

The Structure of Iwami Kagura's Existence in Western Shimane Prefecture¹

YAMAMOTO KENTA

Keywords: traditional performing arts (*dentō geinō* 伝統芸能), transmission of culture (*bunka keishō* 文化継承), community (*kyōdōtai* 共同体), existence structure (*sonritsu kōzō* 存立構造)

Author's Statement

This paper shows how Iwami kagura, a traditional performing art of the Iwami region of Japan's Shimane Prefecture, is being passed down. I hope that this paper will provide useful insights for the future of traditional performing arts throughout the world.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Issue at Hand

With Japan's population growing smaller and aging, local traditional performing arts' preservation and transmission has emerged as an urgent issue. A body of scholarship is taking shape that seeks clues for solutions by focusing on these performing arts' socio-economic aspects. Such research covers topics including their utilization as tourism resources and concomitant conflicts between actors. For example, Hasebe and Ōmura have published on the diversification of spectators and performers' previously-shared feelings and norms due to these performing arts' treatment as tourism products in the context of economic activities,² and Satō, Watabe, and Takasaki have written about school education and local communities becoming transmission sites of these performing arts.³ I have reported on their use as school educational materials for

¹ This article is a translation of Yamamoto Kenta 山本健太, "Shimane-ken seibu chiiki ni okeru Iwami kagura no sonritsu kōzō" 島根県西部地域における石見神楽の存立構造, *Kokugakuin Daigaku kiyō* 國學院大學紀要 59 (2021): 29–49. Translated by Dylan Luers Toda.

² Hasebe and Ōmura, "Dentō geinō no keishō o tōshite"

³ Satō and Watabe, "Chō dejitaru jidai ni okeru minzoku geinō no keishō"; Takasaki, "Kyōiku jissen hōkoku . . . zenpen"; Takasaki, "Kyōiku jissen hōkoku . . . kōhen"

cultivating hometown affection,⁴ and Kumagai and Inoue have discussed younger people, women, and non-residents beginning to be allowed to participate as local populations decrease in size and grow older.⁵ Also, I and others have documented performers seeing these performing arts as local resources and pushing firmly forward with their utilization for community maintenance and tourism.⁶

Scholars have also pointed out that in local communities where traditional performing arts had become untenable due to the likes of large-scale disasters, their social roles change in the process of recovery and exert a large influence on the identities of community members. Mogi focuses on the case of Unosumi Jinja 鵜住神社, a shrine in the Unosumi district of Iwate Prefecture's city of Kamaishi. This district experienced severe damage due to the 11 March 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake.⁷ He points out that after this disaster, the tiger dance (*toramai* 虎舞), a traditional performing art passed down in this area, changed from a dance celebrating a bountiful year of harvest to one for the repose of departed souls, as well as that this dance is functioning as a mooring for the hearts and minds of survivors. Also, Tsutsui looks at the case of Hatsuuma Matsuri 初午祭 on Miyake Island and the Ako district youth group carrying this festival on after the island's forced evacuation due to volcanic eruption.⁸ While two past volcanic eruptions led to a lack of performers and difficulty holding these rites, this was overcome by strengthening collaboration between people with geographical or professional ties. The lion dance (*shishimai* 獅子舞) that is offered at the festival had been a solemn Shinto ritual carried out in a traditional Japanese-style house. However, dancer discretion came to be tolerated, and dances started being held in larger settings that were not necessarily houses and took on highly entertaining aspects.

When working to understand such diverse ways in which traditional performing arts are being passed down in various areas, I have argued that the roles communities assign to traditional performing arts—in more concrete terms, whether they can use them as tourism resources or tools for cultivating hometown affection—is dependent on available channels.⁹ In other words, it is not when communities face local issues that traditional performing arts' usage methods are decided. Rather, these usage methods are chosen out of a set of options that are limited by the area's history. Whether people will use their traditional performing art as a tourism resource or as a tool for community maintenance is prescribed by local contexts: the area's status as a tourist destination, it having become

⁴ Yamamoto, "Traditional Performing Arts."

⁵ Traditional performing arts have normally been limited to local men. Kumagai, "Akita-ken no minzoku geinō"; Inoue, "Sankanchi no dentō bunka keishō."

⁶ Yamamoto, Wada, and Mera, "Kagura no gendaiteki jōkyō"; Wada and Yamamoto, "Hiroshima Kagura."

⁷ Mogi, "Yanagita Kunio no mita tsunami kuyōe."

⁸ Tsutsui, "Shizen saigai to kyōzon suru sairei."

⁹ Yamamoto, "Traditional Performing Arts as a Regional Resource."

necessary for residents to possess shared feelings when encountering events such as municipal mergers, local coordinators having been actively involved in the transmission of the traditional performing art, and so on. For this reason, to show how a certain traditional performing art is being passed down and maintained in an area, it is necessary to make clear the activities of local actors involved in such work as well as the interplay between them.

Taking into account recent discussions on the transmission of local traditional performing arts, this paper aims to make clear the existence structure of the Iwami kagura passed down in the Iwami region of Shimane Prefecture. In Shimane, municipalities' tourism and industry divisions as well as tourism associations broadcast information regarding kagura dance and serve as kagura groups' contact points with the local community. Also, Iwami kagura is actively used as a tourism resource by the prefecture and municipalities. New kagura groups have even appeared.¹⁰ I hope that elucidating the structures by which kagura survives in this area will also shed light on the traditional performing arts that other communities are having problems maintaining and passing down due to dwindling and aging populations.

1.2 The Structure of this Paper

This paper is structured as follows. In the first section, I will analyze the activities of kagura groups based on the results of a questionnaire survey. Then, I will present these groups' operations, highlighting their dance performances and finances. I will also cover the views of these groups' representatives regarding carrying on kagura dance. In the second section, I will turn to groups that give Iwami kagura its distinctive characteristics and discuss the operations of Iwami kagura groups that I made clear in the first section. Finally, in the third section, I will summarize this paper and present the structure by which Iwami kagura is utilized as a local resource and continues to exist.

2. Kagura Groups' Operations

2.1 Iwami Kagura: Overview

There are various theories regarding the transmission channels of Iwami kagura. For example, Yamaji states that the name "Iwami kagura" may have come into use after entering the modern period and touches on this kagura's diversity.¹¹ When doing so, he argues that it can be divided into four types based on geographical area: Ōchi 邑

¹⁰ In this region, the names of individual kagura groups take forms such as "XX *shachū* 社中 [troupe]" and "XX *kaguradan* 神楽団 [kagura group]". In this paper, "kagura groups" refers to all such groups. For respondents' ease of understanding, I used the expression *shachū* in the questionnaire.

¹¹ Yamaji, "Iwami kagura o himotoku."

