Proposition on the Preservation and Utilization of Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems for the Restoration of Depopulated Rural Areas in Japan: A Case Study of Kurokami Shrine Festival

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Abstract
This study aims to clarify the current status of the preservation and utilization of Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems (RPIHS) for the restoration of depopulated rural areas based on a case study of Nigishi District Kurokami Shrine's traditional festival which is located in Wajima City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan. It is highlighted in this study, that the daily activities are linked with RPIHS. It is a remarkable discovery in backing up RPIHS that the organizations supporting the daily activities of the residents and RPIHS are highly linked. In order to effectively utilize and maintain the RPIHS in the future, it is crucial to determine what kind of activities and organizations are connected to the RPIHS to jointly support RPIHS. In order to accomplish this, coordination among the related policies becomes crucial and important.

Keywords: depopulated rural area; people interaction; heritage system; festival; Japan

1. Introduction
1.1 Background and Purpose of This Study
In recent years, there has been increasing interest in Japan regarding World Heritage by UNESCO as the means for local area revitalization. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) has also begun to be noticed in Japan. In addition, there are Japan Heritage Policies outlined by the Agency for Cultural Affairs and Essential Historical Materials for Science and Technology (also known as Mirai Technology Heritage) defined by Japan's Natural Museum of Nature and Science.

GIAHS are assessed by the system of agriculture. Japan Heritage is evaluated on the storyline created by their elements. Mirai Technology Heritage is appraised by the contribution to technology. In this way, each policy concerning heritage mentioned above has different aspects of appraisal based on its respective value. Furthermore, these heritage policies have much potential to be utilized in commonly shared local area revitalization.

However, the concepts of these heritage policies are not sufficient for the restoration of depopulated rural areas in Japan. Many Japanese researchers and the Japanese Government point out the importance of interaction among people for the restoration of depopulated rural areas under Japan's Regional Empowerment Policy.

For example, from the viewpoint of interaction among several generations of residents, Suzuki et al. (2002) clarified that the traditional festival of depopulated rural areas plays an important role in cultivating new young leaders for village community. Fukuhara and Tomokiyo (2003) identified that the interaction among aged residents help their daily lives in a rural village. Nakagawa and Yamazaki (2010) found that the space in the house where some elderly residents meet together and talk over a cup of tea is an important factor for the elderly residents to continue living in a rural village.

Moreover, there are many types of interaction among people, such as between a village and another village, residents and provincials (former native residents) who are not living in their home village, residents and migrants who have moved to rural villages, and elderly and young residents within the rural village. These kinds of interaction among people are formed by the system to preserve jobs in agriculture, society, and culture of rural areas (Fig.1.).

In this paper, I, the researcher of this study, define the system of generating interaction among people as Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems (RPIHS). Similar to the significance of heritage, RPIHS should be worthy to pass on to the next generation.

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Many RPIHS exist in rural areas but the rural areas are in a challenging situation to preserve RPIHS because of depopulation. In the situation like this, it is an important issue to preserve and use RPIHS for the restoration of depopulated rural areas.

On the basis of the abovementioned background, this study aims to clarify the current status of the preservation and utilization of RPIHS for the restoration of depopulated rural areas through studying the Nigishi District Kurokami Shrine's Traditional Festival which is located in Wajima City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan.

1.2 Layout and Method of This Research

This study was conducted in three parts to achieve its purpose.

| Purpose of This Study | Chapter 1 | Clarifying the current status of the preservation and utilization of Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems (RPIHS) for the restoration of depopulated rural areas |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Research Area and Research Object | Chapter 2 | Kurokami Shrine's traditional festival of Nigishi District |
| Verification of the Purpose | Chapter 3 | Explanation of the festival operating system and its main factor |
| | Chapter 4 | Verification of the festival operating system and its main factor |
| | Chapter 5 | Participant interaction throughout the festival |
| Conclusion | Chapter 6 | Activity Proposition Pertaining to the RPIHS |

The third part (Chapter 5) aims to identify how many residents and provincials who had returned to the Nigishi District participated in the festival, and in what way the interactions occurred among them. It is practically impossible to survey all participants, thus I analyzed the enthusiastic participants in a commemorative photograph (Illustration 1 in Fig.8.). In addition, I analyzed how interactions occurred among them in accordance with the festival program.

2. Research Area and Object

This paragraph outlines explanations about the Nigishi District as the research area and Kurokami Shrine as the research object.

