

Think Locally Act Globally
FOUR VILLAGE/TOWN VITALIZATION PROJECTS
Community Development Today In Japan

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This paper introduces the status quo and several cases of community development in Japan in order to contribute toward an investigation into the future direction of community development in Asia and the Pacific Region.¹⁾ Not only a substantive description but also a primary effort towards a conceptual generalization is intended. The paper consists of three parts: The first section discusses the integration of "social planning" and "community development"; the second shows the range of typical community development projects today; and the third section provides four models of community development projects: (1) Self-sufficient, Multiple Farming in "Developed" Countries Model, (2) Controlling Incoming Capitals Model, (3) By-product Model, and (4) "Think Locally, Act Globally" Model. Or with respect for the theme of this conference of "Building Partnerships for Better Development," they may be renamed as: (1) an Agricultural Cooperative-Manufacturing Corporation Model, (2) Farmers-City Dwellers Model, (3) Hospital-Local Government Model, and (4) International Model. The three sections are rather independent in content, and not necessarily interdependent with each other.

I. The Integration of Community Planning and Community Development

There are no community development projects per se in Japan. That is, the concept or the term of community development has not been commonly used in practice,²⁾ although some Japanese social

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- 1) This paper is the revised version of the draft of the writer's presentation at "1st International Outlook Conference on Community Development in Asia-Pacific" titled "Building Partnerships for Better Development," held in Bangkok on 3-5 September 1998, sponsored by Charles Sturt University, Australia and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand, in cooperation with Ho Chi Minh Open University, Vietnam and Community Development Department, Thailand. The expectation to the presentation by the conference organizer was "a sort of country paper."
 - 2) A. Furumoto, Chief, Planning Group II, and Y. Nomura, Assistant Director, Planning Office, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Home Affairs, (Interviews, July 28, 1998); and M. Nakadaira, Assistant Director, Depopulation Office, and M. Tanitsu, Assistant Director, Local City Section, Regional Development Bureau, National Land Agency, (Interviews, July 22, 1998).

work textbooks have devoted a section or a chapter to its explanation, which is typically a copy of or an introduction to the Western/American version.³⁾

However, there are numerous projects in Japan, which are similar in substance to and could be named, if desired, community development projects. They are usually discussed and implemented under the name of village or town vitalization (build-up or resuscitation) projects, which may be a hybrid between Social Planning and Community Development in Rothman's definition.⁴⁾ Social Planning is characterized by terms such as "top down", and Community Development by "Bottom Up", "Local Initiatives", "People's Participation" and "Empowerment".

Today in Japan the distinction between social planning projects and community development projects has not been clear. In the above village or town vitalization projects, both approaches have been mixed. Most Social Planning projects place strong emphasis on the initiative and participation of local people. They are "must" ingredients for projects if, for example, they are to be commended as "good projects" by various segments of governments.

The Japanese government implemented a radical program in 1988: "A 100 Million Yen (\$1 Million) Program", or officially titled "A Community Vitalization Program; Think By Yourself and Act By Yourself." It was a sort of "a carte blanche (a blank power of attorney) project" — the writer named a Bangkok slum employment promotion project as such when he designed it for ILO in 1992-94. The national government ceased to design projects or think and act by itself, and let local villages and towns design and implement projects by themselves. All the national government did was to set a broad framework and to provide 100 million yen to each local entity. It represented the culmination of local initiative, participation or autonomy.

This was "an irresponsible program" in a sense, and such a program is usually not allowed within governmental organizations. Some argued that it was not accountable to tax payers. A group chief of the Ministry in charge, however, responded to this by saying: "It would be OK if one project out of ten is successful." The justification lies in the emphasis on the local initiative and its possible extension to other communities.⁵⁾

On the other hand, a Community Development project fully initiated and implemented by local people with their effort, participation, and resources would be very unlikely to remain a "pure"

3) E. g. Kyoichi Sonoda, *Contemporary Community Theory* [*Gendai Komyuniti-ron*], Tokyo Univ. Press, 1978, pp. 99-124.

