

Yamaoka Memorial Foundation

第7回若者文化シンポジウム

「日本とドイツに見る異文化の受容と変容」

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The influence of volunteer activities on the perception of  
rural regions among young people in Japan

日本の若者が持つ農村地域の認識にボランティア活動が  
与える影響について

Case Study: Art Festivals 2022

事例研究: 芸術祭 2022

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# 1. Introduction

## はじめに

- **Art festivals** still recent phenomenon, since 1950s in Japan (Cai et al. 2020)  
芸術祭はまだ最近の現象で、日本では1950年代から始まっている
    - Aim to involve local population and revitalize in a sustainable way  
地域住民と共に、持続可能な形で活性化を目指す
    - Reflect central social issues in Japanese society (Kobayashi 2014)  
日本の核心的な社会問題を反映
  - Younger generations exploring different lifestyles beyond metropolitan cities (Klien 2009)  
若い世代は、都市にとどまらず、さまざまなライフスタイルを模索
  - Japan one of the first countries to pursue socially engaged art, building new relationships within communities  
日本は社会貢献型アートをいち早く追求し、地域社会との新たな関係を築いている国の一つである
- Strong interest in volunteering & social impact of the art projects  
ボランティア活動やアートプロジェクトの社会的影響に強い関心

## 2. Art Festivals and Volunteer Work in Japan

### 日本での芸術祭とボランティア活動

- Japan: Aging, population decline, economic stagnation in rural areas due to increasing urbanization  
都市化の進展による、農村部の高齢化、人口減少、経済停滞
- Strategies to revitalize developed from the 1980s onwards  
1980年代以降に発展した活性化戦略
  - Focus on economic growth, environmental protection, and the revitalization of rural culture  
経済成長、環境保護、農村文化の活性化に重点を置く
- Regional arts projects (Takahashi 2015)  
地域アートプロジェクト
  - Providing cultural boosts  
文化的な後押し
  - Creating new forms of social, cultural, and economic capital (Boven et al. 2017; Cai et al. 2020)  
社会的・文化的・経済的資本の新たな形態
- Volunteers play significant role ボランティアが重要な役割 (Favell 2015)
  - Ensuring events run smoothly  
イベントの円滑な運営
  - Fostering sense of belonging, collaboration, and cooperation among participants  
参加者の帰属意識、協調性、協力性の育成

## 2. Art Festivals and Volunteer Work in Japan 日本での芸術祭とボランティア活動

- Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (大地の芸術祭, ETAT), Niigata, since 2000
  - Setouchi International Art Festival (瀬戸内国際芸術祭, SAF), Seto Inland Sea, since 2010
  - Both:
    - Established by art director Kitagawa Fram (北川フラム)
    - Featuring contemporary art installations in rural settings  
田舎にある現代アートのインスタレーションを紹介
    - Famous for their natural sceneries (*satoyama* 里山・*satoumi* 里海)
    - Historically known for agriculture-related industries 農業関連産業
  - Exchanges between urban visitors and rural residents aim to (Favell 2015)  
都市部の観光客と農村部の住民の交流は・・・
    - Evoke new interest in regions 地方に対する新たな関心を喚起
    - Help with self-sufficiency and revitalization 自給自足と活性化を支援
- Long-lasting effects of volunteer work at ETAT and SAF? ボランティア活動の長期的効果は？
- Knowledge about remote areas? 地域に関する知識？
  - Interacting with residents on-site? 居住者との交流？

### 3. Research Method

#### 研究方法

- 4 qualitative semi-structured interviews  
定性的半構造化インタビュー
- Snowball sampling & previous contacts  
スノーボールサンプリングと過去の交流
- Criteria 基準
  1. Under 30 years old  
30歳未満
  2. Participated in ETAT or SAF activities as a volunteer in 2022  
2022年にボランティアとして参加者
- Conducted in: Takamatsu 高松, Naoshima 直島, Ōsaka 大阪, Tōkyō 東京 (tourist facilities & cafés)
- All in English, recorded, partially transcribed  
英語・録音・一部書き起こし
- Length: 10 to 25 minutes (limited availability during weekdays)  
時間：10分～25分（平日は制限あり）

## 4. Results

### 研究結果

Interview Data 1: General information & background of the interviewees.