智, Sekiō 石央, Sekisei 石西, and Sekitō 石東. He says that with the history of Sekitō and neighboring areas' kagura being shallow and this kagura exhibiting the influence of kagura from outside traditional regional boundaries, it has been treated as separate from Iwami kagura. Also, Yamaji notes that the Sekitō type was transmitted by mountain ascetics called *shugen yamabushi* 修験山伏 from the late middle ages onwards, and sees the differences in way of dancing between these areas as having arisen after villagers came to transmit kagura in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and later.

Ishizuka broadly distinguishes between Iwami kagura dancing methods: *roku chōshi* 六調子, *hachi chōshi* 八調子, and *sekisei*, which is different from the two others.¹² While *roku chōshi* has short lyrics and many slang words, it has an elegant atmosphere thanks to its slow tempo. On the other hand, *hachi chōshi* was developed from the Meiji period onwards. In this process slang lyrics were changed to classical expressions and it became a lively dance with a fast tempo. *Sekisei* has connections with dances of the neighboring Nagato region in Yamaguchi Prefecture, and is different from both *roku chōshi* and *hachi chōshi*.¹³

In this way, while kagura passed down in the Iwami region have different transmission channels, one also finds region-wide activities that transcend such differences. One example is the Iwami Kagura Wide-Area Liaison Council (Iwami Kagura Kōiki Renraku Kyōgikai 石見神楽広域連絡協議会; below, Liaison Council) that was founded in 2013 by Iwami kagura groups and municipalities. Presently (2018), the Liaison Council is a federation consisting of nine Iwami area cities/towns, ten councils from those municipalities,¹⁴ and 111 groups (ninety that belong to the councils and twenty-one that do not). The Liaison Council aims to promote Iwami kagura by sharing information between its member groups and bringing together people's opinions. It holds monthly board meetings and a yearly general convention. At these, information exchange between kagura groups and consolidation of opinions takes place. Inquiries and requests sent through government administration or tourism promotion associations are either directly shared with kagura groups or given to them via the councils. Groups are chosen depending on the size and scope of the matter at hand.

¹² Ishizuka, *Nishi Nihon sho kagura no kenkyū*, pp. 21–22.

¹³ Ishizuka, *Nishi Nihon sho kagura no kenkyū*.

¹⁴ The nine municipalities (cities/towns) and ten councils are as follows: Hamada City (Hamada Iwami Kagura Shachū Renraku Kyōgikai 浜田石見神楽社中連絡協議会, Kanagichō Iwami Kagura Shachū Renraku Kyōgikai 金城町石見神楽社中連絡協議会, Asahichō Iwami Kagura Hozonkai 旭町石見神楽保存会, Yasakachō Iwami Kagura Shachū Renraku Kyōgikai 弥栄町石見神楽社中連絡協議会, Misumichō Iwami Kagura Shachū Kyōgikai 三隅町石見神楽社中協議会), Masuda City (Masudashi Iwami Kagura Shinwakai 益田市石見神楽神和会), Ōda City (Iwami Ginzan Kagura Renmei 石見銀山神楽連盟), Gōtsu City (Gōtsushi Iwami Kagura Renraku Kyōgikai 江津市石見神楽連絡協議会), Kawamoto Town, Misato Town, Ōnan Town (Ōnanchō Kagura Renraku Kyōgikai 邑南町神楽連絡協議会), Tsuwano Town (Tsuwanochō Jinshōkai 津和野町神星会), and Yoshika Town.

2.2 Overview of Groups that Responded to the Questionnaire

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the addresses Liaison Council groups.¹⁵ We can see that they are found throughout the entire Iwami region. Distribution density varies. The greatest number of groups are located in Hamada City, which has the largest population in the Iwami region.

In October 2017, I sent a questionnaire to all 111 groups that belong to the Liaison Council, and received replies from thirty-six of them. A group that left the liaison council immediately before I distributed the questionnaire was also included in the questionnaire distribution list. I received a reply from them. Therefore, I will analyze responses from thirty-seven groups, including this one (**Table 1**). When creating and

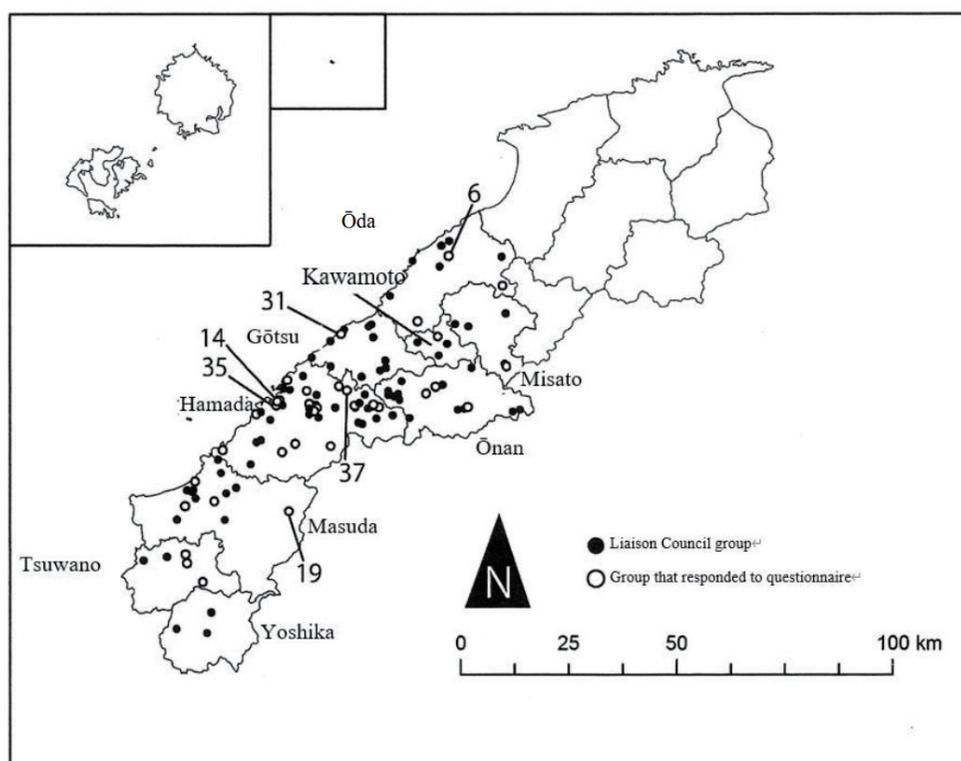


Fig 1. Distribution of Surveyed Groups

Note: The numbers in the above figures are group IDs (see section two). These IDs are the same as Table 1.

Source: Created based on materials provided by Iwami Kagura Wide-Area Liaison Council.