4) Jack Rothman, *Three Model of Community Organization*, F. E. Peacock, 1976.

5) A. Furumoto. (Interview)

Community Development project in countries like Japan. It would be sooner or later embraced in a Social Planning program, then become eligible to receive some governmental or non-governmental subsidies/grants, and the local people's own effort, participation and resources rendered unnecessary. In short, the project becomes the mere shell of a Community Development project. It is not a matter of being good or bad, but inevitable. The Misumi project below (III(4)), for instance, has already received JICA money from the central government and any outlay from the town budget is no longer necessary.

This integration of Social Planning and Community Development may be not a characteristic specific to Japan but a common phenomenon in many countries today. They can be analytically separated, but in actuality overlap.

II. Overview of Community Vitalization Projects

Numerous village/town vitalization projects have been carried out all over Japan, in small communities such as parts of towns, in big communities such as large cities, and even at the prefectural level. Each ministry of the central government, e.g. the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Land Agency of Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery and the Ministry of Construction has been competing with the others, encouraging these vitalization projects through subsidies, grants, and tax transfers. There are some "pure" Community Development activities not under the umbrella of the governmental programs such as those carried out by the Ainu (indigenous Japanese minority), but they are the exception.

When referring to community development, the first things to come to mind are the invitation of manufacturing plants and the promotion of tourism. Not all communities can succeed in inviting plants, and the success of the invitation does not necessarily promise prosperity for the community. Neighboring communities have often to compete with each other for tourism projects. Several years ago a community successfully bored down to hit a hot spring. Hearing of this accomplishment, neighboring communities did the same and the result was that a limited number of tourists were split among them. Their balance sheets were all in the red.

Table 1 shows the whole spectrum of those projects under the Ministry of Home Affairs ¥100 Million Program.⁶⁾ The focus of each ministerial program differs. One National Land Agency's program, for example, may focus on depopulated communities and another on mountainous areas. However, the range of projects under those programs does not differ much in content.

6) E. g. Planning Office, Home Affairs Minister's Secretariat, ed., *Hometown-Nourishing Key Words Book* [*Furusato-zukuri Kī-wādo Book*] (Casebooks IV-VI), 1994-96.

Table 1: Projects Under the Ministry of Home Affairs ¥100 Million Program

(1) The Construction of a Core or Symbolic Facility

e. g. a cultural hall, a library, an art gallery, a museum, a theater, an astronomical observatory, a gymnasium, a convention hall, a children's, women's or educational hall, a park (a historical park, a natural park, a marine park, a folk village, an amusement/theme park, etc.) or various facilities for tourists;

(2) The Sponsorship of an Event

e. g. an art festival, a traditional local festival, a sports tournament, an exhibition, a carnival, a symposium, or official commendation/awarding and its ceremonies;

(3) The Characterization of the Community

e. g. a picture book village, a book town, a puppet village, a Manyo (an old Japanese anthology) village, a Kabuki (a traditional Japanese play) village, a star-gazing village, a mini-independent state, a town of history, or a Guinness Book Town;

(4) The Mobilization and/or Organization of People

e. g. a residents' theatrical troupe or orchestra, volunteers for various activities, beautification, people's involvement in village/town policy and program planning, environmental protection movement, or the rediscovery of one's own town;

(5) The Cultivation of Residents' Talent

e.g. a life-long learning program, a citizens' college, an outdoor learning center, a program of study in a mountain village, a learning through experience program, a recommendation, awarding or certification, a people's exchange program(international and domestic), a transmission of traditional skill and culture, a study abroad program, or a leadership training;

(6) The Promotion of Economic Activities

Many of above facilities and programs are to promote economic activities, most typically tourism.

e. g. industrial technology (biotechnology, high-technology, traditional technology), a town factory, an antenna shop, various facilities to support industrial or economic activities, or the culture of fishes and shellfishes;

Projects listed have been classified into six groups: (1) The construction of a core facility, which can be cultural, educational, recreational, commercial or industrial; (2) the sponsorship of an event, either one-time, annually or at other intervals; (3) the characterization of the community, to enhance residents' love for, awareness of and involvement in their own villages/towns; (4) the mobilization and/or organization of community people, for certain activities; (5) the cultivation

of residents' talent, such as leadership training; and (6) the direct promotion of economic activities. Some of the projects could fall into several of the categories.

