

period in the movements of youth groups and associations. When young people began to flow out of villages consequent to economic growth in urban areas starting in the 1960's, the number of performances was decreasing, to once a year at most. After 1979, when the youth association in Nagatoro was dissolved, performances became impossible, though several were tried during the first half of the 1980's.

The rural theatrical movements ran after two hares: pursuit of an idea and the provision of entertainment. Initially, the staging got rid of entertainment-oriented popular dramas and offered programs of enlightenment aimed at considering problems together with the audience. But gradually the pieces staged freed themselves from their original obstinate adherence to ideals and began to include folklore dramas and other existing masterpieces. Then the programs started to take up subjects close to people's lives in answer to audience

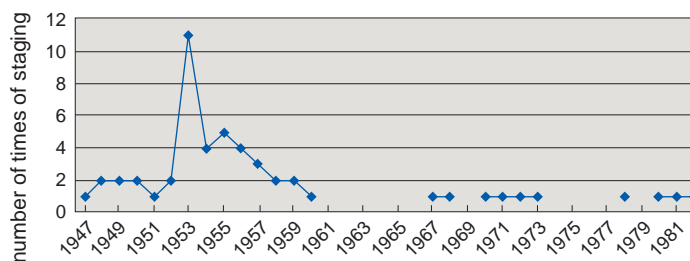


Fig. 1. Number of performances by youth groups and associations in Nagatoro Village after World War II

demand, and to create dramas reflecting rural life and traditions. But as the young people's organizations were dissolved one after another, the rural theatrical movement based on these groups disappeared. At present, Nagatoro has three theatrical groups, which are being specialized in a direction that strengthens the aspects of enlightenment or arts.

Present Problems of Hilly and Mountainous Areas under Enforcement of the Direct Payment System

Takaaki WATANABE

The purpose of this study is to clarify the present problems in hilly and mountainous areas (HMA) by examining the enforcement process of the direct payment system.

In April 2000, the Japanese government started a direct payment system for farmers in HMA, so that they could continue farming and living and could preserve multifunctionality in HMA. The authorities are aware of the fact that depopulation and land abandonment in HMA reduce the so-called multifunctionality of Japan's agricultural and rural areas, and consequently damage the whole system of ecology and economy. Based on regulatory standards, HMA municipalities define the target of this payment, where people and communities are expected to continue farming and preserve multifunctionality. In the target district, farmers participating in the system have to make a contract and continue preserving farmland for 5 years.

According to the author's case studies in some HMA municipalities, municipal officers enforce the system in accordance with the actual situation and needs. All contracts are based on the hamlet, and farmland has been maintained better than before. In all cases, the direct payment is either utilized for communal activities or is distributed to individual farmers. In Minase village, only 6% of payment is utilized for community activities, while the ratio in the other two villages amounts to almost the half (Table 1). In Sukawa village, the majority is spent on the maintenance of farm

roads, farmland and water facilities, whereas in Sakegawa the ratio of the expenditure for communally used machines and facilities is the largest (Table 2).

Table 1. Enforcement of the Direct Payment System in three Villages (2001)

	Minase village	Sukawa village	Sakegawa village
Number of contracts	20	10	32
Number of participating farmers	617	462	608
The total area for payment (ha)	522	314	654
Paddy field (ha)	508	314	637
Field (ha)	6	0	17
Grassland (ha)	7	0	0
Amount of payment (1,000yen)	71,459	32,053	135,701
Ratio of appropriation for communal activities (%)	6	52.4	50

Source: All data is collected from official government of Akita prefecture, Yamagata prefecture, Minase village, Yuzawa city, and Sakegawa village.

Note: The data of Sukawa village is based on 2000.

Table 2. Appropriation for Communal Activities (breakdown) (%)

	Sukawa village	Sakegawa village	Japan average
Committees' remuneration	7.8	7.3	7.2
Meetings	5.9	2.4	2.2
Maintenance of farm roads, farmland and water facilities	48.1	18.9	32.3
Communally used machines and facilities	4.0	32.8	12.7
Promoting landscape management activities	10.1	1.6	7.6
Others	9.3	10.0	12.9
Reserve fund	0.0	6.7	9.4
Balance carried forward	14.8	28.0	15.6

Source: All data is collected by MAFF and official government of Yuzawa city, and Sakegawa village.