¹⁵ Groups' contact information often list a representative's home address or other similar information. Therefore, to protect privacy, I have used these addresses up through the *aza* 字 division for the groups' locations and left out block numbers (*banchi* 番地). Therefore, the map's locations might be slightly different than the groups' actual locations.

Table 1. Overview of Groups that Responded to the Questionnaire

| ID | Location (Municipality) | Year Established | Representative's Age | No. of Members | 2016 FY | |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | Income (In tens of thousands of yen) | Expenditures (In tens of thousands of yen) |
| 1 | Hamada City | 1667 | 62 | 23 | 220 | 320 |
| 2 | Hamada City | End of Edo Period (1603–1868) | 70 | 15 | 367 | 192 |
| 3 | Hamada City | End of Edo Period | 66 | 17 | 253 | 241 |
| 4 | Hamada City | 1830 | 55 | 20 | 360 | 260 |
| 5 | Hamada City | 1861 | 63 | 19 | 123 | 42 |
| 6 | Ōda City | 1864 | 60 | 40 | 457 | 296 |
| 7 | Masuda City | 1867 | 58 | 26 | 326 | 326 |
| 8 | Tsuwano Town | Beginning of Meiji period | 66 | 14 | | |
| 9 | Hamada City | Beginning of Meiji period | 66 | 22 | 55 | 37 |
| 10 | Hamada City | Beginning of Meiji period | 45 | 22 | 102.3 | 102.3 |
| 11 | Hamada City | Beginning of Meiji period | 30 | 22 | 160 | 80 |
| 12 | Ōnan Town | 1877 | 64 | 17 | 6 | 3 |
| 13 | Hamada City | 1877 | 58 | 14 | 28 | 20 |
| 14 | Hamada City | 1877 | 56 | 17 | 325 | 312 |
| 15 | Hamada City | 1887 | 71 | 41 | 300 | 280 |
| 16 | Hamada City | 1887 | 48 | 19 | | |
| 17 | Ōda City | 1897 | 77 | 21 | 25 | 25 |
| 18 | Hamada City | 1897 | 58 | 15 | 100 | 80 |
| 19 | Masuda City | 1907 | 73 | 20 | 269 | 217 |
| 20 | Hamada City | 1907 | 57 | 18 | 40 | 40 |
| 21 | Hamada City | Taishō period (1912-1926) | 70 | 24 | | |
| 22 | Ōnan Town | Taishō period | 68 | 15 | 10 | 10 |
| 23 | Hamada City | 1927 | 49 | 20 | 60 | 40 |
| 24 | Hamada City | 1945 | 70 | 15 | 180 | 168 |
| 25 | Tsuwano Town | 1947 | 76 | 21 | 347 | 230 |
| 26 | Ōda City | 1954 | 75 | 33 | 275 | 190 |
| 27 | Ōnan Town | 1963 | 39 | 18 | 150 | 140 |
| 28 | Masuda City | 1964 | 38 | 28 | | |
| 29 | Tsuwano Town | 1968 | 82 | 20 | 124 | 124 |
| 30 | Masuda City | 1970 | 46 | 20 | 200 | 120 |
| 31 | Gōtsu City | 1972 | 61 | 15 | 45 | 38 |
| 32 | Masuda City | 1973 | 69 | 16 | 267 | 203 |
| 33 | Hamada City | 1985 | 54 | 40 | | |
| 34 | Gōtsu City | 1990 | 55 | 25 | | |
| 35 | Hamada City | 1998 | 35 | 16 | | |
| 36 | Hamada City | 1999 | 73 | 24 | | |
| 37 | Hamada City | 2011 | 26 | 14 | 91.5 | 83.8 |

Note: Blank cells indicate no response.

Source: Created based on questionnaire survey.

distributing the questionnaire, I followed the procedures described in the following paragraph, acquiring the full understanding of survey subjects. The questionnaire covered income and expenditures as well as the residential histories of each member, and some representatives probably did not wish or have the knowledge to answer such questions. With the response rate for the questionnaire being approximately 32.1%, the results do not necessarily provide an overall picture. We must keep in mind that this paper only provides a partial image of the kagura groups in the Iwami region. However, with there being no sets of data regarding the operations of these groups, the results of this survey are rare, and, therefore, I will offer an analysis insofar as possible and by doing so leave a record of the situation at present.

I created the questionnaire after receiving advice from the Liaison Council, people involved in Kagura-related work from the prefectural government, and members of kagura groups. The questionnaire stated at its beginning that its purpose is to make clear how kagura is being carried on and used as a local resource in communities. It consisted of questions on (1) the group's operations (such as year of establishment and income/expenditures breakdown), (2) the group's members (such as number of members, age distribution, and residential history), (3) how the kagura is carried out (such as the form, days of performances, etc. of offertorial kagura and publicly performed kagura), and (4) the group representative's views regarding carrying on kagura. When it came time to distribute the questionnaire, first the Liaison Council provided an explanation to its groups, and then the questionnaire was sent, along with a return envelope, to an office in the Shimane prefectural government that deals with kagura-related matters.

Also, from September to October 2018, I attempted to carry out an interview survey of ten groups from which unclear answers were received and/or that demonstrated distinguishing characteristics in their responses. Nine of these groups agreed to participate. As necessary, I will also touch on the information acquired in this interview survey in my analysis below.

Generally speaking, up through the Edo period kagura was an authority mechanism of local religious professionals. Upon entering the Meiji period, the government banned dance performances and the like by Shinto priests. For this and other reasons, local shrine parishioners took over. Looking at the years of kagura groups' establishment in Table 1, we can see that the majority were founded in the Meiji period and later, with the greatest number of them being founded at the beginning of the Meiji period. Around this time in Iwami and other areas, shrine parishioners took the lead in establishing many kagura groups. This was probably due to groups of shrine parishioners taking on kagura after the government's ban on Shinto priest's dance performances made it difficult for the Shinto priest families (*shake* 社家) to do so. We do not find any groups established at the beginning of the Shōwa period (1926–1989). This was the time of World War II, and it

was probably difficult to establish kagura groups under a wartime regime. There are also some younger groups that were created more recently (1999, 2011, etc.).¹⁶

2.3 Groups' Compositions

There is a total of 751 members in the groups that replied to the questionnaire. This averages out to 21.3 people per group. 661 (86.2%) are males, and 106 (13.9%) females.

Table 2 shows the age and gender distributions of members in groups that replied to the questionnaire, as well as that of the population in the Iwami region according to the 2015 national census. The largest male age subset in responding groups is thirty to thirty-nine years old, followed by under eighteen, forty to forty-nine, and twenty-three to twenty-nine. The largest female age subset is eighteen and under, which is followed by thirty to thirty-nine, forty to forty-nine, and twenty-three to twenty-nine. The percentage of young men between twenty-three and forty-nine years old greatly surpasses their percentage of the Iwami region's overall population. One of the reasons for this high percentage of men is that traditionally kagura has been passed down by adult men. In recent years, the number of groups that permit females and children to dance is increasing. This is due to aging populations, amongst other reasons. Another reason for the high percentage of men is that heads of households, also usually men, are the groups' members.

