorative flowers, too,” said Koda gesturing to some purple irises blooming on the side of the road.



Image 6.4.3.3: Rock retaining walls in Kabu *shuraku* (left and right)

Source: taken by author May 2012

The signboard constructed by the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association at the entrance to Ogirihata *shuraku* (see Image 6.4.3.4) and a pamphlet produced by the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association suggest the kinds of things that the study groups uncovered and are now preserving and maintaining in their community by utilising these in Green Tourism activities. These include:

- An 800 year old elm tree
- Mountain views/scenery
- Ushuku Shrine
- The Hadaka Matsuri (Naked Festival)⁸³
- The Hotaru Concert (outlined in more detail below) and hotaru (fireflies)
- Ume and plums and farming in general
- Ancient skills in charcoal making
- Country cooking and food processing
- Traditional crafts such as basket weaving



Image 6.4.3.4: Ogirihata Annaiban (noticeboard)

Source: taken by author May 2012

⁸³ The festival involves men donning a loincloth, splashing themselves with water and then running to the top of the mountain to pray at Ushuku Shrine in the middle of the night in mid-December.

A 2007 pamphlet produced by the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association outlines the different farm work type activities that were being offered that year and the time of year that the activities were being offered. These included the following experiences:

- Making *umeboshi* (pickled plum)
- Enoki mushroom farming
- Farming small varieties of vegetables
- *Ume* (plum) farming/harvesting
- Cooking with *ume* (plum)
- Charcoal making
- Making *rakkyo* (pickled garlic)
- Carving a wooden Buddhist statue
- Making pickled vegetables
- Making konnyaku
- Making dried vegetables

While staying in Ogirihata in January 2010, my research assistant, Okabe Yumiko, and I were shown a home video of high school students participating in rural work activities including a hands-on charcoal-making workshop. The students were obviously enjoying sawing the bamboo while, as Okabe noted, it also appeared to be quite hard work. I also participated in a hands-on experience working for a couple of hours in Mori Tamiko's food processing workshop at her house in Ogirihata in May 2012, see Image 6.4.3.5. Together with Mori's employee, Kyoko, who appears to work in her workshop fulltime, I affixed Konohana Garten barcode labels to already packaged *umeboshi*. Mori would be dropping the products off at Konohana Garten the following morning. I reflected on my experience in the field note below.

Field note 18 May 2012:

Before lunch, Tamiko let me help out for a couple of hours in the food processing workshop. I was a bit disappointed that we weren't actually making anything, but filling in the Konohana Garten labels and sticking them to the packs of *umeboshi* (pickled plum) was surprisingly satisfying. I like how the labels include the producers' names. Looking at them as I affixed them to the products, I imagined how proud Tamiko must feel when she does this same task. It also made we wonder how it makes customers feel when they see an actual person's name on the product they are purchasing, surely they feel reassured and perhaps a little curious about the person whose handmade goods they are buying and eating.



Image 6.4.3.5: Preparing packed *umeboshi* for sale at Konohana Garten
Source: Self portrait taken May 2012

Green Tourism guests also participate in the various events held in Ogirihata and Oyama more generally. For example Ogirihata's Hadaka Matsuri (Naked Festival), the Hotaru Concert (Firefly Concert), and Oyama's Ume Matsuri (Plum festival). Image 6.4.3.6 depicts Mr Mori finishing the race up the mountain to the entrance of Ushuku Shrine during the Hadaka Matsuri. The name of the festival literally translates to the Naked Festival and the main event involves local men and boys donning loin cloths, splashing themselves with icy water, and racing up the mountain to Ushuku Shrine on a cold night in mid-December.



Image 6.4.3.6: Mr Mori participates in the Hadaka Matsuri

Source: The Mori Household

The season when the *ume* trees are in full bloom and when the Ume Matsuri is on is an especially popular time for urbanites to visit and experience Green Tourism activities as Kurokawa Teruko told the author during a stay at her *minpaku*. The biggest event for the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association is the Hotaru Concert (Firefly Concert), which is generally held annually in June at the peak of *hotaru* (firefly) season and in 2011 attracted over 400 people. The Hotaru Concert was first held in Ogirihata in June 2007, after Mori Tamiko's husband had an idea about sharing the wonder of Ogirihata's abundance of summertime *hotaru* with others from outside of Ogirihata.

Field note 17 May 2012:

Mr Mori told me the story of how he came up with the idea of the Hotaru Concert. One evening he took his granddaughters down to the stream at the bottom of Ogirihata to show them the fireflies. He thought to himself "Wouldn't it be nice to share this with more people through some kind of green tourism related exchange activity?" Then he thought it would be better if there was something else attractive at the same time to get people to come. "Aha – fireflies and a concert!" he thought. This year they decided not to hold the Hotaru Concert as they had already held it for four or five years in a row and everyone was pretty tired and busy. Tamiko said that the hardest part was making the obento (lunchboxes) for 400-500 people. Also, the former head of the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association and Kurokawa Teruko's husband, Kurokawa Hirofumi, had passed away in 2011 and it seems like it is still difficult for Teruko and the rest of the community without him.



Image 6.4.3.7: Hotaru Concert poster
 Source: taken by author at Mori Household May 2012

As mentioned in the field note from 17 May 2012, the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association had decided not to hold the Hotaru Concert in 2012. There had been massive rains in June 2011 and apparently on the night of the concert the rain was particularly heavy. “Obviously, we couldn’t hold it outside like we usually do. We couldn’t cancel either as we had already sold the tickets – I sold something like 120 tickets,” Mori Tamiko explained. The concert is normally held in an empty field at the entrance to Ogirihata. A small stream runs by the field and this is where the *hotaru* are particularly concentrated. They arranged to hold the concert at the Oyama Cultural Centre instead. Obviously, there are not normally fireflies in the cultural centre, but Ogirihata Green Tourism Association participants collected some fireflies in cardboard boxes and set them free inside the centre during the concert. “It wouldn’t have been right to have the Hotaru Concert without any *hotaru*,” explained Mr Mori, “But of course we made sure they could escape, too. We opened windows in the roof of the culture centre, so eventually they would make their way out,” piped in Tamiko. Despite the rain around 400 people attended the concert. The author had intended to go to the Hotaru Concert in 2012 if it was held, but instead was treated to a video that Mr Mori had shot of the Hotaru Concert that was held in June 2011. The video is described in the author’s field note from May 2012.

Field note 18 May 2012:

I awoke to the sound of classical music the next morning. Apparently, Mr Mori had found the video he had shot of the Hotaru Concert (Firefly Concert) that he had been searching for the previous night. I watched the video of the 2011 Hotaru Concert after breakfast – there was about one hour of footage. The concert had been held in the Oyama Cultural Centre due to the outdoors venue being rained out. The huge calligraphy “*hotaru*” kanji hanging behind the stage was probably a product of the calligraphy performance that Mr Mori was

telling me about last night. He said that it was getting quite popular these days and it involved a famous calligrapher producing oversized Chinese character calligraphy to music.

The concert began with a *taiko* (Japanese drums) performance from a group of Ogirihata primary school children. After they finished, one of the children was interviewed on stage “Taiko is hard, but it’s fun.” Next was a contemporary dance performance, according to Tamiko the dance teacher lives in Ogirihata. Then there was another *taiko* performance. After this Mr Mori gave a quick speech and *aisatsu* (greeting). The next speaker appeared to be some kind of environmental scientist or specialist. He gave a lecture on *hotaru* (firefly) cultivation and river conservation. After this the main event was introduced – a three piece group playing beautiful classical type music. Instruments included a massive Irish harp. They started with “Amazing Grace” and also played some classic Japanese tunes I had heard before. The video stopped halfway through the third song or so.

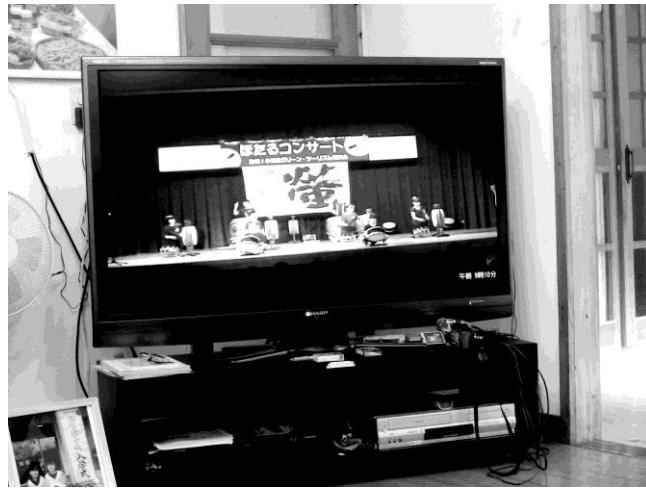


Image 6.4.3.8: video of Hotaru Concert in 2011

Source: taken by author at Mori household in May 2012

6.4.4 MINPAKU

By 2009, a total of nine households in Oyama had gained *minpaku* (home stay) licenses and were accepting overnight visitors through OGTA’s Green Tourism activities. These included five households from Ogirihata, two from Kabu and two from another two communities. At the time, a total of 10 households in Ogirihata were participating actively by offering hands on experiences to guests.

Field note 8 February 2008:

Teruko’s house is licensed as a farm-stay/home-stay (*nohaku/minpaku*). Teruko and her husband are members and leaders of the Ogirihata Green Tourism Group, which consists primarily of households in her neighbourhood of Ogirihata, but also some of their acquaintances or friends from other neighbourhoods in Oyama as the demand for *nohaku* by groups of junior and senior high school students could not be fulfilled by the number of households participating from Ogirihata alone. Still, Teruko mentioned that she would sometimes have up to eight students staying with her at one time. The *nohaku* business is busy in the season when school student groups come for a farm-stay experience, but also when the *ume* (plum) trees are in full bloom and the *ume matsuri* (Plum Festival) is on.

In the fiscal year of 2009, students from 17 schools visited Oyama for Green Tourism programs and each stayed for one or two nights. In autumn 805 students visited and another 1,471 in spring – a total of 2,276 students and nights stayed numbering well over 4,000 nights. Koda Kazumi, who lives in Kabu⁸⁴ and was a good friend of Kurokawa Teruko’s late husband, also has a licensed *minpaku* (home stay) and is a member of Ogirihata Green Tourism. Koda mentioned that his household accepted a total of 120 visitor nights in 2008.⁸⁵ According to the certificate given pride of place and displayed in the magnificent polished wooden *genkan* (foyer/entrance) of Koda’s farmhouse, he received his *minpaku* license in May 2007 (see Image 6.4.4.1).