2.1 Background on the Cancellation of Kurokami Shrine's Traditional Festival due to Depopulation

As of 2014, there were 20 villages in the Nigishi District (Fig.3.). Many aging villages with less than 20 households exist in the Nigishi District.

The Nigishi District consists of four Areas. The 1st Area is "Sangaura" which is located near the coast. The 2nd Area is around the basin downstream of Nigishi River towards the midstream. The 3rd Area is around the basin near the upstream of Nigishi River, while the 4th Area is in a remote part of the side of Nigishi River.

The coast, called "Gotogahama," and the biggest village, which has 178 households, called "Tsurugiji" are located at the entrance of the 1st Area. The 2nd Area has a small zone which is called "Hinataura" consisting of four small villages known as "Uwadai", "Kuroiwa", "Iriyama", and "Wataze". Each village in the Nigishi District has a shrine.

Village Uwadai has a shrine called "Kurokami". Kurokami Shrine is not only Uwadai village's shrine but also the Nigishi District's overall shrine. Kurokami Shrine has held its traditional festival from August...
23 to August 24 every year in cooperation with every village of the Nigishi District since centuries ago.

Due to Japan entering the high economic growth period, the social and regional phenomenon occurred in which people from rural areas moved to urban areas to find jobs. This phenomenon caused the decline in population of rural villages. The young residents essential to conduct Kurokami Shrine's traditional festival in the Nigishi District were short-handed; hence, the festival ceased to be held in 1962.

2.2 Festival Recommencement under Depopulation

There is a group called "Mutsumikai" in Hinataura. Some members of Mutsumikai suggested the festival's recommencement due to the recollection of the good times all residents of the Nigishi District had from interacting with people who participated in the festival. Subsequently, many people of the Nigishi District reached an agreement on the festival's recommencement and as a result, the festival recommenced on August 14, 2001. The date of the festival was changed from August 23 and August 24 to August 14 which is the day before "Obon" when Japanese people pay respect to their ancestors. Mutsumikai spearheads carrying out the festival of its own accord.

2.3 Intentions of Festival Recommencement under Depopulation

There are active groups within the Nigishi District (Table 1.). These groups engage in activities for the purposes of discussing and resolving the issues among all villages of the Nigishi District, operating the Nigishi District Culture Festival, preserving Nigishi River etc. Especially, Kurokami Shrine's Traditional Festival is operated by "Hosankai" a committee that consists of the residents of Uwadai village to preserve the Kurokami Shrine to generate and maintain interactions between residents and provincials not living in their home village.

According to the field research, the leader of Mutsumikai said that the reason why the festival was recommenced under depopulation was that "Young provincials live in the area away from the rural area so they usually do not return often to their villages. However, if we ask them to come back for the festival, they will return specifically for the festival. On the contrary, if we have no festival to hold, we cannot ask them to return. Residents living in the Nigishi District have a happy time organizing the festival. But the most important thing is that we wanted to create a condition for them to come back here at least once a year." That is the reason why Mutsumikai restarted the festival.

This intention, as mentioned above, of the festival restarting coincides with the concept of RPIHS. Therefore, the Nigishi District and its festival are appropriate to be set as the target area for the research of RPIHS in depopulating rural areas.

3. Ways to Operate the Festival Mediated by the Village Friendship Group

Kurokami Shrine has an organization called Hosankai, which is a committee that consists of residents from Uwadai village, to preserve the Kurokami Shrine. The festival is conducted through the cooperation of Hosankai with the other organizations and residents of the Nigishi District. The analysis process of organizing the festival is primarily focused on the people or the Village Friendship Group as shown in the following paragraphs.

First, the representative of Hosankai invites the Village Friendship Group such as Mutsumikai in Hinataura, Hachimankai in Turugiji village and Joyamakai in Shimobanba village to the festival (Table 2.). Then, the Friendship Groups determine whether they will support the festival or not by discussing with the representative of each village community. Only after this process can the Village Friendship Groups support the festival.