Some of the responding groups have a children's kagura division, and in more than a few of these groups, male heads of households and their children are joining. Also, some of the responding groups primarily consist of child members. For this reason, there are many people in their thirties (of parenting age and probably with children), as well as members who are under eighteen (presumably their children). Nineteen to twenty-two year-olds make up the smallest age subset for both males and females. This is a reflection of many people of this age having to leave home for schooling (university, etc.) or employment.¹⁷ However, the percentage of people this age in responding groups is higher than their percentage in the general Iwami population.

After the Meiji government banned dance performances by Shinto priests, kagura

¹⁶ In Ishizuka's "Nishi Nihon sho kagura no kenkyū" from 1979, we find approximately two hundred groups (p. 15). Currently, 111 groups belong to the Liaison Council. If we assume that the majority groups in existence belong to it, this means that over the course of about thirty-five years roughly forty percent of groups have ceased to exist or have been combined with another group.

¹⁷ In the free response section, one respondent who had been involved in kagura up through high school wrote that they were concerned that they may have to leave their hometown some years in the future to attend university and begin working. There are only three universities/junior colleges in Shimane Prefecture: Shimane University and University of Shimane Junior College in the city of Matsue and University of Shimane in the City of Hamada. Realistically speaking, when people from the Iwami region want to attend an institution of higher education, while those living near the city of Hamada can commute from their house to the University of Shimane, others end up living apart from their parents.

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began to be offered to kami by parishioners instead. Partially due to this, many kagura groups emerged out of tutelary shrine parishioners. Asking about the residential history of groups' members, I found that 413 of these groups' 786 members (52.5%) have lived in the district of their kagura (the area of their tutelary shrine) since birth. Adding the seventy-seven people who moved away and then came back (9.8%), a total of 62.3% of members in responding groups live in their kagura's district. A total of 83 people (10.6%) moved from outside their kagura's district. This means that over seventy percent of people live in their kagura's district.

Table 2. Age and Gender Composition of Responding Groups' Members and the Iwami Region's Population

| | Age | 0-18 | 19-22 | 23-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70- | Unknown | Total by Gender | Total |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|---------|
| Responding Groups' Members | Male | 119 15.5% | 48 6.3% | 85 11.1% | 121 15.8% | 94 12.3% | 70 9.1% | 73 9.5% | 51 6.6% | — | 661 86.2% | 767 |
| | Female | 37 4.8% | 6 0.8% | 16 2.1% | 19 2.5% | 16 2.1% | 11 1.4% | 0 0.0% | 1 0.1% | — | 106 13.8% | |
| Iwami Region | Male | 15,300 7.7% | 2,267 1.1% | 5,217 2.6% | 10,019 5.0% | 11,004 5.5% | 12,425 6.2% | 17,326 8.7% | 20,612 10.4% | 600 0.3% | 94,770 47.6% | 198,927 |
| | Female | 14,222 7.1% | 1,947 1.0% | 4,540 2.3% | 9,286 4.7% | 10,385 5.2% | 12,171 6.1% | 17,099 8.6% | 34,162 17.2% | 345 0.2% | 104,157 52.4% | |

Note: The bottom figures in the "Total by Gender" column's cells are percentages of total members. Percentage decimals have been rounded down to the nearest tenth and therefore may not total one hundred.

Source: Created based on questionnaire responses and the 2015 National Census of Japan.

143 members (18.2%) are not from the kagura's district and currently live outside it. There are a few groups for which the majority of members are such. The meaning and role of kagura for members, as well as their feelings regarding kagura, may differ between these groups, groups comprised of people from the kagura's district, and groups with a high percentage of transplants.

2.4 Dance Performances

Opportunities for kagura groups to dance include offerings to tutelary shrines and public joint (competitive) performances. Therefore, in this section, I will present the characteristics of offertorial kagura and public performances that are apparent from the questionnaire's results.

2.4.1 Offertorial Kagura

Offertorial kagura is kagura offered to kami enshrined in tutelary shrines. The purpose of such kagura includes praying to these kami for a bountiful harvest, or expressing

gratitude or reporting something to them. Kagura's repertoires and forms differ depending on the area, and the amount of time required to execute such kagura varies. For example, in the case of night kagura, the first piece begins in the evening and ends sometime in the next morning. Night kagura performers spend the whole night dancing, and therefore their mental and physical burden is considerable. For this reason, with the number of dancers decreasing and society aging, in some cases offertorial kagura is held every other or every few years, the number of pieces is reduced and kagura is finished during the night, kagura is only performed for some hours during the day, and so on. Also, in the case of shrines that hold festivals in specific years, sometimes kagura is only offered during those years.

So that we can see when offertorial kagura is carried out, in **Table 3** I have shown the number of offerings by form and week of the year. Asking groups about the days and times of offertorial kagura, thirty-one of the thirty-seven groups replied that they carried out offertorial kagura once or more in 2017. Two of these groups said that 2017 was the year of a large festival held once every four years. One of the groups that did not offer kagura in 2017 had done so eight times in 2016. The average number of times the groups that offered kagura in 2017 did so is 4.9. While a very small number of these groups offered kagura in April and July, groups primarily did so from late September to late November, especially mid-October (week no. 41, total of twenty-one offerings). In this way, these offerings have a strongly seasonal nature. Approximately sixty percent of the kagura offerings (sixty-two) took the form of half-night kagura. When offering kagura, people from outside the district sometimes participate, and residents or shrines in other districts may request for such offerings to be held. As previously described, this is partially due to the decreasing and aging population.

Table 3. Offertorial Kagura: Weeks Held

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|
| Week Number | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| Day Kagura | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Half-Night Kagura | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Night Kagura | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Week Number | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | Total | |
| Day Kagura | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | | | | 20 | |
| Half-Night Kagura | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 2 | 8 | 13 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 4 | | | | | 1 | 62 | |
| Night Kagura | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | 23 | |
| Total | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 11 | 21 | 9 | 8 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 5 | | 3 | | 1 | 105 | |

Source: Created based on questionnaire survey.

2.4.2 Public Performances

Responding groups publicly performed kagura an average of twelve times per year. These performances were either “held by the group or with another group,” “part of a regularly-held public performance,” a “joint (competitive) public performance,” or “other: done at the request of a person, organization, etc.” The most common form of public performance was the latter. Responding groups put on such performances a total of 248 times. This was followed by appearances in regularly-held public performances (101) and joint (competitive) public performances (68).