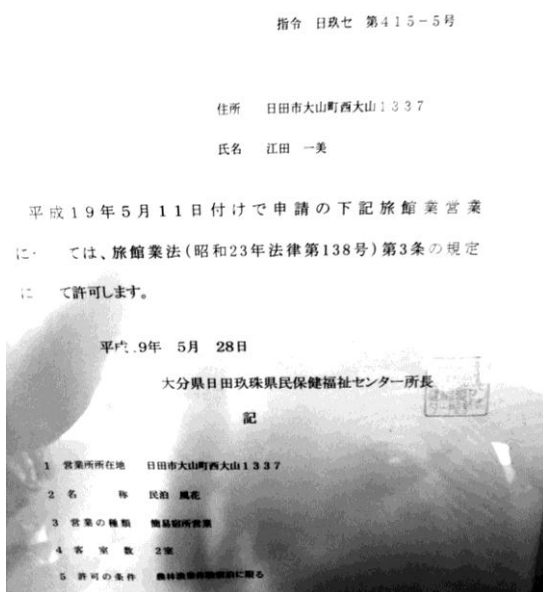


Image 6.4.4.1: Minpaku permission certificate displayed in *genkan* of *minpaku*

Source: taken by author May 2012

Next to the certificate an Ogirihata Green Tourism Association pricing schedule is also displayed. The schedule lists overnight stay and meal prices for junior high school students, senior high school students and general visitors. The prices listed are as follows:

Table 6.4.4.1: Minpaku fees

Guest	Minpaku stay per night	Meals
Junior high school student	5,000 yen	500 yen
High school student	5,000 yen	500 yen
General guest	From 6,500 yen	From 500 yen

Source: created by author

The price for *taiken* (hands on activities) depends on the activity concerned; however, prices would appear to be generally in the vicinity of 1,000 – 2,000 yen. Although these figures would indicate that Green Tourism activities provide a reasonable secondary income source for members of the

⁸⁴ Another even smaller *shuraku* in Oyama consisting of a total of just 17 or so households.

⁸⁵ Learned from lecture delivered by Koda Kazumi to JICA trainees 9 April 2009.

association, Kurokawa Teruko was adamant that more importance is placed on the human interaction dimension and exchanging of culture with urbanites that result from Green Tourism. “Increasing the spiritual richness of members is considered more important than increased income or economic richness,” explained Kurokawa during a community lecture given to JICA trainees in May 2012. Thus the establishment of minpaku provides a mechanism for intimate social interaction between minpaku owners and people coming from outside of Oyama, including high school students from urban areas and JICA trainees from all over the globe resulting in the sharing of knowledge, culture and ideas. This promotes learning by all parties concerned.

宿泊料金等 価格表

区分	宿泊(1泊2食)	昼食代	体験料	飲み物	その他
中学生以下	6000円	500円	500円		
高校生	6000円	500円	500円		
一般	6500円より	500円より	500円より	酒類持込	可者類の用意 不可

平成20年9月改訂
大山小切畑グリーンツーリズム

Image 6.4.4.2: Minpaku pricing schedule

Source: taken by author at Koda Household May 2012

The following feedback from students who have participated in the program also emphasises the importance of the exchange at an individual level:

“My best memory is the obaachans and ojiichans. They taught us by explaining step by step very patiently and when we climbed up the mountain, I was very moved by how much they supported and took care of us” (third year junior high school student).

“Through interacting with people in various settings I learnt ‘courage’” (first year junior high school student).

“Overall, my impression was that every person in Ogirihata remembers to show love towards others, have a grateful heart, and help other people” (first year high school student).⁸⁶

6.5 KODA’S SHAKUNAGE GARDEN

In April 2012, Kyushu’s largest *shakunage* (rhododendron) garden was opened in Oyama. The garden was established by Koda Kazumi, who was a town official in Oyama for decades before retiring. Koda is also a member of the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association and his household has been accepting guests as a *minpaku* since 2007. Koda spent three years or so before the garden opened working on the garden on his own and invested his own funds into the garden as well. Altogether he has planted over 20,000 rhododendron plants with a cost of 20 million yen. Koda also

⁸⁶ From Ogirihata Green Tourism Association brochure.

constructed the access road and paths himself which cost him a further 10 million yen or so and it costs about 1.5 million yen per year to maintain the plants. By mid-May 2012, the garden had received over 5,000 visitors; however, this is well under the goal of 10,000 visitors in the first season that Koda had hoped to achieve.



Image 6.5.1: Shakunage Garden poster
Source: taken at Koda Household May 2012

Field note 16 May 2012:

Koda plans to finish the garden within the next five years. He told us he still needs to fix up the trails, make better rest areas, renovate the guest house so that people can stay, make the parking lot bigger, construct a well for drinking water. He aims to have over 100,000 guests per season by the time the garden is finished in five years.

Shakunage are in full bloom from May to June, coinciding with the Golden Week national holidays in early May. This is also when the weather begins to get warmer after the long and cold Japanese winter, making people want to venture outdoors. The *shakunage* high season also does not overlap, and therefore does not compete, with the Oyama Ume Matsuri.



Image 6.5.2: Shakunage Garden sign on the Kokudo 212 in Oyama
Source: taken by author May 2012

Field note 16 May 2012:

Money spent on the shakunage-en – 20 million yen to plant 20,000 seedlings, 10 million yen to construct the road and trails. Also it costs 1.5 million yen per year to maintain the rhododendron plants. Koda plans to incorporate the park this year. This is because he wants to make sure that it continues to be managed even if something happens to him. His son has already said that he plans to succeed him, but he wants to make sure.



Image 6.5.3: Shakunage Park

Source: taken by author May 2012

The Oyama Dam was completed this year (2012). The purpose of the dam is primarily to supply water to Fukuoka City, which has a population of 1.4 million people and suffers from water shortages. Koda said that he opposed construction of this dam because he was worried about environmental destruction and also the adverse effects he thought the dam would have on the regional population. His reasoning in regards to the latter concern is that if water is more easily supplied in Fukuoka City then the population capacity of the city will be increased. It is said that this dam can meet the water needs of an extra 400,000 people; if this is true then Koda reasons that it is likely that 400,000 more people could move to Fukuoka from rural areas like the Hita region causing further depopulation to rural areas already struggling to deal with the problem of depopulation.



Images 6.5.4: Oyama Dam construction, Feb 2008 (left) and completed, May 2012 (right)

Source: left taken by author in February 2008 and right in May 2012

Around 120 households were displaced by the dam construction. Koda recently learned that from them only 64 households have remained in Oyama. This is because when they were displaced they received compensation and used this money to relocate to Hita City or other more built up areas. In February 2008, I visited the house of one resident who was relocated due to the Oyama Dam construction.

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko brought me to visit a friend of hers, Ms Tsuruno. She had recently been relocated due to the construction of the new Oyama Dam. The place she had been relocated to was up high with a view of the dam construction. There were a group of about 20 or so houses, all brand new looking. Ms Tsuruno's house is very large, although she lives there alone. It is all polished wood and large glass windows with a great view of the mountain over the other side of the valley. Kimiko said she was envious of Ms Tsuruno being relocated and having such a lovely house.

Koda also mentioned that there are some envious feelings amongst those who were displaced or otherwise received compensation due to the dam construction. This is because compensation was calculated based on the assets people would lose due to the dam – some people owned more fields, mountains and mature fruit trees than others and received a lot more compensation money. Koda admitted that he received quite a lot of compensation – an amount in the billions of yen (his words *nan oku en* – JICA interpreter said several 100 million yen). Koda received a lot more compensation than anyone else in Kabu chiku. At around the same time Koda retired from his job at the Yakuba, so also received retirement/pension money. This means that Koda would have been able to quite comfortably live out his retirement without having to work hard again. But he said he would not be able to do this and be happy knowing that his neighbours still had to work hard for a living. Of course, he could not just give them money either. Also as a Yakuba employee Koda said that he had always asked people to “*gambatte*” and work hard to make Oyama into what it is, so he figured it was about time he asked himself to do the same. So Koda decided to do something that would bring benefit to the people in Kabu as well by creating a local industry that attracted people to the tiny hamlet.

Field note 16 May 2012:

He calls it jibasangyo – the word “jiba” has two different meanings, “local” and also “magnet” (with different kanji, but the same pronunciation). His idea was the shakunage-en. He decided to do this because in Japan, due to the aging population, people are starting to get really concerned about health and ensuring that their lifestyle is healthy. This is evident if you watch television here – every TV commercial is about some kind of health supplement or another. Also many people are very stressed out in their work and want a relaxing activity to relieve this stress. Koda thinks looking at beautiful flowers and walking somewhere with mountain views is very relaxing so he decided to create a flower park on a mountain that he owns. He chose rhododendrons because they begin to bloom later than many other blossoms (in April – May) and this is the best kind of weather for getting outside meaning that a lot of people want to go and do outdoor activities at this time of year. The timing also coincides with Golden Week, a string of public holidays in early May, when a lot of Japanese people travel domestically.

Since the garden opened in April 2012, 5,000 people have visited. This is about half of what Koda-san had hoped for in the first year. Apart from the 500 yen entry fee, the park also makes money by selling cold drinks (chilled in the running water of a cool mountain spring)

as well as by selling potted rhododendron plants. At the time I visited in May 2012, Koda had sold around 1,000 shakunage seedlings at between 1,500 yen and 2,000 yen each. I came across some of Koda's plants in Ogirihata when staying at Mori Tamiko's minpaku. As we drove through Ogirihata to her house, Tamiko admired the large *shakunage* bush in one of her neighbours' gardens. Apparently this had been bought from Koda's *shakunage* park. Mori told me that she had ordered a large one like it, too. She said that she had never been able to successfully grow *shakunage*, so was excited about the new purchase. When we arrived I noticed that Tamiko also had one of his smaller *shakunage* plants in a pot by the front door of her home.

Due to his strong commitment to the community and desire to see it continue to prosper, Koda has invested a significant amount of his own financial resources as well as time and labour in a way that will benefit the community more broadly, not just to benefit himself or his own immediate family.

6.6 GAPPEI



Image 6.6.1: "Hita City, Oyama Promotion Bureau" – old Yakuba building
Source: taken by author January 2010

Japan has a long history of gappei (municipal mergers) with three major waves of amalgamations. The Great Meiji Merger implemented from 1888 to 1889 was the first wave and followed enactment of the Municipal Government Act. This legislation resulted in a reduction in the number of municipalities from 71,314 to 15,859 by 1890 (CLAIR 2006). These mergers were aimed at enabling local governments to cope with newly created administrative responsibilities including education, tax collection, civil engineering, disaster relief measures, and census register duties. Also included in this reform was the establishment of towns and villages as local municipalities, which until that time had been formed as voluntary communities (CLAIR 2006).