Name* (Place of Interview)	Age, Sex	Origin	Current occupation (field / subject)	Participating 2022 as a volunteer	Former experience at
Akane (Osaka)	23, F	Osaka, Japan	University Student (Economy), Tokyo	SAF	ETAT, volunteer & tourist
Charlotte (Naoshima)	22, F	Hong Kong	University Student (Event Management), Hong Kong	SAF	ETAT, tourist
Mihou (Takamatsu)	27, F	Hong Kong	Employee (Art Event Promotion), Hong Kong	SAF & ETAT	SAF, Northern Alps Festival (Omachi) & ETAT, volunteer & tourist
Edith (Tokyo)	22, F	Australia	University Exchange Student (Art Management), Tokyo	ETAT	None

\*All names have been changed to protect participant's privacy.

※参加者の身元を保護するため、名前はすべて変更されている。

Abbreviations: F = Female / 女性; ETAT = Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale; SAF = Setouchi Art Festival

# 4. Results

## 研究結果

### Interview Data 2: Motivations & perceptions of the interviewees.

Name	Initial interest	Initial impression	Changes in perception	Return?
Akane	Interest in art and community; learned about ETAT from a friend, got involved with activities and decided to travel to SAF after moving to Osaka.	<b>ETAT:</b> Remote, opportunity to talk about current and future problems in Japan; <b>SAF:</b> Roughly the same, but not as remote / isolated as ETAT.	Never thought of areas as rural, rather as an example / symptom of Japan's current challenges; Realized that revitalization of local communities must be more concrete for locals; Good for building communities but offer nothing definite.	Yes
Charlotte	Heard about SAF from a university program; Wanted to initially go to SAF (more popular), but due to scheduling difficulties because of COVID, went to ETAT as a tourist first.	<b>ETAT:</b> Considered as the "original" of Japan's art festivals; Very remote and vast, difficult to travel around. <b>SAF:</b> Easier to travel around, more exciting to discover artworks.	<b>ETAT:</b> Makes reality of demographic change etc. more visible; Experiences as a volunteer were way harsher; More variety and beauty than expected.. <b>SAF:</b> Was surprised by the rich history of each island; Discovered many strange and special things.	Yes
Mihou	First went to SAF with a university program; Does not like to call areas "rural" because of the implication "versus city"; Had the initial image of Japan in general as very neat, tidy etc., but realized that no place fit into any stereotype.	<b>ETAT:</b> Most difficult place to go around, very vast; People initially were more reserved than at SAF; Landscape feels very real and wild. <b>SAF:</b> Feels more accessible; Local people eager to meet young volunteers.	Always encountered places through volunteering, does not want to comment on local people in general; Activities very tiring and exhausting; Is always looking forward to the opening of the Triennale, especially with the prospect of getting sleep; All festivals and places are special, mostly characterized by the people they met and the memories they now share.	Yes
Edith	Went skiing in Yuzawa and got recommended to attend winter events at ETAT, hence first volunteering in 2022; Read book about ETAT and wanted to learn more about the concept.	<b>ETAT:</b> Felt very typically rural; Vastly different from big cities, especially because of the beautiful landscape, buildings and outdoor activities.	<b>ETAT:</b> Experience felt like a magical tour; Heard about problems like depopulation, seeing closed schools etc.; Idea of community art fascinating, but feels they need more time to get to know the place; Learned that motivation to change has to come from the community rather than from outside.	Yes