“Regularly-held public performances” refer to public performances that periodically take place on permanent stages at the likes of roadside stations selling local goods (*michi no eki* 道の駅) and other venues. Often groups in a district will take turns performing on such stages. “Joint (competitive) public performances” refer to guest appearances at events held by other groups. Hiroshima Prefecture, which neighbors the Iwami region, is notable for the frequency of its kagura performance competitions.¹⁸ In Iwami as well, joint (competitive) performances are often held.

“Other: done at the request of a person, organization, etc.,” groups’ most frequent type of public performance, include guest appearances at events inside and outside the local community, such as at nursing homes and shopping mall events.

These public performance requests might come directly from other kagura groups or members. In other cases, people might see information on the internet and then send requests through cities or towns’ tourism associations or the contact points of prefectural or local governments. Tourism associations and these contact points introduce kagura groups based on the content of the request and kagura groups’ schedules. If the requester does not have any particular preferences regarding the group, kagura’s content, and so on, these contact points introduce groups from the lists of groups they have at hand.

2.5 Income and Expenditures

2.5.1 Income

Responding groups’ had a total of 52,658,000 yen of income in the 2016 financial year, an average of 1,816,000 yen per group. Expenditures totaled 42,201,000 yen, an average of 1,455,000 per group. Based on these figures, the total income and expenditures for Liaison Council groups come out to 153,817,000 yen and 123,271,000 yen, respectively.

The questionnaire also asked about income breakdown. The greatest source of income was “offertorial kagura” (avg. 32.5%). This was followed by “other public performances” (26.6%), “donations” (*ohana* 御花; 23.8%) and “balances carried forward from the

¹⁸ Yamamoto, Wada, and Mera, “Kagura no gendaiteki jōkyō”; Wada and Yamamoto, “Hiroshima Kagura.”

previous financial year” (23.8%). As previously described, offertorial kagura refers to Shinto rituals of offering kagura to tutelary and other deities. In response to a request from a local shrine with connections to the kagura group, or from a shrine outside the area, the kagura group offers its dance. Some groups exist precisely to offer kagura to local shrines such as those that enshrine tutelary deities, and in such cases they do so at no cost. Generally, offerings to other shrines, whether inside or outside the kagura’s district, involve paying some small amount of money for the trip. This amount of money generally charged changes depending on whether the requester is inside or outside the district. Responding groups charge between 0 to 200,000 yen for offerings to shrines inside their districts (avg. 85,000 yen) and between 40,000 and 250,000 yen for shrines outside the district (avg. 109,000 yen).

As previously described, the kagura groups participate in some sort of public performance an average of twelve times per year. The greatest number of such performances fall into the category of “other public performances.” The average percent of total yearly income provided by such performances is the highest after kagura offerings. In this way, public performances, particularly guest appearances at outsiders’ request, are an important source of income. Fees for public performances were as follows: 0 to 150,000 yen (avg. 49,000) for in-district, 20,000 to 200,000 yen for elsewhere in the Iwami region (avg. 76,000 yen), 30,000 to 300,000 yen for the neighboring Izumo region (avg. 132,000 yen), 30,000 to 300,000 for the neighboring Hiroshima Prefecture (avg. 178,000 yen), and 30,000 to 1,000,000 yen for the Greater Tokyo Area (avg. 627,000 thousand yen). While trip expenses greatly differ depending on the distance to the performance site, members’ schedules, and so on, we can see that they increase the farther away the destination.

One group responded that they did not charge for in-district public performances. This group only performs in its district and the Iwami region. Also, the group that charges the least in each out-of-district performance category (Iwami region - 20,000 yen, Izumo region- 30,000 yen, Hiroshima Prefecture - 30,000 yen, Greater Tokyo Area - 30,000 yen) does kagura as part of the activities of a children’s group. Its yearly operations expenses were the sixth lowest out of all responding groups.

Donations are given by audience members to the reception desk at performances, by audience members or organizers directly to dancers in the stage wings, and so on. They are often money. While the donation amount is not set, these donations play an important role as implements in a kagura piece called “Sea Bream Fishing” (Tai tsuri 鯛釣り; also referred to as “Ebisu” 恵比寿 and other names depending on the area), and are often bills.¹⁹ According to my interview survey, while groups cannot know how much in

¹⁹ A clip is attached to the end of a fishing line that hangs off the stage from the fishing rod of a dancer dressed as Ebisu,

donations they will receive, these donations serve as a not-insignificant source of income. Donation amounts not only depend on the number of audience members but also whether audience members are aware of the custom of presenting donations.

2.5.2 Expenditures

“Costume and implement repairs/replacement expenses” make up 43.1% of expenditures on average. This is followed by “money carried over to the following financial year” (21.6%), “deposits” (23.6%), “other (19.3%), and “transportation expenses” (15.0%). Iwami kagura uses wadded costumes with gold thread and lame, as well as a *orochi* 大蛇 (mythological serpent) body costume made from bamboo and Japanese paper. Some forms of Iwami kagura have highly entertaining aspects, such as stage smoke and fireworks, as well as intense music and dance referred to as *hachi chōshi*.²⁰ While costumes are made to withstand dancing, they still must be repaired yearly and replaced once every few years. It is not rare for one costume to cost hundreds of thousands of yen to replace.²¹ For this reason, money is saved for future repairs/replacement in by carrying it over to the next financial year or by making deposits into a reserve fund.

“Transportation costs” refer to the money used to transport members, costumes, and stage props to the likes of public performances. It is not rare for a set of Iwami kagura costumes to weigh nearly twenty kilograms and take up multiple clothing cases. Space is required for storing and transporting these costumes. To perform multiple kagura pieces, at least around ten people are required, although the number depends on the specific pieces in question. This includes the dancers on stage, as well as musical performers and the dancers preparing for the next piece. Transportation occupies a great percentage of expenditures. This shows just how hard it is to travel with these costumes.

Also, kagura practice requires a space larger than the area where it is offered (where the kami is enshrined, or *shinza* 神座). However, on average “facility management costs” related to costume/equipment storage and practice space occupy 9.4% of expenses—not a very high figure. This category is expenses for group-owned facilities and leased properties,

and audience members themselves or another dancer below the stage place cash in the clip. The dancer below the stage holds onto the fishing line to which the money is attached. The Ebisu on the stage pulls up the fish rod but it bends due to the line being held down, making it seem like he has made a big catch. The Ebisu shows surprise at the cash he has caught and carefully puts it away (in, for example, a basket used for carrying fish). Either after or before donations are made in this way, Ebisu also tries to make an even bigger fish catch by throwing small packets of candy or bean snacks (“bait”) out into the audience.