Enactment of the Municipal Merger Promotion Law and implementation of the Great Merger of Showa from 1953 through 1956 resulted in a further reduction to 3,975 municipalities in

1956. This wave of mergers aimed to increase the effectiveness of administrative operations after local municipalities were entrusted with the additional tasks of establishing and managing junior high schools under the new education system, administering the organization of local fire stations, and providing for the improvement of social welfare, health and hygiene services (CLAIR 2006). In 1999, the total number of municipalities had further reduced to 3,232. Even more widespread amalgamations were encouraged after this with a revision of the Law for Exceptional Measures on Municipal Mergers under the Uniform Decentralization Law, with a total of just 1,821 municipalities in 2006 (CLAIR 2006).

The rationale or reasons behind this most recent wave of amalgamations, dubbed the Great Heisei Mergers, include the promotion of decentralisation, the declining birth-rate and aging population, response to suburban sprawl, and promotion of administrative reform (CLAIR 2006, p.2). Expected benefits of municipal mergers include: improved convenience for residents in terms of being able to use services that were previously beyond the boundaries of their former municipality; more effective large-scale community development, for example, for roads, zoning and public facilities; more highly specialised and diversified services; more effective administrative operations and financial management systems (CLAIR 2006, p.3).

In 2005, Oyama and a number of neighbouring towns and villages in Hita County merged with Hita City. Oyama's Mayor at the time, Mitoma Zenpachiro, was a strong supporter of the amalgamation. Mitoma had defeated Yahata Kinji, who was strongly opposed to the proposed amalgamation with Hita City, in the final Mayoral elections in Oyama. This result was part of the reason why the amalgamation was inevitable. Oyama assembly members had also finally made the decision to join the great amalgamation and become part of Hita City after they had visited another town in Kyushu that had refused to participate in a merger with neighbouring amalgamating municipalities. That particular town at the time that Oyama representatives visited appeared to have become isolated and seemed to not be doing so well due to its refusal to amalgamate. Incumbent Mayor, Mitoma, and local assembly members did not want Oyama to suffer a similar fate, so they elected to join in the merger. The merger of the town of Oyama into Hita City heralds a new era for Oyama with some major changes to the community and community capacity. To begin with, the administrative boundaries have obviously changed. Oyama's definition of itself as a community is now no longer reinforced by the existence of these administrative boundaries.

Due to the amalgamation, Oyama also lost local institutions and vehicles of democracy in the Yakuba and local assembly. Without a dedicated local government unit and representative body, Oyama no longer has access to or control over a municipal budget as this is now controlled and allocated by Hita City. Decreased access to resources also includes funds committed to Oyama development including for infrastructure through the construction of the new Oyama Dam. Access to these funds was reliant on matched expenditure by the Yakuba, which is highly unlikely to take place under the Hita administration. Oyama also lost control of assets owned by the Yakuba, as ownership of these was assumed by Hita City's administration. These assets now owned by Hita City include Oyama Television, Oyama Yusen Hoso, the Oyama Seikatsu Ryojikan in Fukuoka, and former Oyama Town's 72 per cent share in Hibiki no Sato. This last item, the majority share of Hibiki no Sato appears to have resulted in conflict and a power struggle between Hita City's administration and the management of Oyama Yume Kobo, many of whom are former Yakuba staff.

Oyama TV now no longer exists; it has been turned into Hita TV and services all of the fringe districts of Hita City, which were all formerly separate municipalities before joining the amalgamation with Hita City. Koda pointed out a number of good and bad points that he had identified with this development.

Good

- Oyama people can get more information from Hita City
- The other surrounding villages that also amalgamated can benefit as they did not have any cable TV stations before

Bad

- Not much local information on just Oyama and Oyama viewers cannot see familiar faces on TV every day
- No information on agricultural produce or markets

There appears to be a certain amount of regret concerning the decision to join the gappei. For example, when asked by a JICA trainee how the town that did not amalgamate was faring now, Kurokawa Masateru, who was one of the last Oyama town assembly members who decided to join the amalgamation, replied “Well, that town ended up receiving some assistance from the national government and they managed to survive and get along okay as a town...obviously, we now regret our decision to merge with Hita City.” A national parliament member who was present at this particular community lecture agreed, blurting out the following bold statement: “Kuni ga machigaetanda!” which can be interpreted as “The national government was wrong!” [in so forcefully encouraging the municipal amalgamations].

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko Matsubara picked me up before lunch time. She works in the Yakuba [now Shinkokyoku] and has since she was 20 years old (she is now about 56 years old – so around 36 years). She took me to Hita City and showed me around Mameda-machi a little. In the car we talked about Oyama and the gappei. Kimiko said that “things have become quite difficult since Oyama-machi had disappeared and become a part of Hita City”. She elaborated that “Hita City, instead of valuing the unique identity of Oyama and accepting it to change Hita into a better city, wants to stamp out any kind of identity, so that a separate Oyama does not exist – only Hita City”. She said it is disappointing because she had originally viewed the gappei as an opportunity for Hita City to change and evolve; however, instead of becoming a new Hita she felt that the city was trying to mould the new additions to the city, including Oyama, into the old Hita. Kimiko also said that “*Nokyo ga gappei shitara mo dame*” meaning that if the Nokyo merges, then that will be it for Oyama.

Indeed it would appear that the importance of the Nokyo has been enhanced as a result of the Gappei.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Koda mentioned that he thinks there are some good things that came from the amalgamation, for example, he felt that local elections had always ended up dividing the town and the feelings of conflict between the winners and the losers often lingered long past the actual elections. “But, and this is just my opinion, the demerits of the gappei outweigh its merits. Yeah, the demerits far outweigh the merits, I’d say.”

Although the Yakuba building remains in Oyama and Hita City is utilising it as the Oyama Regional Development Bureau, it is safe to say that the gappei has resulted in the loss of autonomous local government for Oyama.

Field note 15 June 2012:

Koda said that the staff in the Yakuba (now called the Shinkokyoku) have changed since the amalgamation with Hita City. “Most of the people who work there now don’t know Oyama at all. They’re all from other places like Amagase or Hita.” Naturally, this means that there

are no activities like there were before. In Koda's opinion not having local people working in the Yakuba is the biggest downside of the amalgamation. "*Tonari no ojiisan no tame ni gambaru hito wa inai to ne...*" ("If there's no one who will work hard for the sake of the old man who lives next door to them, then...").

Koda said that the current Shinkokyoku was "*sabishii*" (lonely). He elaborated that since the gappei the Shinkokyoku does not really get any visitors. Oyama people now will normally just go to the main office in Hita for services as most of them are no longer offered at the Oyama branch. Also, no *gyosha* (agents/dealers) come to call – they also go straight to the main office in Hita which is where the decision makers are located. In Koda's opinion this must also be demotivating for any remaining staff in the Oyama branch.

It has also become apparent to us university folk that there are no longer staff with authority within the Shinkokyoku who lived through Oyama's story. Professor Miyoshi now no longer bothers to take JICA trainees to the Yakuba for community lectures as there is no one there who knows Oyama's story well enough to talk to it and share the Yakuba perspective. This is gained from the sharing of stories from former Yakuba employees like Ogata Hideo and Koda Kazumi.

There would appear to be a tension between the administrative efficiencies that come with larger municipalities and democracy which can be degraded through such amalgamations (Mabuchi 2001). Although the mergers have been conducted in the name of more effective decentralisation, to small [former] towns like Oyama, the process would probably feel very much more like a process of regional centralisation.

Field note 9 February 2008:

I asked Tamiko and Keiko if they had noticed any changes in Oyama since the town had merged with Hita City. They seemed a bit hesitant to comment but offered that "Something is different...it's not necessarily worse..." But I get the impression that they do not feel as though the situation has improved since the amalgamation either, although Keiko mentioned that the roads had gotten wider and nicer since. Keiko also alluded that government services were lacking. She said, "There's only one tiny hospital in Oyama and it's not even a proper hospital...and it's in the middle of the town so it's not convenient for those of us who don't live in the centre...but everyone drives cars, so I guess it's not really a problem." Tamiko added, "Oyama's a great place to live...there's places much worse off than here like Nakatsue [she added some other names of places] and those kinds of places over the other side of the mountains...Oyama's much better off than over there." I asked her if the places she had mentioned had also merged into Hita City and she indicated that they had.

Although Oyama as a town no longer exists, the legacy of decades of successful community development remains. There has been a decrease in community capacity due to the loss of a strong community organisation and strategic element of the community, the Yakuba; however, due to the community capacity that had been developed more broadly, Oyama's people continue to thrive and develop new collective activities. Institutions developed over the last half century or so also still remain and contribute greatly in terms of community capacity. These include the Nokyo, the Konohana Garten direct sales outlets, and Hibiki no Sato. Thus individuals and groups within Oyama still have high levels of capacity, access to resources, ability to set and achieve their own objectives but this has been lost to some extent at the whole of community level and community capacity appears to be functioning increasingly at the shuraku level.

Field note 8 February 2008:

I asked Go about the amalgamation (*gappei*) of Oyama into Hita City and whether he had noticed any significant changes since the *gappei*. He said that he felt there were fewer activities in Oyama since it became a part of Hita. He said:

“that does not mean that the bonds or relationships between people in Oyama are weaker or less...there are just less formally organized town wide activities...it doesn't mean there are none either...they are on a smaller scale...instead of whole town or large-scale activities or events people are organizing their own smaller-scale activities in their smaller communities.”

In Oyama, as in many old towns and villages, the community was previously formed according to the administrative zoning of the former municipality. Before these mergers, community members consisted of people and organizations of the community, including the *Yakuba*; however, after the merger, administration is now excluded from the community based on the old zoning.

Instead of being shut down, the former town halls and village offices of merged towns and villages have generally been turned into branch offices of the new post-merger city's town hall, this is the case in Oyama. The new city is governed by the laws, ordinances and regulations of the city, and the local assembly represents the entire merged city not only the members of the former community that has been merged. Such a change in members greatly affects the community. This becomes even more prominent if the former administrative body was a core member of the community, if there are no organizations other than the administrative body that can serve as the community core, or if the new core organization is weak. Also, in general, when former town halls and village offices are restructured into branch offices, the number of employees is greatly reduced. Where employees of the former town halls and village offices are transferred out of the former towns and villages due to the human resources requirements of their new employer, the community element of human resources changes as well. Leadership, internal and external networks are also affected. In some cases, community restructuring may occur.