## 4.1 Initial impressions and growing connections to the region 地域に対する第一印象と地域へのコネクションの広がり

- Mostly art students and young professionals from urban areas  
都市部の美大生や若手社会人
- Before 始めに
  - Interested in gaining contacts with artists and organization of art festivals  
アーティストとの交流やアートフェスティバルの開催に興味をもつ
  - Aware of the social issues faced by rural areas in Japan before their participation  
日本の地方が抱える問題を事前に認識する
- Hands-on experiences & interactions 体験・交流の実践
  - Deepened understanding of challenges faced by rural regions  
地方が抱える課題への理解を深める
- Felt more connected to the region 地域との結びつきをより実感
  1. Sense of accomplishment & belonging  
達成感・帰属意識
  2. Developed a desire to make positive contributions to local communities  
地域社会への積極的な寄与の芽生え
  3. Considered the ongoing well-being of the regions  
地域の継続的な幸福を考慮

*"When we talked to the artists and locals, I learned a lot about the schools and houses that were abandoned because people moved away. **I learned so much more about these regions, and never before would have thought, 'Wow, this is a region with a rich history' (laughs).**"*

- Edith

*"It's an indirect way to learn more about each place, more than 'Okay, this is a region that's aging fast.' Through the artwork and volunteering, **you get connected to what's happening, it becomes more emotional and more real.**"*

- Charlotte

## 4.2 Revitalization vs. understanding of a region 地域活性化vs地域理解

*"It has to come from the **people wanting change, that's the basic idea**. But you have to be very careful, the people who come have to really get to know the residents. Maybe they bring in an idea, but **the locals are the ones who have to get the show on the road.**"*

- Edith

*"If you **don't take enough time**, you're not helping at all, you're actually just turning the place into a city you imagine [...]. When the volunteers come back every year, the locals recognize us as a team, even if they don't remember individual faces. **It becomes easier, but it takes time.**"*

- Mihou

- Thoughts about own impact and goal of revitalization  
自分の影響力と活性化の目標
- Process should...  
プロセスは
  1. ... take its time  
時間をかけるべきである
  2. ... not impose measures  
対策を押し付けないべきである
  3. ... note that will to change should come from local community  
地域社会から生まれる変化であることに注目すべきである
- Aim of socially engaged art in Japan  
日本における社会貢献型アートの目的
  1. Economic benefits secondary  
経済的利益は二の次
  2. Prioritizes sustainability and stability  
持続可能性と安定性を優先
  3. Develop new relationships among people involved  
人脈開拓

## 4.3 Changes in perceptions of "rural vs. urban"

### 「田舎vs都会」の認識の変化

- Did not match image popularized by tourism & media  
観光やメディアで流布されているイメージと異なる
  - Each region with its own unique characteristics  
地域によって独自の特色を持つ
  - Welcome change from stressful city life  
ストレスの多い都市生活から回復する
  - Aware of stereotypes & "rural vs. urban" dichotomy  
「田舎vs都会」の二分化と固定概念の認識
- More attention necessary より注目すべきこと
  1. Job opportunities 就業機会
  2. Education 学校教育
- Lack of recreational activities  
レクリエーション活動の不足
  - Limits possibility of wanting to move to areas  
その地域へ引っ越したくない

*"I was born in Osaka and grew up in Tokyo, so I was stressed all the time. Because the big cities, especially Tokyo, are so crowded, and there are too many people. But when I went to Echigo-Tsumari, I felt very relaxed, especially because of the satoyama and the people there. Both Echigo-Tsumari and Setouchi **feel like home to me now, I feel relaxed** when I go there."*

- Akane

*"Rural" or 'inaka' still kind of **suggests that something is not that advanced or slow**, right? [...] To me, each region has its own history, and so **they're just different**, right? We tend to measure the value of a place by its economic importance, and it doesn't make sense to me."*

- Mihou

*"The problem is the **centralization in Tokyo**. For example, we could move more university campuses to the countryside, while keeping the standard of education the same, which is a huge problem right now."*

- Akane

*"Okay, I think it's very rural in the sense that **you don't have much entertainment here**, on the islands themselves, and around Echigo-Tsumari even less. I mean, of course you can live here, and there are shopping streets and so on. But compared to the activities you can do in a city, it's **quite different and rural**, I would say."*