²⁰ Generally speaking, there are two types of Iwami kagura dances: slower-tempo ones called *roku chōshi* that are older, and faster-tempo ones called *hachi chōshi* that were developed in the Meiji period or later. The gentle movements of *roku chōshi* give off a dignified impression and are preferred for offertorial kagura, and *hachi chōshi* is popular amongst the younger generation and tourists due to its rhythmical nature.

²¹ For example, it costs over 150,000 yen to make a new *orochi* costume body and 250,000 yen for the *orochi* costume head.

and this low percentage shows that not many groups own real estate or rent real-estate for the long term.

The category “other” probably includes a wide variety of expenses, a considerable portion of which are clothing storage and practice facility expenses. According to my interview survey, sometimes individual group members will hold onto articles of clothing that are easy to store (kimono undergarments called *juban* 襦袢, white robes called *hakui* 白衣), while the group will see to the storage of kimonos, *orochoi* body costumes, and so on. The latter items are sometimes stored in storehouses or sheds at members’ homes and in other cases at public community spaces, such as community centers or shrine sanctuaries. Such public spaces are also used for practice. In some cases, community members can use such spaces at no cost, but a small amount of money is collected for facility maintenance in other cases.

2.6 Views of Kagura Group Representatives

In the questionnaire, group representatives rated statements about kagura skills, the introduction and altering of kagura pieces, and the use of kagura for tourism. They used a scale of four to one: (4) “very good,” (3) “good,” (2) “not so good,” and (1) “not good at all.” The average rating was 2.5 or lower for the following questions related to the introduction of kagura pieces and designs: “incorporating new pieces from other shrines or areas” (2.1), “incorporating costumes with new designs from other shrines or areas” (2.4), “incorporating new stage props or equipment from other kagura groups or areas” (2.5). Compared to the questionnaire’s other statements, representatives felt more negatively about these. Ratings for the following items related to piece design and development averaged between 2.5 to 3.0 (“good”): “independently developing new kagura pieces,” “independently developing costumes with new designs” (3.0), and “independently development new stage props” (2.9). We can see that kagura groups have a variety of opinions regarding these.

On the other hand, ratings were positive for the following items related to sharing kagura dance with the public: “taking videos of dances” (3.5), “releasing dance videos on the internet” (3.1), “holding joint (competitive) performances with other groups” (3.2), and “our group holding public performances on its own” (3.1). Average ratings exceeded 3.0. The high rating of “taking videos of dances” was topped only by the viewing of kagura by tourists (discussed below). Some kagura groups were formed to revive kagura that had died out, and others have many participants from outside the kagura’s district. The groups are probably the ones that see creating video records as important.

The ratings for “tourists viewing offertorial kagura” (3.5) and “using kagura as a tourism resource” (3.3) both exceeded 3.0. In contrast, the following items related to the establishment of facilities for tourists were less than 3.0: “installing a kagura stage or a

kagura hall stage for tourists in the district" (2.8), "establishing a kagura stage or a kagura hall stage for tourists in the city/town," (2.9), and "establishing a kagura stage or a kagura hall stage for tourists in the Iwami region" (2.9). While no one said that tourists viewing offertorial kagura or kagura's use as a tourism resource are "not good at all," approximately ten percent said that the establishment of facilities (in district - three representatives, in city/town - four representatives, in Iwami area - three representatives) is "not good at all." While many representatives did see the establishment of facilities as positive to a degree, we can tell that there are various opinions. In my interview survey, a group representative that thought highly of facility establishment remarked that with a limited number of places where tourists can enjoy themselves at night, such a facility would serve as a place of entertainment for visitors. On the other hand, group representatives that did not think highly of facility establishment said that there is already a community center and stage that could be used, as well as that it would be preferable if people viewed the regular public performances already held at their shrine, which have a pleasant atmosphere, rather than performances on a stage. Another person said that things are fine as they are and that an increase in stages and the burden on dancers might be untenable. Respondents' differences in opinion also might reflect the number of tourists that visit their area. For example, some respondents in urban places with comparatively many tourists said they desire the installation of a permanent kagura stage, while some people from mountainous and other areas with few tourists were skeptical.

Respondents rated "tourists viewing offertorial kagura" the most positively. In the free-response section, someone wrote the following:

Rather than stage kagura, I would like for them to take in Iwami kagura by experiencing [these] Shinto rituals at the shrine and other sacred places, like the manner of viewing offertory kagura, like night kagura. In recent years in the countryside, there have been many fall festivals unable to put on kagura. I think it would be good if it also served to invigorate for [the] precious shrine's continued existence.²²

This response straightforwardly shows that the respondent understands offertorial kagura at a shrine as the true form of Iwami kagura, as well as desires to bring tourists to the area through offertorial kagura viewings. Rather than seeking to benefit to the area by using kagura as a stage spectacle, the respondent, while recognizing that kagura is a tourism resource, hopes to bring in people to the area in a more direct fashion.

In my interview survey, while some people thought positively about having tourists

²² Translator's note: The awkward English phrasing reflects the phrasing of the Japanese original.

view offertorial kagura (stating that offertorial kagura alone doesn't feel very worthwhile but dancing in front of tourists serves as motivation), others felt that this presented a dilemma because they located offertorial kagura's value in its authenticity (stating that with only tourism kagura, the true meaning of kagura will be lost).

I want to consider whether these views differ due to kagura groups' attributes. To do so, I will identify groups with distinctive member residential histories and then examine the differences in views between these groups. There were six responding groups (A) with more than half of members born and living outside the district. Comparing the views of these groups' representatives regarding carrying on and utilizing kagura with those of the other groups (B), the difference in average rating was 0.5 or greater for items such as the following: "independently developing new kagura pieces" (A - 3.2, B - 2.5), "taking videos of dances" (A - 4.0, B - 3.4), and "independently developing costumes with new designs" (A - 3.5, B - 2.9). All six groups positively rated taking videos of dances ("very good"). Also, these six groups rated all statements higher than the other groups, excluding "independently developing new stage props," "installing a kagura stage or a kagura hall stage for tourists in the district," and "establishing a kagura stage or a kagura hall stage for tourists in the city/town."

In the free-response section, some respondents stated that with many members living outside the district and being young, they were concerned about their group's continuity, as well as felt conflicted about how to interact as a group with local residents and pass down culture.²³ For members living outside of the kagura's district, the kagura that they are carrying on is not something they offer to the tutelary deities of the district in which they live. This all shows that they feel conflicted about how to be seen as a legitimate transmitter of local culture by people inside and outside that district, as well as that they are trying to figure out how to utilize kagura to contribute to the community and thereby acquire legitimacy. Therein we can glimpse a stance that seems contradictory at first glance: to pass on that district's kagura, rather than carrying out the kagura as it has always been done, it is necessary to flexibly change kagura expressions in accordance with the demands of the era.