Table 2. Invitation Letter to the Festival that Hosankai Sent to the Friendship Group of Other Villages

| Number | Group Name                                      | Group Activities                                                                 |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Meeting of all villages' representatives of Nigishi District | Discussing and adjusting the issues among all villages of Nigishi District       |
| 2      | Meeting of Nigishi District hometown interaction | Operating Nigishi District Culture Festival                                      |
| 3      | Meeting of Nigishi District Athletics Festival   | Operating Nigishi District Athletics Festival                                    |
| 4      | Meeting of Nigishi District Traditional Drum     | Preserving Nigishi District Traditional Drum                                    |
| 5      | Kurokami Shrine Hosankai                        | Preserving Nigishi River                                                         |
| 6      | Meeting of sharing "Kitamae Ships" story         | Preserving the history and culture of "Kitamae Ships"                           |
| 7      | Meeting of trekking                             | Operating the event of trekking for health                                       |
| 8      | Meeting of preserving Nigishi River             | Preserving Nigishi River                                                         |
| 9      | Community Center of Nigishi District            | Operating activities of lifetime education for Nigishi district residents        |

Resource: Field research in 2010

Wataze village presents the "Kiriko" (a tall, traditional lantern-like ornament composed of wood). Hachimankai of Turugiji village, Uwadai, Shimobanba, and Okama villages contribute big drums. The people of the Nigishi District drive the Kiriko and play the big drums (Table 3.). Furthermore, those villages offer financial assistance for the purchase of alcohol and drinks.
In summary, the festival is conducted under the system whereby the Village Friendship Groups play a role as a bridge to mediate between the festival and villages (Fig.4).

The Village Friendship Groups usually provide volunteer work for their villages and the Nigishi District, and therefore, they have a good reputation among the residents. Because these Village Friendship Groups, which have a good reputation with the residents, mediate and ask the representative of their villages, the representative of the respective village happily allows the Village Friendship Group to support the festival. Thus, we can see that the Village Friendship Group's day-to-day volunteer work is connected with the Operating System through involvement of the Village Friendship Group in the festival. The Village Friendship Group's day-to-day volunteer work is indicated as follows.

4. Village Friendship Group's Day-to-Day Volunteer Work for the Nigishi Residents
4.1 In the Case of Hinataura

There is a Friendship Group in Hinataura called Hinataura Mutsumikai. There are 2 more organizations known as Hinataura Jikeidan which works for the residents' safety and another organization known as Hinataura Seisan Kumiai in charge of agriculture. The number of members from Mutsumikai is 13 in total. Of the 13 residents, 5 are from Iriyama village, another 5 are from Kuroiwa village, 1 is from Uwabanba village, 1 is from Igawadani village and 1 is from Okama village. The objectives of the 3 organizations are different but each group's members mostly consist of the same people. (1) Activities of Hinataura Jikeidan

Hinataura Jikeidan was established in 1965 according to its Articles of Association. Its members ensure the safety of Hinataura residents when an emergency situation occurs (Fig.5.). They conduct safety and protection work such as removing snow and weeds from the roadside. It is especially very difficult for the elderly residents to remove snow themselves. Unless the snow is removed, ambulances may not be able to reach the elderly residents' houses when they are in need. Therefore, the Hinataura Mutsumikai's assisting deeds are very useful for the well being of the elderly residents.

(2) Activities of Hinataura Seisan Kumiai

Hinataura Seisan Kumiai is an agricultural union. Shimobanba village, Kuroiwa village, and Wataze village located in the 2nd Area of the Nigishi District cultivate farmland not in use under the "community treaty" which was formed by the Direct Payment Policy.

Wataze is a small village inhabited primarily by the elder generation. Therefore, Hinataura Seisan Kumiai assists in cultivating and managing the farmland not in use by Wataze village (Fig.6.). Wataze village had no farmers in 2012 due to depopulation and the aging of residents, thus the support from Hinataura Seisan Kumiai is very helpful in preserving the farmland of Wataze village and the rural landscape. In addition, 2 members of Hinataura Seisan Kumiai have personally

![Fig.4. Diagram of the Way to Operate the Festival Mediated by the Village Friendship Groups](image)

![Fig.5. Safety Communication Roster of Hinataura Residents by Hinataura Jikeidan under Emergency](image)
been cultivating some farmland not in use in Shimobanba Village (Table 4).

(3) Activities of Hinataura Mutsumikai

Hinataura Mutsumikai has assisted with the festivals of other villages in the Nigishi District. As mentioned above, Mutsumikai takes the lead in carrying out the Kurokami Shrine Festival of its own accord. Through operating the festival, a variety of interactions among the people including provincials of Nigishi District are facilitated. This is specified in Chapter 5.