Note: The data of Sukawa village is based on 2000.

On the other hand, we find only a few core people who are eager to preserve farmland, whether they are newcomers or not. People in HMA are mostly willing to preserve farmland for the legislated period, even if not considering their activities bring multifunctionality.

Conclusively, the direct payment system for HMA is, at the present moment, not enough to achieve the governmental task of long-term preservation of multifunctionality.

Although the system is intended to make the multifunctionality of HMA more explicit and therefore to contribute to the whole nation's welfare, it is not assumed that the people benefiting could participate in the community activities. In the future it might be more difficult to continue farming and preserve farmland. For that purpose, to assist core-people in preserving multifunctionality in HMA communities is indispensable.

Necessary Conditions for Continuation of Rural Communities in Hilly and Mountainous Areas

Noboru HASHIZUME

1. Objective and Method

The purpose of this research is to approach the realities of communities in which farm households have disappeared (communities where farm household did not exist after 1990) and to clarify the conditions necessary for continuing rural communities in hilly and mountainous areas, which play a key role in regional resource management.

The analysis uses the following two methods. One is the analysis of data using a brief table of communities in which farm households have disappeared based on information gathering. The other one is a discriminant analysis of communities in which farm households have disappeared, and rural communities which continue under the same production conditions.

2. Outline of the Results

(1) The number of 4,959 rural communities has decreased compared with ten years ago, because a lot of rural communities disappeared in urban areas and hilly and mountainous areas. However, a few farm households are scattered among non-farm households in 70% of these communities. On the other hand, communities in which farms have disappeared was estimated at about 1,500, and the number of farm households in 1990 was 4 or less in many of them (Fig. 1).

(2) Fig. 2 shows the main reason why farm households were lost: "Abandoning farming by urbanization" accounts for 46% and "Progress of depopulation and aging" leads to the collapse of the community most is 16% around the hilly and mountainous areas.

The number of these communities becomes about 40 by the period average and it is not very many. However, we should take note of a rapid increase after 1998.

(3) The contributory factors of communities in which farm households have disappeared in hilly and mountainous areas were clarified using discriminant analysis. The main factors were scale of a petty communities, rapid decrease in the number of farm households, and poor access to public facilities such as public offices and elementary schools (Table 1).

(4) Measures for the large area reorganization are important for continuing rural communities in hilly and mountainous areas. The reason is that about 5 or more farm households per community are necessary.

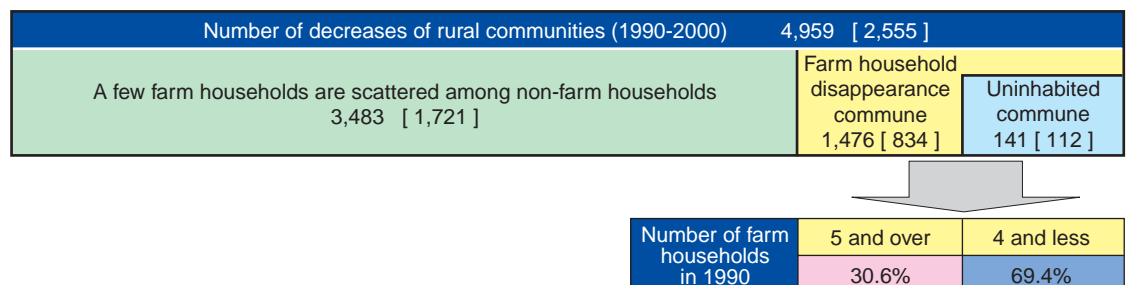


Fig. 1. Current State of Disappearing Rural Communities (Estimate Results)

Note: 1. [] is hilly and mountainous areas.

2. The number of rural communities in 2000 is 135,163.