Some are more hardware-oriented projects, and others more software-oriented projects. Some are more top-down projects, and others more bottom-up projects. Some are more local government initiated projects, and others more local non-governmental people initiated projects.

The final beneficiaries should be the people of the community, but the direct users of the facilities and participants in the activities could be both people in and outside the community. How to invite people from outside is often crucial for tourism and commercial type projects.

III. Four Suggestive Models

The following four cases of village/town vitalization projects do not necessarily typically fall into one of the six categories above, nor are they all-inclusive, but may be suggestive of the future direction of community development. The descriptions below are not the simple compilation of facts but an interpretation of them. Many factual aspects of each case have been dropped.

1. Case 1—Nikaho:⁷⁾ Self-sufficiency, Multiple Farming In "Developed" Countries; The Partnership between an Agricultural Cooperative and a Manufacturing Corporation

Nikaho is a town of 12,000 inhabitants located in Northern part of the main island of Honshu. The case is a response of an agricultural cooperative to industrialization and the market economy.

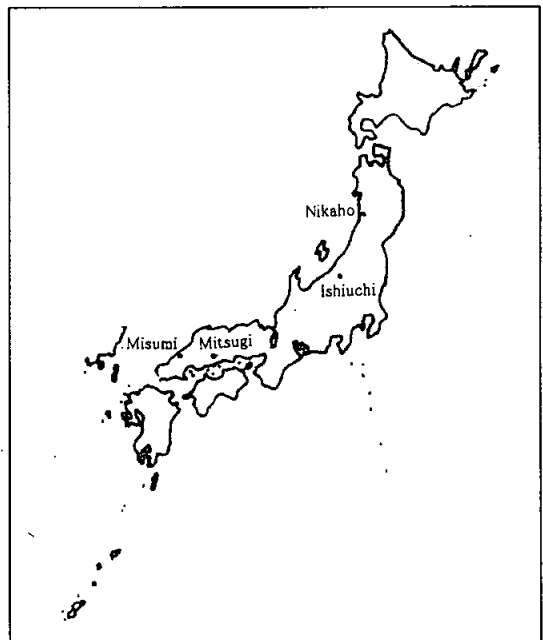
The progress of industrialization leads to the introduction of chemical fertilizers and medicine and agricultural equipments. Productivity certainly goes up, but so does the cash expense. The living standard of farmers do not become comfortable, at least in relation to urban dwellers. Once people become involved in a commodity economy and need money, they go to cities to work as seasonal workers, or work full-time or part-time in their own communities if opportunities are available. Family and community life, including human relations, changes. Wives and husbands sometimes live apart, parents and children spend little time together, and the role of grandparents is lost.

7) The description of this section is based on the writer's interview with Kisaku Sato, former President, Nikaho Agricultural Cooperative, on August 19, 1998, unless otherwise cited. Also see Kisaku Sato, "Walking With the Self-sufficiency Movement — The Locus of the 500 Thousand Yen Self-sufficiency Movement [*Jikyū-undō to Ayunde—50 man-en Jikyū-undō no Kiseki*]," Masao Kuboi, ed., *Village Vitalization Towards the 21st Century* [*21 Seiki e no Murazukuri*], Tokyo: Ochanomizu-shobō, 1986, pp. 33-79.

Meals are not cooked by parents, but instant or ready-made foods are served. Traditions disappear and the whole culture changes. People's sense of value also changes. Goods and services purchased are desirable and valuable, and those obtained without paying are of no value. The more expensive, the more valuable. Worldly desires know no limit and money worship prevails. This is a common story all over the world.