Table 4. Rice Paddy Owners and Farmers of Shimobanba Village

| Residences with or without Rice Paddies | Place of Residence | Owner | Non-Owner |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|-------|-----------|
|                                        | Cultivated by Owner |      |           |
| In the Village (9)                     | 2                  | 17    |           |
| Outside the Village (6)                | -                  |       |           |
| In the Village (8)                     | -                  | 20    |           |
| Outside the Village (12)               | -                  |       |           |

Resource: Interview research with a Shimobanba village representative in 2014

4.2 In the Case of Shimobanba Village

(1) Activities of Shimobanba Showakai

Shimobanba Showakai was the Friendship Group established in 1986. At that time, bullying among students was a serious problem in Japan. Thus, some young parents with children thought that if parents got along well with other parents, their children would also get along with other children. According to this way of thinking, young parents in Shimobanba village formed Showakai as a means of facilitating friendship among members and contributing to the Shimobanba village community.

Showakai removed weeds from streets and from the land not in use for housing, and also cleaned around the Shimobanba village shrine (Table 5.). It supported the other community activities such as the Festival of Monzen Machi District and the Art Festival of Nigishi District, for example, by making Japanese traditional rice cakes. Furthermore, they are members of the volunteer organization of Wajima City. As a volunteer deed, they removed the weeds around the senior group home in Nigishi District as well as supported the Kurokami Shrine Festival.

The members of Showakai consist of about 10 - 14 residents. They have put on years, so their ages are between 60 and 80. The number of the actual active members is only 4 people and therefore, they decided to disband Showakai in 2011.

Table 5. Activities of Shimobanba Showakai in 2005

| Month | Meeting | Activities                                      |
|-------|---------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Annual General Meeting | ○ Excursion & Showakai Annual General Meeting  <The New Year Activity Plan> • Continuous participation providing Japanese traditional rice cakes at the Art Festival of Nigishi District • Year-end party together with wives • Support of the cleaning of Shimobanba Shrine |
| 5     | General Meeting | ○ Consider participating in Monzen Machi District Festival • 4 Residents prepare for traditional rice cakes |
| 6     | -        | ○ Post-meeting of the rice cake event and bonding • 14 Participants (8 male: 6 female) |
| 7     | General Meeting | ○ Grass cutting • All 10 Members participated • Removal of grass from the Shrine's entry road and precinct |
| 10    | General Meeting | ○ Fishing & Grass Cutting around Nigishi River followed by a BBQ |
| 11    | -        | ○ Participation providing Japanese traditional rice cakes at the Art Festival of Nigishi District accompanied by wives |
| 12    | -        | ○ Post-meeting of the rice cake event and bonding |

Source: Shimobanba Showakai. (2005)

(2) Activities of Shimobanba Joyamakai

There is another Friendship Group called Shimobanba Joyamakai in Shimobanba village. The Joyamakai consists of male members between 30 - 50 years of age. They formed Joyamakai based on the influence of Showakai. The purpose of Joyamakai is to promote friendship among the younger residents and to contribute to the Shimobanba village community.

They have performed deeds such as cleaning up around the Shimobanba village shrine in cooperation with Showakai (Fig.7.). They have gathered 1 hour earlier than the other residents to reduce the elderly residents' workload. They have supported the Kurokami Shrine Festival by cooperating with Showakai.

(3) Succession from Showakai to Joyamakai

After Showakai was disbanded in 2011, they passed down the role formerly played by Showakai to Joyamakai. At the time it was disbanded, 3 of the 8 members from Joyamakai were also members of Showakai. These 3 members had joined Showakai due to their parents having aged or passed away. These
successors were able to obtain knowledge of Showakai naturally through participation in its activities.

For example, alongside the former members of Showakai, they went fishing and volunteered for grass cutting. This kind of training was one of the reasons that made a successful handover possible. Since the handover, with the sponsorship of Shimobanba village, Joyamakai held a barbeque event to reemphasize friendship among members as well as their residents (Table 6.).

Table 6. Joyamakai’s Announcement of a Barbeque Event among Residents of Shimobanba Village

| Dear Sirs of Shimobanba village | From Shimobanba Joyamakai | Host: Shimobanba Joyamakai |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                                 |                           | Sponsor: Shimobanba Community Organization |
| **Date:** August 25th 2014 (18:00 – 20:00) | **Entrance Fee:** ¥500 per person, Free for students |
| **Venue:** Open space in front of Resident S’s factory | **This is to inform you that we are again organizing this year the barbeque party to promote close bonds among residents. We will prepare for the purchase of alcohol, drinks, fried noodles etc. We duly look forward to the attendance of all residents. Thank you.** |

Source: Shimobanba Joyamakai. (2014)

4.3 In the Case of Tsurugiji Village

There are two Friendship Groups called Tsurugiji Jikyodan and Tsurugiji Hachimankai that support the operation of the Tsurugiji village festival. Many of the young male residents of Tsurugiji village worked for pelagic-fishing vessels. They could not come back for long periods of time, from 6 months to a year or even more. Tsurugiji village is short of young male manpower to operate their festival, although Tsurugiji is the largest village in the Nigishi District. Under this circumstance, the remaining male residents formed Tsurugiji Jikyodan and Tsurugiji Hachimankai to support the operation of the Tsurugiji village festival.

