

The Continuity of Shinto Theatrical Dance in Aging Society Era: Case Study of Kagura Dance Revitalization in Matsumae City Hokkaido

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Abstract

The Kagura dance is a sacred, theatrical dance to entertain the Shinto gods. In several areas, including the city of Matsumae, Hokkaido island, this dance is threatened with extinction due to a lack of the next generation. Using an ethnographic approach, this research aims to describe the development of the Kagura dance and efforts to revitalize the dance amidst the aging society phenomenon that has hit Japan. The data collection techniques used were observation and in-depth interviews. Researchers observed the preparation process for the dance festival for six months and conducted interviews with Shinto priests, local Education and Culture Service employees, and hotel employees to gather data. The research results show that the potential extinction of the Kagura dance is mainly caused by the reduction in the young population because most of the population urbanizes to study and work in big cities. The revitalization strategy that has been carried out is establishing the Kagura Matsumae preservation body which oversees the Matsumae shrine, the Kagura Kiyobe Preservation Society, the Haraguchi Preservation Society, and teaching the locality of Matsumae City from elementary to middle school students. The effort has a positive impact on student's awareness of preserving Kagura dance. Some students have joined and become the main members of the Kagura Preservation Body. Since the majority of people moved to the urban areas, the revitalization effort has not been completely successful. However, it can be seen that the city government's awareness and efforts are very high to maintain traditional culture.

Keywords: Revitalization; Kagura Dance; Matsumae; Aging Society

1. Introduction

The aging society is a term that describes a condition in which the proportion of elderly people (usually defined as those aged 65 years and above) in the population increases significantly (UN World Population Prospects 2019). One of the countries experiencing depopulation is Japan. According to the European Parliament website, Japan is categorized as a super-aged society (a high population of people aged 65 years or older as much as 28.7%) and is dominated by women. The demographic crisis in Japan has caused the government to develop robotic-based services and open job vacancies for foreign workers (Jack, 2016) including bringing in nurses and caregivers to care for the elderly (Srimulyani et al, 2023). In addition to the impact on the economic and employment sectors, the existence of local culture in Japan is on the verge of extinction. Kagura dance in Matsumae City is an example of the problems of local culture in the era of Japan population aging.

According to the website of Japan's Ministry of Defense, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Kagura dance is a sacred dance to entertain the Shinto deities. Since pre-historic times, this dance has been performed to ask for blessings for the harvest and avoid

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natural disasters. The origin of the Kagura dance is written in a *kojiki*. This book contains the story of the formation of Japan and was written about 1,300 years ago. According to this book, *Amaterasu Okami* (sun god) hid in a cave. Amaterasu's actions caused darkness to cover the earth. The gods decided to lure him out of the cave by dancing and playing various musical instruments. Over time, the Kagura dance is threatened with extinction due to the reduction of human resources that support cultural preservation. Based on these problems, some of the Kagura dance preservation actors in the western Japan area try to preserve the Kagura dance by performing the dances in front of tourists. Examples include *Iwami Kagura* (Shimane Prefecture), *Geihoku Kagura* (Hiroshima Prefecture), *Takachiho Kagura* (Miyazaki Prefecture), and *Tosa no Kagura* (Kochi Prefecture). Attempting to perform Kagura dance as a tourism asset has not been entirely successful because of the different perspectives between locals (who want to keep Kagura as a local tradition) and tourists (who tend to view it as an entertainment show) (Kenta, 2018).

Shiro Horiuchi and Mari Morino in an article entitled "*How Local Cultures Contribute to Local Communities? Case Study of Japanese Spirits Dance Kagura*" say that the sustainability of Kagura dance is determined by location and population composition (Horiuchi & Morino, 2015). In remote areas, this is difficult due to depopulation. Another case of Kagura preservation is in Iwami Prefecture. Kagura preservation in Iwami Prefecture has involved the younger generation such as students in schools, holding public performances, and forming new Kagura communities. When viewed from a tourism perspective, these efforts are considered positive because they are able to maintain the existence of the dance but create a dilemma for some residents who debate the position of Kagura dance as an object of tourism and entertainment (Kenta, 2022). Based on previous research, various efforts have been made to maintain the existence of the Kagura dance but have not been successful because they tend to override the sacredness of the dance.

Research on Matsumae Kagura dance in Hokkaido is very limited compared to Kagura dance in other regions. Matsumae Kagura dance is no longer performed on Rishiri Island due to the reduction of people catching herring (Oikawa, 2020). Even today, not many people come to see Matsumae Kagura dance performances at the Yoimiya festival and the main festival. Based on these problems, the author is motivated to research the development and revitalization efforts of Matsumae City Kagura dance amid the depopulation of Japanese society.

2. Methods

This research focuses on Kagura dance in the Matsumae City area, specifically regarding the sustainability of local culture in the era of an *aging society*. The basis for choosing the research object is related to the increasing population of elderly people in Matsumae City, which poses a challenge to the inheritance of local culture. This research is descriptive qualitative using an ethnographic approach. Qualitative emphasizes the description of the results of a study and ethnography refers to the researcher's participation at the research site.

This definition is following the meaning of qualitative proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) that qualitative uses a scientific background to define phenomena using various methods. Ethnography according to Creswell (2012: 462) is a qualitative research procedure to describe, analyze, and define elements of a cultural group such as behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time. The qualitative ethnographic approach is used to get an overview of the existence of Kagura dance in Matsumae City, Hokkaido. The description of Matsumae Kagura dance is obtained from primary and secondary data.

Primary data sources consist of observations and interviews while secondary data is obtained from videos, news articles, and scientific journals of Kagura dance.