The Town of Nikaho exactly followed this story. In Japan there was imposed an additional condition of *Gentan*, a national program to limit the space of planting rice—for example, a 10 percent reduction.

Facing this industrialization, Nikaho Agricultural Coop, in early days, tried dairy farming, “strategic vegetables” and other programs, which the national government encouraged, and the production and sales⁸⁾ of special products to Nikaho—sandfish (*Arctoscopus japonicus*)-sushi, miso (soybean paste), pickled radish, etc., which were all natural, with no additives, no coloring agents and no antiseptic substances—to increase earnings. The former was a total failure and the latter, which was a common strategy in many communities, was not effective enough. As one Nikaho Coop leader says, “Following a government program has never resulted in a success.”



The Coop then made twin recommendations, to their members. The first of these was self-supply and multiple farming: “Don’t try to increase income, but try to decrease expenses.”⁹⁾ Unique to this case was that the Coop showed cost and benefit in monetary terms. The Cooperative leaders were different from many NGO people and “intellectuals”, who preach the philosophy of self-sufficiency. They partially accepted the mainstream value of the present society. They countered the market economy with its words, that is, the amount of earnings from work employed, for example 1,000 yen per hour, vs. the amount of expenses, for example, for meals, in recalculation of vegetables and other materials,

8) Directly to city dwellers and through department stores.

9) Few members, however, followed the leaders’ idea. The term “self-sufficiency” reminded them of life during World War II when they ate weeds and roots of trees.

in consumer prices, not producer prices. They drew up a very detailed calculation and balance sheet for a scenario in which people planted, raised and cooked these vegetable and other materials.¹⁰⁾ The consciousness of unhealthy and harmful foods provided for their children, and the alienated family life reinforced this persuasion for decreasing expenses. The self-sufficient, multiple farming was accompanied by organic farming.

The Coop's second recommendation was to take full-time and part-time jobs in the community – another “compromise” with the general nature of society. Fortunately, Nikaho is the birthplace of TDK, which produces tapes and various electronic parts for TV sets and other appliances and equipments, and increased its employment as industrialization proceeded in Japan. TDK has even solicited the COOP's cooperation for its workforce recruitment. Owing to the mechanization, invested labor in rice farming has been minimized. Only a few days are necessary for plowing, planting and harvesting. Weeding and other daily maintenance of fields can be done by family members. By working in a plant in the community, people can maintain their family and community life.

It was not the matter of a choice between agriculture and manufacture, nor a transition from agriculture to manufacture. The farming industry has been maintained. The primary breadwinner may work in both farming and employed work, or some family members may work in farming and some others in employed work. The agricultural work and industrial work are well balanced in a household. Farmers' families tend to be composed of three or four generations. Thus they have maintained their cohesion and identity and their culture and life, as farmers. The reality and advantages of a farming community can be preserved. The response of Nikaho was the acceptance of trends in mainstream society with some resistance against it.

Case 2 – Ishiuchi:¹¹⁾ The Control of Incoming Capitals Through Democracy; Farmers and City Dwellers Alliance, Refusing Partnership with Government

Ishiuchi used to be a small mountainous, snowy village located in central Japan. Its people were poor, and eight out of ten families had to send one or more members to the Tokyo area as seasonal

10) Coop members were persuaded and followed this time. However, “That's a men's explanation,” says a woman leader, Hatsu Sasaki, Assistant Director, Center for Agricultural Improvement [*Nōgyō Kairyō Fukyū Sentā*], Honjo Region, Akita Prefecture (the writer's interview, August 19, 1998). “Women preferred to work outside and be employed, even if costs and benefits were equal or even if the cost exceeded the benefit. It is easier.” “Unhealthy and harmful food for children was our real concern.”

11) The description of this section is based on the writer's interview with Shōji Onozuka, President, Shiozawa Town Resort Tourist Association, on August 21, 1998, unless otherwise cited. Also see Takehiko Hoda, *Endogenous Development And Japanese Farm & Mountain Villages*, Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1996, pp. 189-202.

workers during winter. At present it is one of 79 districts of a town named Shiozawa whose population is 120 thousand.