- Charlotte

## 4.4 The ups & downs of volunteer activities

### ボランティア活動のメリットとデメリット

*"Well, it's meaningful, there are many chances to communicate with everyone. **But also, it's harsh**, I have to say, harsher than I ever thought, **incredibly harsh.**"*

- Charlotte

*"Yeah, I think it's **totally exhausting**, but also really nice here. Yeah, it makes you want to come back. Even though it's exhausting - think about all the calories you burn! (laughing)"*

- Edith

*"**Sleep!** I'm sorry, but it's true! Because it is just so exhausting. But honestly, in the past, once the festival opened, I just went to sleep immediately and **couldn't get up until the next morning.**"*

- Mihou

*"You can just do so **many strange and special things**. One day I just cut bamboo all day, another I cleaned up a forest. All of that has to be done at some point so that both the locals and the visitors can enjoy the festival. So, it's okay, **it pays off in the end.**"*

- Charlotte

- Traditional Japanese corporate style hierarchy  
日本の慣習的な階層構造スタイル
- Organization considered "very strict" & "harsh"  
厳格できつい組織・「厳しい」
- "Necessary evil" to get things done  
実行するための必要悪
- Hard physical and mental work, concerns about exploitation 精神的ストレス・力仕事

→ Can top-down initiatives achieve sustainable development?

トップダウンの取り組みで、持続可能な開発は実現可能か？

## 4.4 The ups & downs of volunteer activities

### ボランティア活動のメリットとデメリット

- Excitement despite criticisms  
それでも感動すること
  1. Diverse tasks 多様なタスク
  2. Meeting people from different backgrounds  
異なる背景を持つ人たちとの出会い
  3. All want to volunteer again in the future  
またボランティアに参加したい
- Overall 全般的に
  1. Promise of personal fulfillment 充足感
  2. Skill development 能力開発
  3. Networking with like-minded individuals  
志を同じくする人たちとのネットワーキング
- Main accomplishments 主な成果
  - Establishment of new social connections  
新しい関係の構築  
→ Especially between participants from urban and rural areas  
特に都市と農村の参加者の間

*"The **most fun for me** is when we are on location with the artists and talk to them about their projects. That's fantastic. **Working with people** who come to the rice fields, working with the artists and **talking to them**, that's just awesome."*

- Edith

*"I remember we were in Echigo-Tsumari, very close to a village, and the residents wanted to show us that they had the best apples. We got so many things, someone would always come by and bring us whole boxes of apples! And then I **met one of the older ladies** again, and we immediately started talking about apples, for longer than I care to admit. **It was delightful!**"*

- Mihou

*"Both triennales promote a **new relationship between local and city residents**, and also artists and students, especially foreign students. [...] They all come here and **experience the culture and the life of the local community**, so it's very **healthy for the future**. And it's important! **The most important thing is this new relationship.**"*

- Akane

# 5. Conclusion

## 結言

- Volunteering at art festivals can... ボランティアに参加すれば
  1. ... positively impact young people's views of rural areas 若者の農村地域の認識にプラスの影響を与える
  2. ... foster critical thinking towards urban vs. rural stereotypes ステレオタイプに対する批判的思考の育成
  3. ... have a positive impact on both individuals and local communities in the long run コミュニティへの貢献
- Revitalization efforts now... 地域おこし
  1. ... mainly focus on social and communal sustainability 社会的・公共的・持続可能な開発
  2. ... offer potential for creating new social relations 新しい関係の可能性の提供
- **But:** Strict organization and physical exertion of volunteers can hinder meaningful exchange and connections  
**しかし:** 厳しい組織や肉体労働は有意義な交流やコネクションを妨げる可能性がある
- Future research should consider... 今後の研究で考えるべきこと
  1. ... a more diverse sample of participants (gender, location, age, resident groups)  
更なる多様な参加者のサンプル (性別、居住地、年齢)
  2. ... long-term development and relevance of volunteer work  
ボランティア活動の長期的な発展と関連性
  3. ... that borders between urban and rural continue to blur  
境界があいまいになる

Thank you for your time and attention!

ご清聴ありがとうございました。

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