In the development approach outlined in Chapter 3, communities are treated as an operational social construct and the subject of development; however, it is important to remember that communities change. The new merged city is another new community and will go through its own changes with the former towns and villages as its constituents.

Putnam (1993) studied the introduction of regional governments in Italy and the course of developments thereafter from a social capital perspective. It is also possible to view this as community restructuring in accordance with the administrative re-zoning of the regional government resulting in new communities with different strategic elements of capacity.

6.6.1 AMALGAMATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN JAPAN

There is also a long-term trend in Japan for the agricultural cooperatives to amalgamate, so that on average each agricultural cooperative now covers 3.2 or so municipalities (JA-Zenchu 2012). This is in order to remain financially viable through achieving efficiencies and due to declines in the numbers of members in line with the trends of Japan's aging population and rural population decline. In March 1950 there were 13,314 multi-functional agricultural cooperatives. In 1998 there were 1,833 agricultural cooperatives. By February 2005 this figure had shrunk to 894, and again to a total of just 710 agricultural cooperatives in Japan in 2012 (JA-Zenchu 2012).

Oyama's *Nokyo* is one of the few in Japan that has resisted amalgamation with the agricultural cooperatives of surrounding areas. The *Nokyo* has, however, devised methods to expand its service catchment area without necessarily broadening its official area or losing local control over the organisation through amalgamating into a super *Nokyo* or broadening official

membership and voting rights. For example, the Konohana Garten direct sales outlet is not limited to only Oyama farmers – farmers from the immediate surrounding areas also sell their produce through Konohana Garten.

Field note 15 June 2012:

In Koda’s opinion the role of the Nokyo has gotten broader and more important since the town amalgamated with Hita City. He said that the Nokyo is the only organisation left that can organise all of Oyama’s farmers.

6.7 CHALLENGES

Despite the community’s efforts to combat depopulation in Oyama through the NPC movement, the shrinking of Oyama’s population has been marked. As shown in Table 6.7.1 and visually depicted in Figure 6.7.1, Oyama’s population in 2012 had dropped to below half of the population during its peak in the mid-1950s. The number of households has also decreased by 138 households, from a peak of 1,125 households recorded in the 1965 Census to just 987 households in 2012. This is likely due to the aging population, a decreased birth-rate and successive generations of migration to urban centres, phenomena that are affecting most rural areas in both Oita Prefecture and Japan more broadly.

Table 6.7.1: population and number of households in Oyama 1955 – 2012

Year	Population	Households
1955	6485	1098
1960	6168	↑ 1107
1965	5755	↑ 1125
1970	5118	1069
1975	4701	1059
1980	↑ 4716	1055
1985	↑ 4727	↑ 1058
1990	4373	1046
1995	4226	1044
2000	3910	1027
2005	3790	--
2006	3688	1021
2007	3614	↑ 1022
2009	3451	1019
2010	3386	1011
2012	3147	987

Source: created by author with data collected from various sources, mostly based on Census data

Community members have noticed the rapid population decline over the last couple of decades. The field note below describes a conversation I had with one of the younger community members, Tsuruno Go, who has elected to stay in Oyama and works for the Nokyo. Even though Tsuruno is acutely aware of the depopulation problem, which is evident by the absence of his primary school classmates, he underestimates the decline in population figures by quite a few hundred (when compared to the official figures shown in Table 6.7.1 and Figure 6.7.1).

Field note 8 February 2008:

After lunch we wandered around Konohana Garten a little and then Teruko introduced me to Go Tsuruno who works at Konohana Garten. He is young, around 30, and married. He has worked for the Nokyo for about 4 years and 4 months ago was transferred to Konohana Garten. I asked Go about the history of Oyama and he said that apparently it used to be a very poor place with a very simple agriculture system but with the introduction of the NPC movements became very prosperous and now has the largest per-capita number of passport-holders in all of Japan.

I also asked if he had noticed that Oyama was experiencing an aging society and depopulation like what was occurring all over rural Japan and he confirmed that it was. He said that 20 years or so ago when he was in primary school the population was over 5,000 but now it had dropped to well below 4,000, around 3,800 he thought. He also noted that most of his classmates were no longer living in Oyama and instead were working in Osaka, Tokyo or Fukuoka. I asked what he thought about the future of Oyama in this respect and he just responded with “well, it would be nice if Oyama could become the kind of place where young people want to live...”

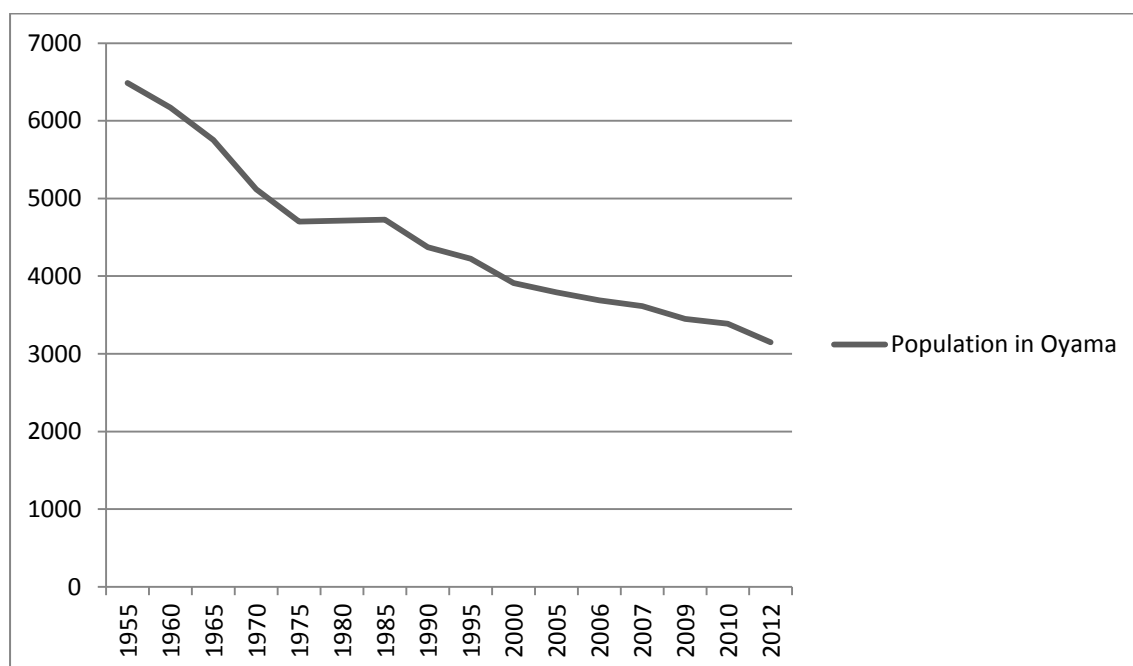


Figure 6.7.1: Population decline in Oyama 1955 – 2012

Source: created by author

Field note 10 February 2008:

Kimiko told me that lately people in Oyama were getting set in their ways and afraid of change. Her view is that if people resist change Oyama will not progress further. The reason why they are where they are now is because people embraced change and took drastic measures. She seemed to believe that if people continued to attempt to maintain the status quo it would lead to the break down of the Oyama community and be tragic economically and socially. She said that she thinks if there is to be a bright and continued future for Oyama people need to be flexible and also remain open and receptive to influences from

outside of the community. She said she thinks that it is about time for another big change like the sort instigated by Harumi Yahata with the first NPC. She said she does not know what kind of change is needed but she feels that without it there will be no future for Oyama. She also indicated that she thought it would be up to the next generation, such as her son Kozo to bring about this change and make the way for the next chapter of Oyama's development. She said it is time for her generation, the middle-aged and older residents to start handing over the reigns to the younger generations.

Kimiko does seem to expect that the next generation of young people in Oyama will do great things for the town. Especially due to their high levels of education and extensive experience overseas, like her son Kozo, they have been receiving the benefits of hito zukuri since they were born. Kimiko then told me about the trips overseas for primary and high school students and how these early experiences had then resulted in her son wanting to study overseas and even getting his master's degree in Europe.

Later chatting to Koda Kazumi I found that he believed that the younger generation were less motivated to work hard for the benefit of the community. He said they had never experienced the hard life that their parents and grandparents had lived and persevered through – there had always been cars, TVs, computers etc and they can not even imagine a life without such luxuries. He said also with their level of education they will be more interested in “playing” in the stock market and making money that way than through real work on a farm for example.

The following vignettes of three Oyama households reveals some of the challenges that are facing the small mountain community, including immigration of successive generations to urban centres, rural depopulation and an aging population.

The Mori Household

I stayed with the Mori family on a number of occasions between 2008 and 2012. The Moris enjoy accepting visitors who come to stay in their home as a result of their involvement in the Ogirihata Green Tourism Association. Visitors include high-schoolers and the programs from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, as well as the occasional random visitors like a middle aged married couple who visited in 2012 from an area near to the radiation affected Fukushima, north of Tokyo. “That couple were really happy to have a break and just relax down here with no worries. It has been hard for people up there. They seemed to really appreciate staying here,” said Tamiko. They are both very active in the OGTA's activities including the Hotaru Concert.

Mori Tamiko is a very active and cheerful woman in her 60s. As mentioned in the previous chapter, she grows and processes a myriad of different products including her famous yuzukosho dressing and of course umeboshi. Her husband used to be a tradesman with his own business, but is now retired and helps her out with the farming. “I used to be the shacho (boss) and she helped me. Now she's the shacho and I'm the helper,” he smiles as Tamiko giggles in agreement, “That's right, I'm the shacho.”

The Moris have two daughters; one is married and lives with her husband and twin daughters in a city in another prefecture. Their second daughter, Keiko (38), lives in the family home with them. She works at a bank in Hita City and her job is quite busy meaning that she often only returns home after 9 or 10pm each night and sometimes has to work Saturdays as well. “She's so busy and works so much, I can't ask her to help me out with my business,” explained Tamiko when discussing the reason why she could not accept email orders for her processed goods. “She knows how to use computers, but I have no idea, so I ask all of my customers to send me their orders by fax instead of email.” It is unlikely that anyone will succeed Tamiko's farming activities in the future; however, I sensed that Tamiko has some decades of genki activity left in her.