A group of villagers wondered about finding livelihoods which did not necessitate seasonal work and leaving their families behind. Having industrialization, Ishiuchi did not enjoy the same conditions as Nikaho (Case 1) — there was no TDK nor an equivalent. Ishiuchi people had to create something new for themselves. "Use your own resources and turn your biggest disadvantage into the biggest advantage," is a principle of community development. What the villagers thought of was the development of a ski resort. Snow is really a burden and pain for people in a land of heavy snow, but now is an asset for Ishiuchi people. This case happened in the 1950s, when skiing was not yet a popular sport in Japan. Villagers started guest houses, restaurants, souvenir shops and other ski-related businesses. Now more than 80 percent of the village families run one or more of these. The remaining 20 percent of the people also have some relationship with the skiing industry with their close relatives running those businesses, for example.

The Ishiuchi case is a tourism model, which is common in community development. Instructive here, however, is their core strategy — the control of incoming capital from the outside to protect their local interests. One of the most common community development projects is the invitation of big capital to start a business in a community. If "successful", however, the company may grab everything within its reach. The company may become prosperous but the life of the people there may not.

Once Ishiuchi was found to be profitable, big tourist capital might come in to take over the whole area, bringing in hotels, lifts, restaurants and shops, even as a set. There were actually such examples nearby. All local people's interest might be even overridden. Local people might be employed as part-time or temporary attendants during winters at most.

The control has been realized through self-government and community democracy. The people of Ishiuchi organized themselves, choosing their own chief of the district through elections, a community council, rules and regulations, budget of 1 billion yen (US\$10 million), a tourist association¹²⁾ and four or five full-time staff, which is exceptional in Japan. On one occasion, a lift company, which usually has a political power at a ski resort, tried to monopolize the site. On another occasion, a hotel with 200 rooms was planned, which endangered the operation of the guest

12) The director of the association was the chief of the section elected from all residents till recently but now is selected by executive board members of the association.

houses. The people prevented these actions. Shady businesses and disreputable drinking establishments were not allowed. When a resort condo was built, they successfully negotiated the local people's use of a swimming pool, a gymnasium and a conference room in it and even the management of those facilities through an entrust contact.

Interesting in the case of Ishiuchi is that the people never intended for a total transition from farming to tourism. They have been engaged in tourism only for three or four months of a year, and in farming for the remaining months, rejecting the idea of the all-year-around tourism.

The leader¹³⁾ even advises villagers to save 50 percent of their earnings from the ski industry and purchase pieces of farm land with the remaining 50 percent. There are many pieces of land abandoned in the surrounding communities due to *Gentan* (See p. 47), with the owners abandoning farming. The people of Ishiuchi have cleverly increased the acreage of owned farm land per household.

Furthermore, the people have rebelled against the government's *Gentan* policy to plant rice on all their lands including those newly acquired, and have sold their harvest directly to city dwellers¹⁴⁾ while a Food Control Program forces farmers to sell their rice to the government.¹⁵⁾ Relationships with city dwellers have been established through the operation of guest houses. "Because of this disobedience, Ishiuchi has had the least government investment in social infrastructures," says the leader proudly.

Ishiuchi has become an important ski resort and the National Athletic Meets have been held there twice. It is a typical "endogenous development" model.

Both Case I (Nikaho) and Case II (Ishiuchi) did enter into a sort of negative partnership with governments, which was a secret for their success—independence or self reliance. Nikaho leaders did not adopt nor become involved much in governmental programs after their bitter experiences in early days. The Ishiuchi case simply refused the *Gentan*. In both cases, people wanted to remain to be farmers. Through self-restraint, people did not disregard but stuck to agriculture. They have kept an excellent balance between farming and employed work or the skiing business. Thus, they have maintained the reality and merits of rural communities, including culture and family relations.

13) He used to be a labor union activist in Tokyo.