The members of Tsurugiji Jikyodan consist of male residents aged from 16 (high school students) to 55. The members of Tsurugiji Hachimankai are male residents aged above 55. When the members of Tsurugiji Jikyodan reach 55 years of age, they are supposed to become members of Tsurugiji Hachimankai. In operating the Tsurugiji village festival, Tsurugiji Jikyodan takes charge of the "Mikoshi" (a portable shrine) and Kiriko, which requires physical power. Tsurugiji Hachimankai takes charge of operating the "Hikiyama" (festival float) and the drums. In this way, these two groups have supported the Tsurugiji Village Festival operations.

5. Interaction and Participation of Residents at Festivals

5.1 Resident Participation

(1) Returning Provincials

There are 46 people in the group picture out of which 3 were unidentified. I managed to analyze the 43 people (Illustration 1 in Fig.8.).

There were 35 residents from the Nigishi District and local attendees from Wajima City. Eight were returning provincials (Table 7.). Only 1 was in their 20s, 2 were in their 30s, 1 was in their 40s, 2 were in their 50s and 2 were in their 60s (Table 8.). During the field survey, the leaders organizing the festival were promoting participation in the festival to the returning provincials and while it was not captured in photos, it was also observed that the returning provincials were enjoying participation in the festival. In this way, the festival serves the objective of the children and grandchildren returning to their hometown.

Table 7. House Location of Participating Residents and Returning Provincials for the Festival

| Number of Participants | Age of Participants |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Excluding Provincials who Returned for the Festival (35) | 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s Total |
| 2. Provincials who Returned for the Festival (8) | Outside Isikawa Prefecture (4) Inside Isikawa Prefecture (3) Outside Japan (1) |
| Nigishi District (33) | Village of Uwadai (5), Kuroiwa (4), Iriyama (3), Wataze (2), Igawadani (1) in Hinataura |
| Village of Tsurugiji (13), Shimobanba (1), Okama (1) |
| Village of Kamibanba (1), Takimachi (1), Mawatari (1) |
| Local Attendees from Wajima City (2) | Wajima District (1), Touge village (1) |

Resource: Analysis of Illustration 1 in Fig.8.

Table 8. Ages of Participants in the Festival

| Age of Participants | 10s 20s 30s 40s 50s 60s 70s 80s Total |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number of Participants | 1 1 7 5 6 15 6 2 43 |
| Provincials Returning for the Festival | (1) (2) (1) (2) (2) - (8) |

Resource: Analysis of Illustration 1 in Fig.8.

(2) Nigishi District Residents

The next paragraph features the festival participants from the Nigishi District (Table 7.). Among the villages in the 2nd and 4th Areas, 13 participants were from Tsurugiji, 14 from Hinataura, 1 from Shimobanba, 1 from Kamibanba and 1 from Okama. Regarding the 3rd Area, 1 participant was from Takimachi and 1 was from Mawatari. While not featured in the photo, 1 person also attended from Kyukawa. Thus, as indicated, attendance from the 3rd Area was minimal.

5.2 Festival Operation & Resident Interactions

This paragraph explains interactions among the residents, through festival preparation and operation (Fig.8.).
On August 13, one day prior to the actual festival, residents gathered at 9 am to prepare Kurokami Shrine by cleaning the area, preparing the "Sakaki" which is a leaf used for purifying, and the banners. They also arranged setting up the Kiriko as well as checking dangerous traffic points. After completion of these tasks in the afternoon, the members of Hosankai and the residents who had participated in the festival preparation joined together for a simple celebration (Fig.9.).

On the festival day, the villagers in charge of the Iriyama, Tsurugiji, Wataze, and Okama drums arrived at the entrance of the entry road leading to Kurokami Shrine around 2:30 pm while playing the drums. When these drums were heard at Kurokami Shrine, the other Uwadai party with drums waiting at Kurokami Shrine greeted the group at the entrance (3 pm).