Image 6.7.1: Posing with the Mori *fufu* and Goma-chan and field notes
Source: the author 2008

Field note 9 February 2008:

The Mori family grow ume and make umeboshi. Tamiko told me that they had never won the first prize of best umeboshi in the all-Japan contest, so she would introduce me to some of her neighbours who had produced award-winning umeboshi if I was interested in the umeboshi process. Tamiko took me to see her hot houses down by the Kokudo and in which she grows water cress that she sells at Konohana Garten. She also took me to see Oyama's michi no eki, Mizube no Sato. Mizube no Sato had been established by the municipality prior to the gappei. In the shop she showed me her products displayed – yuzukosho (a Kyushu style spice made from citrus and chilli) and yuzusu (vinegar made from citrus). [When I left the Mori house she gave me one of each to take home].

Tamiko also took me to meet Mrs Yano of Yano Noen whose relatively large scale umeboshi factory had produced award-winning umeboshi. It seemed that Mrs Yano's husband had passed away recently and she was managing the farm with the help of her son and daughter-in-law (who have four school-aged sons). Mrs Yano's son is Kozo Matsubara's cousin and it seems they are somehow related to Harumi Yahata also. Her son has also studied or travelled overseas and can apparently speak English. I did not get to meet him as he was in the field pruning trees or something when we visited. According to Tamiko, groups of trainees and individual students have often visited Yano Noen, sometimes staying for up to 2 months in order to write a graduation thesis. Tamiko said that the Mrs Yano would be a good person to talk to about development in Oyama as her husband was very close to Harumi Yahata and she, herself, is also very smart. Mrs Yano told me that I was welcome to come and stay with her family; although it would not be related to nohaku or green tourism (I guessed she does not have a minpaku license).

Tamiko also took me to visit her neighbours who live across the road. They had also won the first prize in the umeboshi contest; however, their operation seemed a little smaller than Mrs Yano's farm. We stayed chatting for a while with the two grown daughters and two grand-daughters. One of the daughters had recently been married and Tamiko said it was

amazing because her husband had moved from Osaka to marry her rather than her moving there, which is the norm with most of the young women.



Image 6.7.2: Mr Mori packaging water cress for market in their hothouse

Source: taken by author February 2008

The Kurokawa Household

Kurokawa Teruko lives in Ogirihata, a short walk down the road from the Mori household. Her husband Hirofumi passed away in 2011. I met them for the first time in 2008. Their house was the first farming home that I had a home-stay experience in – they were very hospitable and Teruko was also very helpful in introducing me to other people in Oyama. Teruko used to run a kimono wearing class and on one of my last visits to Oyama she invited me over to try wearing a kimono.

Field note 8 February 2008:

Teruko and her husband grow Japanese style plums (ume) and Western style plums (sumomo). They used to cultivate enoki as well but have quit the mushrooms because they feel they are too old and enoki are quite a lot of work. Also their two grown up children did not become farmers. Their son owns his own pharmacy (possibly in Hita) and their daughter is married with two children and lives in Yokohama. Teruko makes and sells manju called “Ume Karukan” at Konohana Garten and for mail orders. She uses rice, ume and shiso that she has produced. She also employs some of the elderly ladies in her neighbourhood to hand-make the manju. She said it takes the load off her a bit and also gives the older ladies who are too old to do harder work including farming some extra pocket money.

Teruko picked me up from the bus stop and took me all around the town including to the Shinkokyoku and the enoki facilities. The photograph at Image 6.7.3 was taken on the way to the home of an elderly couple who used to be hemp farmers, as Teruko was also hosting a professor from Tokyo, who Teruko referred to as the *taima no sensei* (Professor of Marijuana), for the day.



Image 6.7.3: Teruko helps the Ojiichan from next door

Source: taken by author 8 February 2008

Field note 8 February 2008:

After I had been shown around the enoki facility Teruko had an appointment at the Yakuba/Shinkokyoku (local government branch in Oyama). Her visitors were a professor from Tokyo who is a hemp specialist. I'm not sure exactly what their business was at the Yakuba but Teruko introduced them to Kimiko Matsubara, Kozo's mother. The visitors briefly explained to Kimiko about the hemp products and left her with some gifts including some books about cooking with hemp seed and a fan with a number of hemp products pictured on the back and which was made from hemp plastic.

We left the Yakuba with the visitors following and headed to Ogirihata where Teruko lives. On the road in Ogirihata a very old man was driving a small truck filled with used enoki sawdust and ends – Teruko muttered, "I wonder where he's planning on throwing all that?" As he sped up the hill the crate of enoki ends fell off the back and all over the road in front of Teruko's car. We stopped and helped him sweep it up, laughing. Teruko explained to the visitors that she should help him because he is the Ojiichan (grandpa) that lives next door. It was a comical experience! After helping Ojiichan on his way we continued to the house of an elderly couple of farmers who seemed to have once grown hemp, or perhaps it was their parents. The visitors chatted with them at length and Teruko and I left them there and headed to her house down the road where they met us a half hour or so later and had tea (together with Teruko's manju, umeboshi and home-made karinto that Teruko said one of her neighbours makes).

The Koda Household

Koda Kazumi worked at the Yakuba from 19 years of age, until his retirement in 2002. He was one of the AgriPartners, who supported farmers with farm work and technical advice during the first six years or so of the New Plum and Chestnut movement. Koda lives in Kabu shuraku. Kabu is one of the smallest neighbourhoods in Oyama with just 16 households (as of 2012) and is located up high in the mountains. Koda's first wife passed away and he remarried with a widow. They honeymooned in Bangladesh. Between them they have five or so children from their previous marriages. Koda's son lives at home and has agreed to succeed his father and take on management of the Shakunage Garden after Koda.

Field note 10 February 2008:

I followed Koda around on his morning chores, which included weeding and watering plants. “What’s that you’re growing?” I asked him. “Oh, this is spinach, but it’s not going well. I don’t think it will survive.” We walked pretty much the entire circumference of the tiny hamlet, which did not take long. Koda also took me to visit one of his neighbours, who grew enoki. We barged into their enoki packing workshop and they were happy to take a photograph together with me. Koda showed me his *ojizosan*⁸⁷ (Shinto statue) as well, “Most families here have one of these. We hold small festivals in their honour.”



Image 6.7.4: Koda Kazumi waters greenhouse spinach on a frosty winter morning

Source: taken by author February 2008

Field note 10 February 2008:

Koda Kazumi had previously worked at the Yakuba for a short time and it seemed he had also worked for the Nokyo. He farms ume, has a few hot houses and also used to log cedar; however, he said that he had stopped logging as the logging business is not so good these days due to much cheaper and plentiful wood coming from the Philippines, Indonesia and Canada. Koda told me that he was in the first group of Oyama young people sent to the Kibbutz in Israel for study. He said he had previously been contracted by JICA to give lectures in Indonesia (Sulawesi and Jakarta) and had also given talks about Oyama in Shikoku and other places in Japan. Koda seems better educated and more like an office worker than the heads of the Kurokawa or Mori households. His skin is whiter and his hands are softer looking. I get the impression that he is quite wealthy. His house is huge and he travels overseas a lot. He mentioned travelling to Egypt, Sudan, Israel, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and various countries in Europe.

Koda took me to visit his mountain where he was in the process of making a flower park and lodge/cabin for tourists to come and stay there. He had planted thousands of rhododendron plants and was expecting the entire hill to be covered in beautiful blossoms by May.

Koda enjoys sharing his home and entertaining guests from around the world during JICA training programs. In Image 6.7.5, Koda introduces his Aunt to a JICA trainee during an early morning walk around Kabu shuraku.

⁸⁷ Ojizosan = a kind of Shinto religious statue



Image 6.7.5: Koda Kazumi introduces an African JICA trainee to his elderly Aunt
Source: taken by author May 2012

6.8 CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY

This chapter has described and examined some of the key developments in Oyama from the late 1980s to the present, which at the time of writing was the year 2012. Key elements of this era are summarised in Table 6.8.1. This period saw a broader national and global environment making primary industry focused agriculture more difficult and less lucrative than the preceding decades as well as national level policies encouraging the increased amalgamation of villages, towns and cities into super municipalities. National trends of rural depopulation and an aging Japanese population have also presented challenges to the community. Oyama's responses to these trends and its ability to continuously redefine itself and progress were demonstrated in this chapter. This period saw the effects of well developed community capacity resulting in ever more complex and sophisticated community policy structures including such things as the creation of new distribution systems, the community venturing into tertiary, quaternary and quinary sectors, a plan for establishing Oyama as the most well-known umeboshi production region in the country, and ever more ambitious value added production activities of both individuals and organisations.

Establishment of the Konohana Garten direct sales outlet as a subsidiary of the Nokyo saw the Oyama community taking control of the marketplace and ensuring that it benefited farmers, particularly elderly, female and small scale producers. This direct sales system also institutionalised value added activities and stimulated innovation and the entrepreneurialisation of agriculture in Oyama, particularly among female producers. Konohana Garten would also lead to the establishment of restaurants which resulted in a latent resource, the domestic skills of farming household wives and elderly women, being recognised as valuable and being utilised in a productive way and saw further value added activities and products. The restaurant also capitalised unsold vegetables from the direct sales market.

Agriculture in Oyama is now entrepreneurial, multidimensional and highly diversified. Higher value added processing of agricultural products has been institutionalised and systematised – partly due to the impacts of Konohana Garten and the introduction of the National Umeboshi Competition, but also as a result of Nokyo policies and the concerted efforts of individual farmers, many of whom are women. The Oyama brand is well established and there are a number of

representative products that Oyama is known for. Distribution channels are varied and producers select the channels that best suit them and their products.

Ogiri-hata residents organised themselves to take advantage of national and prefectural government programs to maintain and further develop their community in the face of major challenges including the amalgamation of Oyama and the appearance of derelict farmland, fallout from an aging and shrinking population in the tiny hamlet. This showed that community capacity was well established in Ogiri-hata, with influential leaders who had graduated from the Yahata University, a strong sense of community and close relationships, as well as high levels of commitment leading to action and active participation in community. Establishment of the Ogiri-hata Green Tourism Association has subsequently resulted in the discovery of previously unrecognised resources including cultural, historical and environmental assets in the shuraku, which are now being preserved, enhanced and capitalised on in a productive way (resulting in extra income for farming households). Collective activities such as the Green Tourism and minpaku programs are also increasing person to person contact with people from urban areas (a kind of linking social capital), and this contact, particularly with young people is bringing joy to these now aging farming households.

A strong sense of community has been developed over the decades of shared experience, strong identity and common objectives that were a central part of the NPC movements. There is strong commitment by residents and organisations as well as productive linking social capital (networks with cities, private sector organisations, and government). Although the kibbutz training program was discontinued, Oyama has continued to pursue relationships with outsiders including with urban areas within Japan, regions and cities overseas, as well as with Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University and the Japan International Cooperation Agency through the rural community development training programs, not to mention the person to person interactions that Oyama farmers continue to have with trainees from all over the developing world.