14) Vegetables were consumed by themselves and at guest houses.

15) These regulations have been relaxed recently.

The differences between the two cases are the partnerships: In Case 1 this is the agriculture and the manufacturing industry, while in Case 2 it is the agriculture and service industry; in Case 1 a cooperative and a corporation, while in Case 2, farmers and city consumers; but neither with the government. The third and fourth cases are stories of depopulated areas.

Case 3—Mitsugi:¹⁶⁾ Health and Welfare and By-product Model; Partnership Between a Hospital and a Local Government;

Mitsugi is a town of 8,337 people as of March 31, 1998,¹⁷⁾ 65 kilometers west of Hiroshima. Half of the households are engaged in farming.¹⁸⁾ The de-population accompanied by its aging population was and is a common problem in rural areas across Japan. The 1977 Mitsugi population was 10,000,¹⁹⁾ and today 27 percent are older than 65.²⁰⁾

A young doctor was invited to its village clinic 32 years ago. He worked hard for the villagers, only to find soon that his good care and effective treatment resulted in a larger bed-ridden elderly population. He realized the need of visiting nursing and introduced the service. Responding to the villagers' needs he encountered, step by step he added a health management center for all residents, a nursing home for senior citizens with or without senile dementia, a care-at-home supporting center, a rehabilitation center, a vocational training center for people with disabilities, an apartment with care, a home visit care service, a day service and a short stay service for the aged, a visiting rehabilitation service, a 24-hour emergency service, a meal service, a bathing service, and other facilities and services, with a hospital grown from the clinic as the core. A plan for a hospice is now underway.

Even the health- and welfare-section offices of the town government were moved into the hospital building and the position of the section chief was occupied by the director of the hospital, in order to override the bureaucratic jurisdictional division among the health and welfare sectors within the town government. It was very unusual for Japanese local governments to take such actions. Patients have certainly benefitted from the convenience.

16) The description of this section is based on the writer's interview with Mr. Noboru Yamaguchi, Administrator, Mitsugi Hospital, and his staff on August 13, 1998, unless otherwise cited.

17) "The Economic Effect of Medical, Health and Welfare Facilities in Mitsugi Town," a material prepared for the interview above (Footnote 16) by the hospital administration, p. 1.

18) *Research On Settled Habitation In Depopulation Areas As Forefront Communities With Aged Population* [*Senshinteki-kōreika-shakai toshiteno Kaso-chiiki no Teiji no Arikata nikansuru Chōsa-kenkyū*], Research Institute for Depopulation Area Problems [*Kaso-chiiki Mondai Chōsa-kai*], 1997, p. 99.

19) "The Economic Effect of Medical, Health and Welfare Facilities in Mitsugi Town," p. 1.

20) *Research On Settled Habitation*, p. 101.

A comprehensive community health and welfare care system has been completed. Mitsugi is now well-known in Japan and in some part of the world. Even a Swedish group came to the town to admire the system. The success has owed much to: (1) the doctor's ingenuity of hospital management to carry out various programs ahead of the national government and fully utilize the governments' incentives and grants, and (2) the good partnership between the hospital and the town government.

In the process of establishing this system some typical community development approaches and techniques were used. For example, the townspeople were mobilized as participants and volunteers for those programs above, and the Welfare Bank Program, a national government program, was introduced in which people caring for people in a community accumulate the number of hours worked for their future own use when they come to require care.

However, the reason why Mitsugi is cited here is not because of the development of this comprehensive care system nor the utilization of community development techniques, but because of the contribution of the development of the care system to the economic and social development of the community.