These drums assembled at the precincts of Kurokami Shrine and performed to liven up the festival. Various residents interacted around the playing of these drums. During the onsite survey, children, former classmates in their 30s (male), seniors and juniors played the drums together (Illustration 2 in Fig.8.). While watching them, their families and residents were also enjoying the occasion. A religious service began at 4 pm. From 4:30 pm, a group of people carried the Mikoshi together with Kiriko and drums, and paraded on foot around the area. The route of the parade started at Kurokami Shrine, going along Nigishi River in Tsurugiji village, reaching Gotogahama on an outward route, and returning via Gotogahama through Tsurugiji village back to Kurokami Shrine (Fig.8.). The parade reached Gotogahama at 6 pm to hold a religious ritual and returned to Kurokami Shrine around 9:30 pm to conclude the festival.

There are 2 patterns of the interaction of participants -- residents and provincials -- by which the participants enjoyed the festival. While the festival was going on, one pattern was for the participants to raise the "Mikoshi" and "Kiriko" to heighten the atmosphere of the festival; the rest of the participants watch this for enjoyment.

Symbol ● denotes places where the participants raise the "Mikoshi" and "Kiriko" to heighten the atmosphere of the festival; the rest of the participants watch this for enjoyment.

Symbol ■ denotes places where the participants play the drums that have been set aside during breaks.
Mikoshi and Kiriko to heighten the atmosphere of the festival and for the rest of the participants to watch this view to enjoy (Symbol ● in Fig.8.). The other pattern was for the participants to play the drums that had been set aside during break times (Symbol ■ in Fig.8.).

Through these means of enjoying the festival, various interactions among the residents took place. For example, it was observed that people enjoyed taking pictures of those carrying the Mikoshi and Kiriko (Illustrations 3 and 6 in Fig.8.) and that elderly people chatted while viewing the festival (Illustration 7 in Fig.8.). During a break, elementary students and young men in their 30s played the drums together (Illustration 4 in Fig.8.), a grandfather taught his grandchild how to play the drum while the mother took pictures (Illustrations 5 in Fig.8.), middle-aged people played the drums together (Illustration 10 in Fig.8.), young men from Tsurugiji (in their 30s) performed the Japanese traditional lion dance although the lion dance was not a customary practice (Illustration 11 in Fig.8.). People interacting around playing drums and watching were frequently observed during the onsite survey.

6. Conclusion
6.1 Findings on the Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems (RPIHS) in this Study

The RPIHS was functioning through the interaction of the district residents and the provincials upon return to their hometown during the festival.

Through the case study of Nigishi District's Kurokami Shrine Festival, the system based on the respective villages supporting the festival with the involvement of the Village Friendship Organization, which provides daily assistance to the residents, was made clear. In other words, it is accurate to consider that the day-to-day activities of the Village Friendship Organization have been one of the reasons to generate cooperation among the villages. Therefore, as highlighted in this study, daily activities are linked with the Rural People Interaction Heritage Systems.

6.2 Activity Proposition Pertaining to RPIHS

It is a remarkable discovery in backing up RPIHS that the organizations supporting the daily activities of the residents and RPIHS are highly linked.

It is crucial to determine what kind of activities and organizations are connected to utilize and maintain the RPIHS in the future to jointly support RPIHS. In order to accomplish this, coordination among the related policies becomes crucial and important.

7. Future Research

Based on the research results, future research will identify what kinds of relations there are between provincials and the Nigishi District and how their villages are involved in the RPIHS pertaining to the traditional festival of Kurokami Shrine in the Nigishi District.

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Notes

1) In this paper, "provincials" (native former residents) mean those and their families who were born in their home villages but live in places other than their home villages.

2) The Nigishi District Kurokami Shrine's Traditional Festival is also known as "Osayo Festival". Osayo comes from the name of a young lady in a fairytale who lived in Wataze village located in the Nigishi District. It was said that she fell in love with a man from another village in Wajima City. They became engaged and were supposed to get married. One day, her fiancé went to work to catch fish in the sea by boat. On that occasion, he died when the boat sank during a storm. After that accident, Osayo kept grieving and missed him while standing on the coast called "Gotogahama". She kept looking into the sea where he died. Consequently, she killed herself by jumping into the sea. Following this incident, the residents of Nigishi District built Kurokami Shrine to pay tribute to the memory of Osayo's beautiful mind towards her fiancé. The residents of Nigishi District carry the portable shrine once a year in order to worship Osayo's spirit at Kurokami Shrine to enable Osayo to meet her fiancé's spirit. This is the historical story behind the Nigishi District's Kurokami Shrine and Traditional Festival. (Monzen Machi Festival Editing Committee (2004))

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