Strong networks and enhanced relationships have led to the establishment, and have also been further developed as a result of the activities, of the Oyama Yume Kobo Corporation Inc., a unique public-private enterprise now acting as a kind of community development corporation in Oyama. OYKC has taken higher value added products and collective activities to a whole new level in Oyama and epitomises the concept of collective entrepreneurship.

Oyama residents are proud of their culture and history as a community. They continue to live the ethos bestowed on them by the late Yahata Harumi ensuring that they strive to be learned and cultured, and continue to travel and learn by experiencing new places and activities. Most young people from Oyama are now tertiary educated and quite a few it would seem have completed degrees in Europe or United States; however, Oyama is having difficulty retaining these young people, with most of them choosing to move to larger cities to pursue careers and/or families there. A large percentage of the remainder of Oyama's residents are now aging, and many of them do not expect to be succeeded by their children in their farming activities.

A decline in community capacity was experienced with the loss of the Yakuba and associated assets including the Oyama-dedicated cable TV station due to the amalgamation of Oyama Town with neighbouring Hita City. This would appear to have resulted in a loss in access to resources now that local government funding is controlled by Hita City and in particular some significant grants funding that were a result of the Oyama Dam construction and relied on a certain percentage of matched local government funds which is unlikely to be provided by the Hita City administration. Community functions such as planning, implementation and evaluation of whole of community projects has likely been diminished and the Yakuba was the only organisation in Oyama with the ability to organise everyone. It is evident that there is broader capacity invested in the skilled human resources and committed individuals, established and evolving networks, as well as other remaining and newly established organisations that is enabling Oyama to further progress, develop and redefine itself, even without the Yakuba. This is important given the challenges that rural communities in Japan such as Oyama are now facing; however, there does appear to be a trend

towards less collective activities being organised at the (now) Oyama district level and more being organised at the shuraku level (OGTA in Ogirihata and Koda's Shakunage Garden in Kabu for example).

Table 6.8.1: Summary of modern Oyama

Oyama during the period late 1980s onwards	
Element	Description
Broader context	Bubble bursts and economic growth slows
	Uruguay Round and falling agricultural prices
	Rural depopulation and aging population
	National policy encouraging amalgamation of fringe rural areas with regional cities
	Trend for amalgamation of agricultural cooperatives
	National government encourages exchange between rural and urban areas
Community definition	Oyama Town as community growing stronger until 2005 Gappei results in weakening of Oyama as community – reversion to shuraku as main community definition and focus
Community capacity	Networks – discontinuation of the kibbutz training program, strengthened relationship with urban areas, links established with Ritsumeikan APU and JICA through training program
	Leaders – Yahata Harumi passes away, his protégés / Yahata University graduates continue his legacy e.g. Koda with his Shakunage Garden, Ogirihata's Green Tourism activities, leadership vehicle is lost (Yakuba), but another is created (OYKC)
	Individuals – most young people are university educated, but many do not remain in Oyama, residents are aging (and passing away)
	Organisations – establishment of Konohana Garten as subsidiary of Nokyo, disappearance of Yakuba (loss of community capacity), establishment of Yume Kobo and Hibiki no Sato, emergence of Ogirihata Green Tourism Association, likely impending incorporation of Koda's Shakunage Park
	Sense of community – decades of shared experience in NPC movement and other collective activities has resulted in strong sense of community, no local elections has increased sense of community (less bad feelings from those who lose), potential dilution in sense of community through the change in administrative boundaries
	Commitment – many people are continuing to actively strive for the betterment of the community
	Ability to set and achieve objectives – loss of Yakuba may mean decreased collective planning ability, there are not really any organisations that can organise everyone, although the Nokyo has resisted amalgamation and establishment of Yume Kobo may have filled the gap left by the Yakuba to some extent, despite loss of Yakuba community capacity already at a level where new policy structures can be thought up and effectively introduced without Yakuba assistance e.g. OGTA
	Access to resources – local government funds lost (including funds committed by construction of the new Oyama Dam, which were reliant on matched expenditure by Yakuba), individuals know how to access information and can participate independently in programs (e.g. One Coin)
Community Policy	Less whole of community collective activities, trend for collective activities to be organised at the <i>shuraku</i> level

Structures / Collective Activities	Quality of life: affluence, comfortable living conditions, big houses, hopes and dreams for the future, but many are worried about effects of Gappei and the aging and shrinking population
	Agricultural production: Oyama brand is well established, entrepreneurialisation of agriculture, multidimensional / mukade agriculture, move to ever higher value added processing, involvement in primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary and quinary sectors, agriculture as education
	Distribution of produce: direct sales outlets, farmers independently set price, quantity and quality of produce, mukade marketing, fax/internet orders
	Leisure: most farmers appear to travel overseas every year, many active in various hobbies and classes

Source: created by author

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a summary of how the research has responded to the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. A number of implications for rural community development policy and practice are also presented. These include implications and recommendations on community capacity development focusing on strategies for human resource development, leadership, organisations and networks as well as selection of community policy structure, focusing on collective activities. The implications of a practitioner's approach to research is also touched upon and the chapter concludes with a number of suggestions for potential future studies to build on this research.

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

The serious inequity and injustice that development too often leaves in its wake calls for more research to be done, more holistic, logical and practicable theories and ideas to be generated, and better development policy and practice that benefit rural communities. An alternative development to the economic centred approach is required, and this study has responded to this with an approach that is both holistic and grounded in practicality. This is offered in the form of the community capacity development and policy structure model, a model for describing and discussing community capacity and development initiatives that this study has demonstrated is potentially useful both in theory and praxis. As outlined in Chapter 1, this research aimed to achieve four main objectives:

1. Develop an alternative approach to development (in the form of an analytical framework or model for looking at community development) that is both holistic and practical for use both in this research, later research and in the practical sense.
2. Describe the key aspects of development in Oyama from post WWII to 2012 and examine these based on the analytical framework.
3. Offer a unique approach to research that is practical and applicable to the development practitioner.
4. Based on the description and analysis of development in Oyama, explore the policy and practical implications and make recommendations for further research.

In responding to the first objective, the research has presented the community capacity development and policy structure model. The research has demonstrated that the model is a useful tool to describe rural community development in a holistic way. The model is a relevant lens or analytical framework for researchers interested in examining a number of different aspects of rural community development and is also applicable to practical use, for example, development planning and evaluation by local policymakers and community development practitioners. The model constitutes an alternative approach to development that is holistic in its approach while also grounded in practicality. This is a dual-function model that elucidates interaction and synergies between rural community capacity and community policy structure whereby improvements in community capacity enable the formation of more complex and sophisticated community policy structure. Community capacity and its development is one of the two pillars of this alternative development model and defined by the interaction of three basic elements: strategic components, characteristics of community capacity, and functions of the community. Community functions consist of the planning (redefinition), implementation (action), and evaluation (reflection) of a community's policy structure. Community capacity is executed through the fulfilment of these functions. The consequences of community capacity development interact with and produce an impact upon the selection of policy structure of the community. By policy structure I refer to the

economic, social, cultural, political and other aspects of life and activities within the community. The community's selection of policy structure depends heavily on its capacity situation. Thus as the community develops or upgrades its capacity, the community transfers to or selects a new and more sophisticated policy structure through their evaluation, planning, and implementation functions.

In responding to the second research objective, the key aspects of development in Oyama from post WWII to 2012 were described and examined based on the model and over three chapters, each of which looked at a specific time period. By constructing and examining a holistic development narrative of Oyama and using the model as a framework or lens, the research drew out a number of valuable elements of Oyama's remarkable development success over the last 50 years or so. In short, this is a holistic and longitudinal case study of good development practice which will be useful for policymakers, researchers and practitioners alike. The first of these chapters provided a description and discussion, based on the model, of Oyama in the post-war period. This period saw the small village as the poorest in a poor prefecture of mountain villages. In this time the people of Oyama were both emotionally and materialistically impoverished, community policy structures were simple and collective activities few and mostly limited to traditional activities, and there was limited community capacity. However, this period did involve some important foundations of community capacity that would later enable the introduction of more sophisticated policy structures and assist Oyama to help itself out of poverty and despair. These included the existence and establishment of key organizations, the emergence of an influential transformational community leader, community organizing to negotiate favourable terms in the construction of a dam in the community, and the introduction of innovative technology to share knowledge, disseminate information and encourage participation. These set the foundations for and ensured the effectiveness of successive community development initiatives.

The second of the data chapters described and examined key happenings during the period between 1960s and 1980s which saw the formulation and introduction of the NPC movements. These focused on: *hataraku* (work) – full scale agricultural reform in the community to switch from rice farming to orchards of plums and chestnuts, diversification through a “*mukade*” (centipede) approach to agriculture, and higher value added agriculture; *manabu* (learning) – a range of initiatives to develop community human resources with an emphasis on exchanges and experiential learning; *aishiau* (love) – attempting to create a liveable environment that makes community members want to remain in Oyama and not move away to live permanently in larger urban centres. This period is arguably the heyday of community development experiences in Oyama and saw community capacity strengthened and ever more complex policy structures introduced.

The last of the data chapters described and examined some of the more recent key developments in modern Oyama from the 1980s onwards. These include: the introduction of the National Umeboshi Competition; the establishment of Konohana Garten heralding the introduction of a direct sales distribution channel; the establishment of OYKC, the Oyama Lifestyle Consulate and Hibiki no Sato; the pursuit of Green Tourism activities in Ogirihata; Koda's Shakunage Garden; and the higher value added processing activities of a number of households. This period saw the effects of very strong community capacity resulting in ever more complex and sophisticated community policy structures including such things as the creation of new distribution systems, the community venturing into tertiary, quaternary and quinary sectors, a method for establishing Oyama as the most well-known umeboshi production region in the country, and ever more ambitious value added production activities of both individuals and organisations. The more recent merger of Oyama into Hita City is also discussed – although this event resulted in a depletion of community capacity with the loss of the Yakuba and associated assets including the formerly Oyama-dedicated cable TV station, the strength of the community capacity which had been built over the decades has ensured that the community of Oyama continues to thrive. Implications for rural development policy and practice and suggestions for further studies are outlined in the following sections.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

The research has uncovered a number of implications relevant to the work of national government policymakers, local government administrators and rural development practitioners. The research has offered an alternative development approach and accompanying conceptual framework in the community capacity development and community policy structure model. This dissertation has demonstrated that the model is a useful tool that can be used for development planning and evaluation by both national and local policymakers and community development practitioners, and is also a relevant lens or starting point for researchers interested in examining a number of different aspects of rural community development.