The hospital of the small town has grown into a core medical center serving 70,000 people not only of the town but also of surrounding communities. The positive effect on the employment and economy to the town is tremendous. Now the system is the largest employer in the town. It employs 433, and the whole medical, health and welfare system in the town employs 577, while the total employment in Mitsugi is 4,500. Including outpatients and visitors, 2,265 people use or visit this system per day. More than 113 million yen has been spent per year in this town by the system. Including the personnel expenses (wages and allowances), it reaches 2,554 million yen. The annual budget of the whole medical, health and welfare system is nearly double that of the general budget of the town government: ¥92 billion vs. ¥50 billion in 1998 FY. Shopping malls (streets) near the hospital have been all renovated and stores have expanded their business. Because of this system, the town population has stabilized in these ten years, while all neighboring towns in this region lost significant percentages of their populations.²¹⁾

"Since health and welfare have been administered by the hospital, the government can focus its resources and efforts on other fields such as education," says one of the town top officials. The hospital has been financially independent from the town or self sufficient with bonds issued, and no general tax fund received.

21) "The Economic Effect of Medical, Health and Welfare Facilities in Mitsugi Town."

Another by-product is not economic but social. Because of the various programs, interaction among townspeople has increased. Nurses and care-takers of the new visiting care program, for example, go into neighborhoods which were otherwise isolated and link them with the outside world.

Turn the biggest disadvantage into the biggest advantage. In the Mitsugi case, the biggest disadvantage to be turned into an asset was the aged population. The thorough devotion to the solution of the problem, or the establishment of a comprehensive local care system, in other words, the sincere pursuit of the welfare of inhabitants, contributed to the vitalization of the town, or the development of the community as a whole. In this sense, Mitsugi is named as a by-product model here.

The realization of health and welfare for all people, however, is the ultimate goal of community development, and economic development an instrument for it. In the 21st century, it is the welfare sector as well as/including environmental sector that are expected in some countries to form a core industry which will support and promote their societies in replacement of the dwindling manufacturing sector.

Case 4 – Misumi:²²⁾ Think Locally, Act Globally; International Partnership Model

The last case is an international model, or a “Think locally, act globally” model. The partnership is between two communities in two different countries, which support each other for their development of communities. The two countries could be any combination among the “developing” countries and “developed” countries.

Misumi is a small town along the northwest shore of the main island of Japan. It used to be a village of farming, forestry and fishing, but those industries have been shrinking. There were more than 15,000 people in the late 1950s, but now (1995) there are only 8,600. Within forty years it lost nearly half of its population. Young people have gone to cities for study and work. Elderly people count twenty seven (27) percent of the population today.²³⁾ There are no special industries or products nor tourist potential.²⁴⁾ The only thing special to Misumi is a traditional paper hand-

22) The description of this section is based on the writer's interview with Yuji Seitani, Mayor, and Hideo Tanaka, Director, Community Promotion Section, of Misumi Town, and Yasuichi Kubota, Intangible Cultural Property of *Sekishū* Handmade Paper, on August 12, 1998, unless otherwise cited.

23) *Data Book, 1995 Misumi Town Handbook [Chōsei Yōran] : Statistics Edition*, Misumi Town, 1995, pp. 3, 4 and 9.

24) In 1998, a thermal power plant was built to attract more population.

making skill, which has lasted for 1300 years and has been designated as an Intangible Cultural Asset by the national government. A group of paper-making craftsmen are still active.

Misumi Town decided to revitalize itself utilizing this handmade paper known as *Sekishū* Paper. The idea was to sell itself as a Town of Handmade Paper to people in and outside the town. It had a plan to build a paper museum, too. By having something which they can be proud of, handmade paper in this case, residents heighten their cohesion as townspeople as well as their "morale".

In terms of international programs at the local government level, there are two types in Japan. One is "friendship exchange" programs. Most typical are "sister city" programs. A total of 839 Japanese villages, towns, cities and even prefectures enjoy this arrangement with 1,260 counterparts abroad.²⁵⁾ Mayors, councilpersons and other leaders most commonly visit each other to shake hands and exchange gifts. Sometimes youth or children exchange programs and some cultural exchange programs may be implemented. The other type is "assistance programs" – a local version of ODA.