3. Kagura Groups Carrying On Kagura: The Current Situation

From the previous section's questionnaire survey results, we can tell that there is

²³ For example: "Currently group members are young and many are from outside the community, and I am concerned whether there will be people who will continue to do this in the future. Also, few people join from the community. Participation in community events is decreasing. Even in terms of traditional transmission, I have doubts whether exchange with people in the community will be possible. Currently we are receiving requests for various types of events, primarily offertorial kagura at local shrines. . . . I don't know how to move forward as a group, and activities and practice for upcoming performance requests are what's mainly on [my] mind. I think it's necessary to think about raising awareness amongst members themselves for the transmission of tradition."

exchange between kagura groups in the Iwami region, as well as that there is a diverse set of structures for carrying on kagura. Typology-based analysis of these groups cannot capture the diversity of their characteristics and situations, and is not necessarily appropriate if we want to show the structure by which these groups exist in their communities. Therefore, in this section, I will avoid doing so and instead introduce the activities of kagura groups with distinguishing attributes based on the results of my interview survey.

A Recently Established Kagura Group

ID37 was established in 2011 by six former members of a high school hometown performing arts club because they wanted to continue kagura with fellow club members after graduation. One of their objectives was to revive their hamlet's offertorial kagura, which had died out. Having recently founded their group, they are all in their twenties. Their costumes and implements are stored in their hamlet's now-closed elementary school. They practice twice a week at a community center that neighbors the former elementary school.

Initially after the group's founding, they did not have joint public performance opportunities, and put on their own ones. In recent years, requests for public performances have been gradually increasing and they now do not put on solo public performances. Their representative states that having such public performances, in other words, opportunities to perform in front of people, serves as motivation to practice.²⁴

Due to the circumstances of the group's founding, they emphasize precision in kagura dance. In my interview, the group representative remarked that with the group being new, first and foremost, it is important to properly perform the kagura that already exists, as well as that they want to mesmerize people not with stage props but with the true kagura dance.

A Newly-Independent Kagura Group

ID35 was turned into an independent group in 1997 by a person from the children's division of ID14. ID14 emphasizes tradition in dance and has firm hierarchical relationships, which this person felt to be restrictive. While a child, they wanted to dance on the stage at public performances. However, the group did not let its children's division do so. Out of the desire to incorporate dances in their own style, including new moves, and take the stage themselves, five members went independent when they were middle school students.

²⁴ Sako and Hashimoto have also pointed out that showing dances to audiences itself serves as motivation for carrying on kagura. See Sako, "Dentō geinō no keishō nitsuite"; Hashimoto, "Hozon to kankō no hazama de."

Partially due to these circumstances of its establishment, and at first those around them were critical. However, there were adults who were understanding and supported them. At the time of their founding they were not adults, so adults served as the group's representative. One such individual lent money at no interest to the group so that they could make costumes. They now practice once a week at a community center. Having acquired the understanding of the community, they continue to be able to use it for free.

Offertorial dances for shrines in the area where the group is located are done by groups that have existed in the community for a long time (such as ID14). For this reason, ID35, which was recently founded, offers kagura to shrines outside of its area in response to requests. It often performs outside of the Shimane Prefecture, particularly in Hiroshima Prefecture. Some of its members have participated in a New York magic show as an *oroichi*. The group also has begun trying its hand at new methods of kagura expression. For example, it began creating new kagura pieces around 2014.

A Kagura Group with Many Members from Outside the Community

ID6 was established in 1864. Currently, thirty-four of its forty members are from, and live, outside the local community. Some members have left their hometown for education or work.²⁵ Such individuals cannot participate in twice-weekly practice. While they sometimes participate in public performances at events, the number of actually active members is at most around twenty-five.

Many of the members live in Ōda City, where the kagura group is also located. They are primarily in their twenties. A member in their thirties serves as the group's head. The kagura of ID6 was the *roku chōshi* kagura passed down in the group's hamlet, but as the number of young members increased, *hachi chōshi* pieces were introduced.

In Ōda City, there is a children's kagura group. While it was established in 2000, kagura had ceased to be carried out in the group's hamlet since 1995, and when reviving this kagura, group members had to learn to dance from a neighboring kagura group. This hamlet's offertorial kagura is done by ID6, which was deeply involved in establishing this children's kagura group and teaching members how to dance. Children's group members graduate from the group upon high school graduation. Therefore, individuals who want to continue kagura must join another group. ID6 became one group that took in such individuals. Fifteen years have passed after the founding of the children's kagura group, and ID6 now has a high percentage of young individuals, primarily ones who came from the children's group. In this way, the group, therefore, has become young again.

²⁵ Shimane Prefecture does not have any private universities. There is only Shimane University (a national university located in the city of Matsue), University of Shimane Junior College (also in Matsue), and the University of Shimane (a prefectural university located in the city of Hamada). See note 16.

A Children's Kagura Group

ID31 is a children's kagura group. This group was founded so that children (primarily preschoolers to middle schoolers) could carry on kagura. The current representative's father (the founder) learned to dance from ID14 and established the group in 1972. The current representative took over upon the founder's death. Initially, after its founding, many ID31 members resided in its hamlet, but today they live all around the city of Gōtsu, where the hamlet is located.

They practice and store their costumes at a community center. Their current costumes were purchased with local donations and made by a local futon store. Some of the costumes, such as white robes, were made by adults. Currently, the group collects a monthly 500 yen membership fee, which is used for children's snacks during practice, amongst other things. Kagura instruction is done by people who have graduated from ID31 and are currently dancing in other kagura groups. Its major public performances throughout the year are primarily local events: a summer night festival, a gathering for honoring elders, a culture festival, and so on. They perform for free to repay the community for its everyday understanding of and support for its activities.

Initially after its founding, the group carried on ID14's dances, but today its dances are from a variety of groups. This is because children themselves see adult groups' dances and incorporate those they like into their own repertoire. ID31 does not have an adult division. Not infrequently, children who want to continue to do kagura after graduating join a group that has dances they like.

A Kagura Group with a High Yearly Performance Volume

ID19 was established in 1907. Around 1951, it incorporated *hachi chōshi* dance from a neighboring group, which today makes up the primary part of its repertoire. Of its twenty members from seventeen households, twelve members from eleven households live in the hamlet where the group is located. Two of its members are transplants to the community, one of which is a professional taiko artist.

Groups in the area that used to be the town of Hikimi (where this group is located) take turns doing offertorial kagura. At the community's request, the group also does offertorial kagura for the neighboring area that used to be the town of Mito.²⁶ Its offertorial kagura repertoire consists of approximately six dances. It also has a deep relationship with local residents. For example, it provides instruction for elementary school and middle school club activities in the Hikimi area, as well as instruction at a high school in the city of Masuda.