7.2.1 COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Using the model offered in this dissertation, policymakers, development practitioners and communities can identify strategies to promote the development of community capacity. These may be focused on human resource development, leadership development, the establishment and strengthening of organisations, or facilitating networks (the building of social capital), or some combination of these. Although every community's situation is unique and strategies to develop community capacity should ultimately be devised based on the assets and strengths that exist in that community, some specific suggestions for the kinds of strategies that may work based on Oyama's experience are drawn in the following sections.

7.2.1.1 Human resource development

Oyama's continuous emphasis on hitozukuri (human development) since the beginning of the NPC campaigns until today shows the importance of developing human resources. Hitozukuri should be viewed as a continuous and ongoing process and a learning culture should be promoted. Oyama strived for a learning community by actively promoting hitozukuri; an entire public and whole of community campaign (the NPCII) was devoted to developing cultured and educated human beings. Learning communities should be promoted by considering and introducing policies that encourage human development and lifelong learning among community members. The learning, education and development of *all community members* should be emphasised. In Oyama, the latent value of each and every person was recognised. It was also recognised that to be successful in development each of these individuals would have a role to play, even the inherently uneducated, uncultured and uninspired lot that made up the majority of the farmers in Oyama in the 1950s. Thus, although human resource development of local government and NGO staff is also extremely important and should also be developed through specific strategies, there needs to be thought given to strategies that promote the learning of every individual community member.

Firstly, it is important to identify and change practices and cultures inhibiting the development of cultured individuals. For example, Oyama introduced labour-saving farming techniques and banned the keeping of livestock so that farmers had time to pursue leisure and cultural activities every day. The Mayor, a respected and legitimate leader, actively encouraged people to use this spare time to partake in cultural, leisure and fun activities that would help shape them into more cultured people and worked to change cultural attitudes that meant that having fun was historically looked down upon. In order to do this, an effective mechanism for dissemination of information and knowledge sharing was introduced in the form of OYHK.

Once the time was created to allow farmers to partake in activities that would develop them as cultured human beings, activities and opportunities were also introduced. In Oyama, activities that worked well included organised group exchange activities such as study tours to other production areas and an organised community learning program, Seikatsu Gakuen (Lifestyle School), which built on the knowledge and skills (particularly traditional and cultural knowledge and skills) already existing in the community.

Oyama also implemented targeted programs such as scholarships for farming successors to attend agricultural college and the kibbutz training program, as well as focused skills development to ensure that farmers were successful in the more advanced method of farming. This included a special taskforce to teach farmers one-on-one on their own land. Experiential learning (learning through experiencing) should be emphasised as little previous education or literacy/numeracy skills are required and it is generally an effective method for adult education. In Oyama, combining learning with attractive activities such as leisure and group travel or holidays also worked and ensured that learning was associated with fun and enjoyable activities rather than something perceived as difficult and boring. Study groups were also established to investigate particular products, processes, or ideas with members becoming experts in a certain subject and utilising mechanisms to disseminate results to add to the community knowledge bank.

7.2.1.2 Leadership

First and foremost there needs to be vehicles for local leaders to both exercise leadership and further develop leadership skills. In Oyama, the most important of these vehicles, the Nokyo (agricultural cooperative) and the Yakuba (local government), were both established by the national government; however, both would become very important community actors. Other leadership vehicles, such as groups and associations formed within or under the umbrella of local organisations, should also be promoted to provide more opportunities for leaders to be made and incubated (see paragraph on diffuse community leadership below). Even national government programs can contribute to this by including requirements for establishing local steering committees or organised groups of residents to access programs like the Japanese Government's direct payment system for hilly and mountainous areas.

The existence of the influential, committed and visionary leader, Yahata Harumi, was critical in Oyama's initial successes. This kind of transformational community leadership should be promoted. This can be done by the inclusion of leadership modules in training programs that teach the elements of this approach, using case studies of leaders such as Yahata Harumi to describe the qualities and behaviours of a transformational community leader. Through the study and emulation of such leaders, even where natural born transformational leaders do not exist, it may be possible to shape or influence existing or potential leaders to adopt a transformational community leadership style. Oyama currently does not appear to have any particularly amazing natural born leaders like Yahata Harumi to succeed him in leading the community; however, as his son, Yahata Kinji, expressed to a group of JICA trainees that he addressed while he was Kumiaicho (head of the agricultural cooperative) "although there may be no gold, bronze can still be polished until it shines".

Another important leadership approach that can be identified from Oyama's experience is that of diffuse or whole-of-community leadership. This approach would involve identifying and promoting opportunities for community members to take on leadership roles across the whole of the community. By identifying, mentoring and guiding satellite leaders in each shuraku (neighbourhood), Yahata was able to more effectively transmit knowledge (including new or modified values and norms), secure commitment, promote sense of community and ensure the successful organisation of collective activities. This could also be identified and promoted in leadership training programs. Strategies to promote diffuse community leadership, such as intensive mentoring and leadership development programs or the promotion of associations and targeted groups, for example producers' associations, neighbourhood associations, or women's groups, could also be encouraged.

It is evident in Oyama's experience that the leadership has been able to effectively utilise government and industry awards as a tool to motivate and both formally and publicly recognise excellence by staff and organisations. These kinds of initiatives can be established with relative ease and low cost to government and can generally be simply promoted through the journalistic endeavours of a free press. Examples include national or prefectural level awards, for example, the awards and rankings for local government PR publications mentioned by Ogata Hideo, industry

awards such as the collaborative industry award which recognised the successful public-private partnership that established Hibiki no Sato, job category awards such as national awards for excellence in radio announcing, and specific product related awards such as those won by some Oyama farmers through the National Umeboshi Competition.

7.2.1.3 Organisations

As demonstrated in the case of Oyama, organisations are important foundational elements of community capacity. The establishment and/or strengthening of organisations are also shown to be valuable strategies to develop community capacity and introduce new community policy structures including collective activities.

In Oyama, even though the two main community organisations were set up through external intervention by the national government, rather than springing up endogenously, both proved to be pivotal lynchpins in the success of Oyama's development efforts. National or local governments can develop enabling legislation and policies to assist to establish community organizations that support community capacity development, for example agricultural cooperatives that have savings facilities or local organisations or institutions that enable community organising, networking and participation, knowledge sharing and human resources development, increased access to resources, and the exercise and nurturing of local leadership.

The Yakuba, Oyama's local government unit, drastically changed its perspective and approach to government in the town under the leadership of Yahata. Instead of viewing itself as an extension of the national government with a purpose consisting of mainly implementing national policy, the Yakuba transformed itself into a member of the community. Thus, the Yakuba worked to progress the goals and objectives of the community and developed local policy to benefit the community. The Yakuba also applied pressure to the prefecture and national government, advocating for the community and its interests. Based on Oyama's experience, I now include local government as a component of the community, a major contributor to community capacity and the introduction and maintenance of community policy structures. The Yakuba also had the luxury of having a fair amount of autonomy, freedom and flexibility to develop and introduce local policies and allocate local budgets and resources demonstrated when the decision was made to dedicate the majority of their three year budget to the NPC movement (with consent of the local assembly, of course). This also presents a good argument for decentralisation and promotion of local autonomy in government.

7.2.1.4 Networks

The importance of social capital in community development is well known and widely accepted and Oyama's experience also demonstrates this. It is important for both national and local policy makers and rural community development practitioners to identify policies and strategies to enable and encourage the formation of informal social capital as well as formal networks. Informal collective social or cultural activities such as team sports or annual festivals can be organised to promote bonding social capital and in turn increasing commitment and sense of community, as well as promoting knowledge sharing and human resource development. Formally organised exchange activities between community members and outsider individuals, groups or organisations such as training programs like Oyama's Kibbutz training program, or group study tours, or other cultural, social or environmental activities with participants from both inside and outside of the community will promote bridging and linking social capital and contribute to human resource and leadership development, the introduction of new knowledge, increasing a community's ability identify and access resources among other potential benefits. Oyama's experience also demonstrates the value of close relationships and collaboration between government (local, prefectural and national), community based organisations and non-profits, industries, universities and citizens. Collaborative activities, such as those that resulted in the establishment of Hibiki no Sato in Oyama, should be identified in and promoted as policy.

7.2.2 SELECTION OF COMMUNITY POLICY STRUCTURE

Community capacity and its development in Oyama interacted with and produced an impact upon the selection of community policy structures (the economic, cultural, social, environmental and political aspects of life within the community and, in particular, collective activities). In addition to community capacity which is the *sine qua non* of community policy structure selection, development in Oyama has been successful in large part due to the continued introduction of sophisticated community policy structures enabled by said community capacity. Arguably the most important of these is the successful introduction and maintenance of collective activities. Continuous increases in community capacity made these collective activities possible and their implementation in turn affected the continuous development of community capacity. Community capacity is a basic element that enables a community to function. It refers to the ability to achieve the community's shared goals as well as to promote and maintain the richness of the community. This is done through the collective efforts of individuals and organizations within a community, utilizing the human, organizational and social resources available. Collective activities organised in this way can have a multitude of favourable outcomes, for example, increased sense of community and commitment, mitigation of risk to producers, knowledge sharing, human resource and leadership development, increased access to resources, influence on national policies, markets, consumers or other things otherwise generally unable to be controlled or influenced. Many of the collective activities identified in Oyama's case are a result of a strategy of systematic value addition whereby the community has continuously added to and improved production-based collective activities to pursue their collective and individual goals. So not only have collective activities been introduced into Oyama, but this has been done strategically and in a systematic fashion.

On investigation, each of the formal collective activities for rural community development introduced into Oyama, such as the Seikatsu Gakuen program, Konohana Garten – the direct sales distribution channel, and the Oyama method for enoki production, were able to be formulated under the local government and agricultural cooperative, and their created affiliated organizations, as implementation organisations. These local implementation organisations formulated approaches and guidelines for each of the collective activities also establishing affiliated organizations where appropriate, for example the Mushroom Department and Konohana Garten under the Nokyo. The Yakuba or Nokyo then provided these created affiliated organisations with various kinds of support in order for them to effectively carry out the collective activity. At the producer level, existing or potential producers were targeted and included either internal (community members) or both internal and external (community members and outsiders – for example in the case of exchange activities with Fukuoka City or the example of Konohana Garten, whose membership extends beyond the membership base of the Nokyo).