Misumi's project basically falls into the latter category flavored with the former. Misumi provided the technical assistance for paper hand-making skills to Bhutan. (Bhutan, a country, should be replaced with a town or village of Bhutan to construct this last model, but the reality is reality. Such projects as between two local communities are unfortunately not able to be found among the hundreds of village/town vitalization projects which are now going on in Japan.)

In the mid-80s, Bhutan officials attended a trade fair held in Japan, and became interested in Japanese traditional papermaking skills. In Bhutan; the paper used by the Royal Family and the government was imported from India and Western countries. They wanted to improve their own paper-making skills and, in future, even export their paper to other countries. Till today the town of Misumi has accepted trainees several times from Bhutan, presented two sets of equipments, dispatched advisors and given various advice to the country. Misumi craftsmen successfully developed a means of making paper from a species of trees growing wild in Bhutan in place of *Ganpi* (a plant for *Sekishū* paper) in Japan.

25) As of October, 1, 1997. CLAIR (Jichitai Kokusai-ka Kyōkai).

The difference of Misumi from other similar technical assistance projects is their insistence that theirs is not just a friendship program, nor a one-way assistance program. They have a perspective for an alliance on an equal basis through which they gain mutual benefits for community development on both sides.²⁶⁾

“Even today,” say Misumi town leaders, “We have learned and gained much.” The story of their assistance to Bhutan has been repeatedly spread by mass media, TV, radio, newspapers and periodicals all over Japan. The people of Misumi are now proud of themselves and encouraged, and their “morale” as citizens of Misumi has been boosted. They dream of the second stage as a broader exchange between the two parties, or one not only cultural and psychological, but also social and economic.

The reason why I (the writer) have presented this model is as follows: Two states or countries can have a war, but two local entities, e. g. villages, towns, cities or even prefectures in different countries cannot. If we develop numerous partnerships or arrangements of this kind all over the world, it will contribute not only to the development of communities itself but also to peace, which is the real basis of community development. Without peace, no community development efforts make any sense. Thousands of villages, towns and cities all over the world have already entered into the “sister city” relations. I (the writer) wonder if we could go a step beyond this present level. Think locally and act globally.

Table 2 summaries the four cases above.

26) *Community Building Commendation Casebook* [Chiiki-zukuri Hyōsyō Jireishū], National Land Agency, 1998, P. 16.

Table 2: Four Models of Japanese Community Vitalization Projects

Village/Town	Nikaho	Ishuichi	Mitsugi	Misumi
Model	Self-sufficient, Multiple Farming in "Developed" Countries	Control of Incoming Capitals	By-Product	(International) Think Locally, Act Globally
Partnership I (Industries)	Agriculture-Manufacturing	Farming-Tourism	Health & Welfare-Economy	
Partnership II (Subjects)	Cooperative-Corporation No Partnership with Government	Farmers-City Dwellers Refusal of Partnership with Government	Hospital-Town Government	Communities in Two Countries Town Government-Craftsman Association
Asset	Farming & TDK	Farming & Snow	Elderly Population	Paper Hand-making Skills
Approach	Self-sufficient, Multiple & Organic Farming (Recalculation in Money Term) & Employed Work Acceptance of Mainstream with Resistance Balance Between Farming & Employed Work (Self-restraint to Remain as Farmers)	Running a Ski Resort Self-government through Resident Democracy Balance Between Farming & Tourism (Self-restraint to Remain as Farmers)	Building a Comprehensive Health & Welfare System Focus & Attack on a "Problem" → Economic & Employment Effects	Providing Technical Assistance for Paper-making Skills Perspective for Village/Town Vitalization on Both Parties or for Mutual Benefit on Equal Basis Beyond Friendship Exchange & Assistance Program
Background Condition	Counter-industrialization, Market Economy & <i>Gentan</i> Disruption of Family & Community Life and Farm Village Culture Concern over Unsafe and Unhealthy Food	Counter-industrialization, Market Economy & <i>Gentan</i>	Depopulation with Aging Population	Depopulation with Aging Population
Leader	Agricultural Coop Leader	Former Labor Unionist	Medical Doctor	Town Government Official