²⁶ The towns of Hikimi and Mito became part of the city of Masuda in 2004.

This group is notable for its large yearly volume of performances. Regarding this, the group representative pointed out that kagura will not survive unless used as a tourism resource, and said that the group is further refining its dances to increase audience satisfaction. Approximately ten years ago, this group developed a new kagura piece based on community lore. It now serves as the group's major dance. Also, it is actively seeking out ways to introduce local culture to tourists from inside and outside Japan. For example, it also puts on English kagura that includes explanations of pieces in English and an English chorus.

4. Conclusion: The Structure by Which Iwami Kagura Exists

In this paper, I analyzed the existence structure of Iwami kagura, which is passed down in Shimane Prefecture's Iwami region, based on a questionnaire and interview survey. **Table 2** summarizes the existence structure of Iwami kagura groups that I identified in this paper.

In the Iwami region, there is a Liaison Council that is a federation of kagura groups. Some of these Iwami kagura groups are registered with this Liaison Council. Through the Liaison Council, groups that belong to it exchange information, transmit to government organs their collective opinions, and so on. Municipalities and tourism associations serve as contact points for public performance and event appearance requests. They also provide information to tourists.

Over eighty percent of responding groups' members are male. Most of the males are in their thirties, followed by those eighteen or younger. The largest age subset of females is eighteen and younger. In many cases, the members who are eighteen or younger belong to a group's children's division or are part of a group for children. Individuals participating in the children's divisions of kagura groups sometimes become full members of these groups when they get older (upon advancing in their education or starting a job). Also, members of children's kagura groups sometimes join another kagura group based on their preferences and relationships upon graduation from their group. Here, they make choices that are not bound by the shrine of which they are a parishioner, the hamlet to which they belong, and so on.

Some members of kagura groups went independent due to different views about group operations. Some launched their own group in order to, for example, revive a community's offertorial kagura. In all of these cases, neighboring groups' dances have been adopted based on the preferences of the founders and members, the form of kagura passed down in the community, and so on.

Looking at activities throughout the year, offertorial kagura is primarily done in mid-October. There are many other opportunities to dance, such as regularly-scheduled public performances at the likes of roadside stations and tourist destinations, as well

as performance done at the request of other communities. Some include opportunities for providing entertainment to local residents, such as performances at nursing homes and shopping mall events. Due to such opportunities for public performance being throughout the year, groups practice about once or twice a week. We can also see that dancing in front of an audience is something group members look forward to and that it serves as motivation for carrying on kagura.

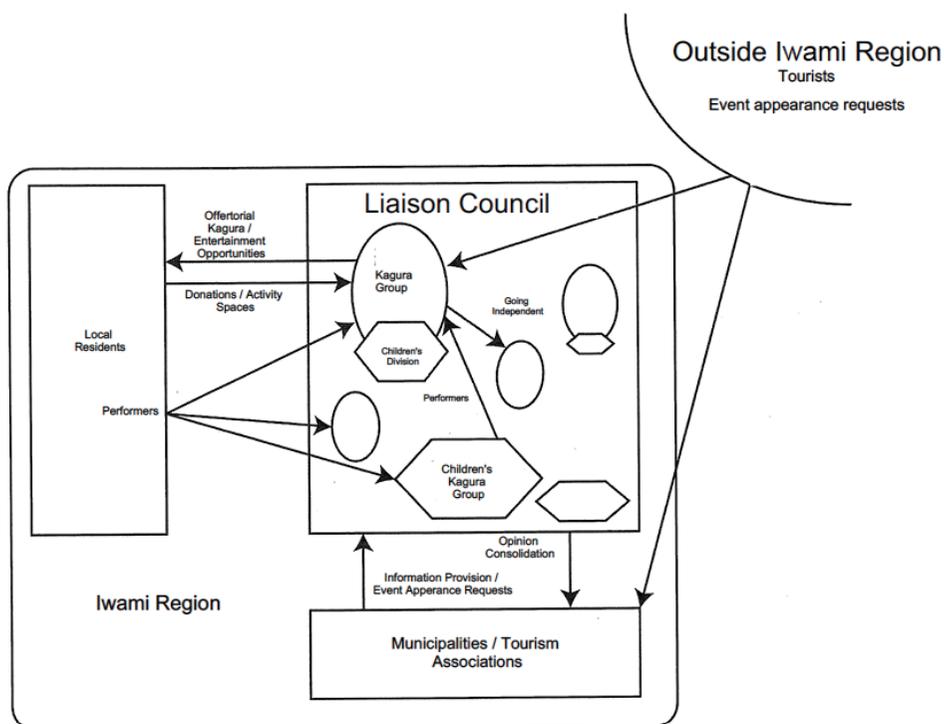


Fig 2. The Existence Structure of Kagura Groups in the Iwami Region

Source: Created by the author based on questionnaire survey.

A year's income primarily comes from requested public performances. The percentage occupied by donations is also not insignificant, but they are an unstable source of income. While they are received from communities and audience members for whom such donations are part of their culture, often this is not the case. Also, it is not rare for donations to not be received at public performances that involve paid tickets.

A high percentage of more than a few groups' expenditures consists of costume repairs and purchases. These are paid with funds saved over some years, grants, and so on. Facility management expenses are not a major portion of expenses. Shrines, community centers, former schools, and so on are used for the likes of practices and costume storage. Groups can use these for free or at a very lost cost thanks to the understanding of the community and municipalities. Donations make up a large portion of income, and facility management expenses make up a small portion of expenditures, a fact which reflects forms of support that happen outside of local and municipal institutions (unspoken support). These are possible thanks to the understanding of local residents regarding these groups' work to carry on kagura.

In such localities, dancing and viewing kagura have taken root as entertainment in everyday life. A foundation is in place that makes it easy to acquire the understanding of municipalities and local residents regarding carrying on kagura. In my surveys, I found that when using kagura as a tourism resource, being watched became motivation for dancing. On the other hand, more than a few respondents touched on the dilemmas they felt regarding turning their kagura into a resource as a tourism spectacle. Further research can reveal whether the local structures that enable kagura to continue to exist that became clear in this paper are also found in other communities and cultures.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Shimane Prefecture Western Prefectural Resident Center (Shimane-ken Seibu Kenmin Sentā 島根県西部県民センター), the Iwami Kagura Wide-Area Liaison Council (Iwami Kagura Kōiki Renraku Kyōgikai 石見神楽広域連絡協議会), and kagura groups' members for their considerable cooperation in my fieldwork. This research was supported by a JSPS Kakenhi grant (no. 17K03256, Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [C], “Waga kuni enpen chiiki ni okeru dentō geinō no genzai” わが国縁辺地域における伝統芸能の現在, research representative Yamamoto Kenta).

(Translated by Dylan Luers Toda)

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