A most important and interesting point of the organisation of collective activities in Oyama is the division of labour or functions between the implementation organisation and producers or participants. In collective production-related activities, this sharing of functions whereby the implementing organisation performs some functions centrally and relieves the producers of the burden of that function, has resulted in a number of positive outcomes for producers in Oyama. These include such benefits as the reduction of risk to producers, as in the case of the Oyama method for enoki production, and reduction of the barriers and disincentives for product innovation for small producers, as in the case of Konohana Garten. The existence of an implementation organisation also means that individual producers can reap the benefits of collective activities without the extra burden of organisation or administration of the activity itself. Thus, in order to ensure maximum benefit to participants, it is recommended that collective activities be structured in such a way in the community as a strategic approach for rural development. It is also recommended that collaboration, between public and non-government organisations for example, focuses on the promotion of collective activities rather than specific individual-oriented activities. In this connection, central and prefectural or provincial government can support the promotion of collective activities as their policy for rural development, effectively becoming active policy

organisations in certain collective activities and their programs can be offered in a way that encourages (if not requires) collective activities.

7.2.3 PRACTITIONER'S APPROACH TO RESEARCH

The research was conducted from a practitioner's viewpoint, I refer to this as a Practitioner's Approach to Research (PAtr). The narrative of development in Oyama was constructed mostly from my experiences and interactions working as a practitioner in rural community development through my role as a facilitator in the Japan International Cooperation Agency training (JICA) programs run through Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. One of the main audiences of the outcomes of this research was also I as the practitioner. The research is also intended for the benefit of, and is being used by, other practitioners including participants of the JICA training programs, who are mostly developing country government officials in positions of responsibility for rural development. By fulfilling our duties as practitioners, but being reflective and examining our own experiences in practice and the processes and outcomes, we can achieve reflective practice. Writing it down and examining helps us as practitioners to clarify meaning and better understand and learn from the experience and this is likely to result in improved practice. I believe that this is a valuable endeavour and encourage other researchers and practitioners to approach research with the practitioner in mind as end user of the research.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

If I lived twenty more years and was able to work, how I should have to modify the Origin, and how much the views on all points will have to be modified! Well it is a beginning, and that is something...

Charles Darwin to J.D. Hooker, 1869

As far as this dissertation itself is concerned there was one major objective – that is to partially fulfil the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies degree program at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University; however, this was not the sole objective of the research project and it is highly unlikely that this is where the research will end. I expect to further develop the narratives and adapt the text contained in this dissertation. I will do this in order to publish the research as a book and as chapters of books so that more effective voice is given to the research and Oyama's story. Also to publish in scholarly publications so that the concepts and ideas presented contribute more fully to the academic sphere. Lastly, I will likely continue to convert the material contained in this dissertation for further use in training materials for the JICA training programs as well as university level courses, so that the story of Oyama continues to benefit and inform good development policy and practice in rural communities, particularly those in less developed and developing countries.

This study offers four main contributions to the field of rural community development studies. The first is a description of Oyama's development experience stretching over 50 years. The second is the community capacity development and policy structure model and associated conceptual discussion. Thirdly, the research offers a relatively unique approach in terms of methodology in the reflective practitioner's research approach. Finally, the research offers an interpretation of Oyama's story, which is unique in that it is constructed based on my own personal experience and interactions.

In the social fields, the most important contribution of the early career researcher's doctoral research project is generally going to be limited to the descriptive elements of the dissertation (see Wolcott 2009). This research is no exception and it is likely that the most valuable of the contributions listed above is the description of Oyama's development experience. This research has

nonetheless contributed to the field by building on previous works of academics in a number of fields such as leadership theory, social capital, sense of community, knowledge sharing, community development and rural development through offering the community capacity development and policy structure model.

As mentioned in section 1.5 on scope and limitations of the research, this research offers a holistic exploration of development in Oyama. This entails constructing an entire picture of development over a long period of time, which meant that particularly in depth study of any specific element was out of scope. This kind of study is necessary in order to understand rural development, but will need further studies of a more focused and specific nature to support or clarify certain elements where needed. It is here that I extend a most sincere onegaishimasu (request) to my kohai (junior colleagues) in the Miyoshi School, who I expect will further build on this study along with associate researchers of the Institute for Community Design, which is steadily getting legs under the oversight of Professor Koichi Miyoshi, and other researchers and rural development practitioners who can contribute to the further development of the theoretical concepts and practical approaches associated with the model.

I expect that they could do this by conducting more specific and detailed investigation into any one of or interactions among two or more of the elements of the community capacity development and policy structure model. Because this study is quite broad and covering all facets of the model, the opportunity for detailed examination of any of the specific elements and their interactions are not covered in depth. Further research that hones in on one or two of these and examines them in detail would complement this study greatly. This could be focused on Oyama, another community or across a number of different sites. Suggested topics include, for example: human resources development and community capacity; leadership and changes in commitment and sense of community (and therefore mindsets and behaviours); the role of local government in the functioning of community capacity; community organisations and community capacity development; an examination into how community leadership contributes to human resource development, organisational strengthening and the establishment of networks; or a more detailed analysis of the challenges currently faced by Oyama and the specific and practical policy implications associated with these. This is not to say that further research from a holistic approach would not be worthwhile. On the contrary, holistic studies of development experiences in other communities could further add value and be a great contribution to the field. Researchers might choose to conduct such a study in a rural community of a developing or less developed country or in other developed countries for example in a European country, the United States or Australia.

More detailed investigation into collective activities and the practicalities of introducing and implementing such activities would also be a worthy topic and build on something very important that was only lightly touched on in this paper. Such a study could describe and elaborate further the roles of national, prefectural and local government and NGOs as either policy organisations or implementing organisations in the introduction and maintenance of collective activities and could focus on, for example, production or market related activities, cultural activities or events, or environmental focused collective activities.

Another potentially worthwhile avenue for further research would be an action research project. The project could involve working with a particular community to further refine, build on, and add to the practical aspects of the model whilst also reflecting on and working to develop community capacity and introduce more sophisticated community policy structures within the community participating in the project. Action research activities might include: using the model to describe community capacity and community policy structures; developing strategies to further build on community assets identified in the description and implementing these to, for example, build social capital, nurture leadership, encourage knowledge sharing, and/or facilitate human resources development through experiential learning and exchange activities; or using the model as a framework for a participatory evaluation of a particular community program, initiative, cultural event such as a festival, or other such collective activity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Oyama Case Study and activity for JICA group training in October 2007

Work, Learning and Love

Oyama-cho's Story

(Please read before Tuesday's morning lecture)

Oyama-cho was once a very poor and deprived community. Its location in the mountains of central Oita Prefecture meant that land suitable for cultivating rice was limited and harvests, and therefore, households' incomes were small. In 1949 the town established an agricultural cooperative, the first step towards improving lives for the residents (almost all of the population were rice farmers).

In 1954, Mr Harumi Yahata became the chairman of this cooperative. Yahata-san loved his town deeply. He had grown up in Oyama, had been educated in Tokyo and had returned to his hometown with a sense of the difference in lives of city people and the residents in his town. He thought for a long time about how he could help to improve the lives of people in Oyama-cho, so that they could live a rich and enjoyable life like the people he had seen in the city. During this time he travelled to other rural townships in Oita and elsewhere in Japan looking for ideas to make life easier and more affluent for the farmers.

In 1961, Yahata-san introduced a radical new development plan for Oyama-cho. He called it the "New Plum and Chestnut" (NPC) movement and it would be the first of three such NPC movements introduced over the following ten years. The first NPC centred on "work" and aimed essentially at increasing people's incomes whilst also reducing the hours and severity of physically strenuous labour. As the name suggests the scheme involved switching from farming rice and tending livestock to cultivating plums (*ume*) and chestnuts (*kuri*), both of which grew naturally very well all over the town. Mushrooms, which proved to be doing quite well in other communities with similar environments to Oyama-cho, were later added and would become the main source of income for farmers in Oyama-cho.

As can be imagined, Yahata-san's idea was met with some resistance especially from older farmers who believed that if one was not farming rice then one was not a farmer and who could not see the benefit of switching to producing something they were not familiar with. Yahata-san devised a number of methods to gain the support he needed for the NPC to be effective. Firstly, he came up with a catchy slogan "Let's plant plums and chestnuts and go to Hawaii!!" This left an impression. For a population of poor farmers who could hardly imagine travelling for leisure within Japan, the idea that they would earn enough to go for holidays overseas was beyond imagination and kindled a spark of hope. Yahata-san also enlisted young and energetic farmers who supported his idea to talk with the older population and also gained support from the schoolteachers who talked to Oyama's children about the idea with the intention that they would go home and discuss with their parents. Eventually the NPC had full support from the entire community including the town administration

and also from the prefecture, which agreed to send agricultural experts to give advice on successful growing techniques. Through implementation of the first NPC incomes were increased, physical workloads were reduced and farmers holidayed in Hawaii.

The second NPC, the “Neo Personality Combination” was introduced in 1965. The campaign centred on “learning” and sought to develop people’s abilities and to refine their personalities through increased interaction and cooperation with each another and other people from outside Oyama-cho. Initiatives under the second NPC included: a local learning centre, an Oyama-cho cable TV station, exchange activities and various regular events. One of these events aimed at increasing the interaction between residents was community morning softball. Residents formed teams and organized competitions and the activity gained much popularity and interest from most of Oyama-cho. New relationships developed through being in teams also spawned other activities and organizations, formed and run by the residents themselves. Exchange activities involved residents being encouraged to make study tours both within and outside of Japan (Hawaii, China and Israel) and also inviting people from outside of Oyama-cho come and stay with Oyama residents. Encouragement for such activities came from the agricultural cooperative in the form of interest free loans for tours, free culture buses, and scholarships for young people expected to engage in agriculture.

In 1969, the “New Paradise Community”, the third NPC movement, centred on love. The aim of this campaign was to increase the liveability of the community in order to retain residents or make young people less likely to want to leave Oyama in search of more entertaining environments. Under this NPC Oyama-cho was divided into eight cultural zones, inside each of which a cultural centre would be constructed so that every resident could walk from their house to a cultural centre in less than five minutes. Regular interesting community activities are organized at each of the centres.

Group Discussion and Activity

1. Stakeholder analysis: identify the stakeholders in community capacity development from the story of Oyama-cho.

2. Identify strategies of community capacity development in Oyama-cho.

3. Identify characteristics of community capacity in Oyama-cho.

4. Break into four groups. Each group should choose one of the strategies (leadership, human resource development, organizational enhancing, or networking). Describe how the community capacity development strategy caused changes in community capacity (please refer to the community capacity characteristics).