Participants in this study consisted of traditional and religious leaders, namely Shinto priests, one employee of the Matsumae City Education Institute, and the people of Matsumae City, including hotel employees at a traditional Japanese inn (*ryokan*). The role of the informants includes explaining the history of Matsumae Kagura dance, the process of Matsumae Kagura dance, the discourse on the extinction of Matsumae Kagura dance, efforts to preserve Matsumae Kagura, and people's perspectives on the importance of Matsumae Kagura dance. Overall, the selection of informants is based on the criteria of ideal participants, namely those who know and are involved in the Matsumae Kagura dance procession.

The research process began with an observation of one of Matsumae Kagura dance processions. The observation was carried out while the researcher was doing a six-month internship (April-October) at a traditional Japanese hotel. After observing, the researcher conducted interviews with informants who were assisted by one of the seniors from the hotel. The results of the interview answers were then codified and sorted based on the objectives and formulation of the research problem.

The sorted answers were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1984) data analysis model. The stages of analysis consist of three stages, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction refers to the process of sorting interview answers while data presentation is the presentation of research data through observation and interviews so that a conclusion can be obtained in the form of the core research problem.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 The History of Matsumae Kagura Dance

Kagura dance can be defined as the oldest ritual in Japan and is regularly held at Shinto shrine festivals (Averbuch, 1996:7-8). According to interviews with respondents, this dance can only be performed and passed down by Shinto priests. The existence of the Matsumae Kagura dance comes from the Matsumae clan. Historically, this clan played a role as a liaison between Japan and other East Asian nations. Around the middle of the 15th century, Matsumae became the most crowded city. Matsumae City's bustle was caused by the arrival of Japanese residents from Honshu Island. They came and settled in Matsumae City. In addition to settling, they also established a headquarters. The headquarters was called Fukuyama. Satou Yuuki, an employee of the Matsumae City Institute of Education, explained the history of the Matsumae Clan's arrival.

『15世紀中ごろ、本州から渡ってきた和人が北海道の南部に定着して、数々の拠点を築きました。松前はその中心地として賑わいました。江戸時代、松前氏が福山館という拠点を新たに築き、北海道（当時は蝦夷地と呼んでいた）の海産物などを一挙に集め、本州との交易によって栄えました。江戸時代、松前氏が福山館という拠点を新たに築き、北海道（当時は蝦夷地と呼んでいた）の海産物などを一挙に集め、本州との交易によって栄えました』。（佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳）

In medieval times around the 15th century, Japanese people from Honshu crossed into Southern Hokkaido, settled, and established many bases. At that time, Matsumae became the most crowded city center. In the Edo period, the Matsumae Clan built a

new base called Fukuyama. At that time Hokkaido was called "Ezo". They collected seafood from Hokkaido and became rich through trade with Honshu. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Like the people of Honshu, the Matsumae Clan's arrival in Matsumae City was influenced by economic motives. That motive was trade activity. This started with establishing a base called Fukuyama. After establishing a base and deciding to settle down, the Matsumae Clan fulfilled their needs through sailing and trading activities with the Honshu islanders. Sailing activities became the main medium for the spread of Kagura dance in Matsumae City. The spread of dance is carried out along the waters of the island of Japan. This is a characteristic of the Matsumae Kagura dance.

『松前神楽は、今から350年前の1674年、福山館（後の松前城）の鎗の間（やりのま）という場所で「湯立神楽」（ゆたてかぐら）が行われたという記録があります。これは、当時の松前の殿様が、領内で行われていた神楽などを統合して始まったとされます。江戸時代を通じて、松前神楽は基本的に城の中で行われ、次第に城下町にも広がりました。江戸時代の終わりごろから明治時代にかけて、多くの人々がニシンという魚を追いかけて北海道の奥地に進出するようになったことで、松前神楽はさらに広い地域に伝わったのです。今では北海道の日本海側を中心に、約120以上の神社で演じられています』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

There are records that Matsumae Kagura was performed 350 years ago in 1674 at a place called Yarinoma in Fukuyama Castle (now Matsumae Castle). It is said that this tradition was started by the lord of Matsumae who combined Kagura and other dances performed in his territory. Throughout the Edo period, the Matsumae Kagura dance was only performed inside the castle and then slowly spread in the town around the castle. From around the end of the Edo period to the Meiji period, it spread to a wider area as many people ventured into the interior of Hokkaido to catch fish called herring. Today, it is performed at more than 120 shrines mainly in the watery parts of Hokkaido. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Matsumae Kagura dance was initiated by the Matsumae Clan by combining Kagura dance and other dances originating from the Matsumae Clan. According to historical records, this dance was first performed in 1674 at a place called Yarinoma located in Fukuyama Castle (later renamed Matsumae Castle). Throughout the Edo period, the Matsumae Kagura dance was only performed inside the castle and slowly spread in the town around the castle. From around the end of the Edo period to the Meiji period, it spread to a wider area as more people ventured into the interior of Hokkaido in pursuit of herring. Today, the dance is performed at 120 temples and centers on the waters of Hokkaido, Japan.

3.2 Matsumae Kagura Dance Processions

Dance is a manifestation of human expression through the rhythm of song and body movement. Corrie in Muryanto (2019) defines dance as a rhythmic movement of limbs in a certain space and time. In this regard, dance becomes a medium of communication accompanied by musical instruments. The communication process is symbolic because it refers to the philosophy of movement. Based on its purpose, dance can be divided into two, as entertainment and religious ceremonies.

The function of dance as entertainment contains choreography that aims to entertain the public. This is in contrast to religious ceremonies as they are exclusive and only performed at certain times. One example is the Matsumae Kagura dance, which takes place from late June to October and is routinely performed at shrines and on New Year's Day. Because it is sacred, careful preparation is necessary. The preparation process takes about two to three days. This was reaffirmed by Satou Yuuki and the Shinto Priest in personal interviews.

『各神社の例大祭で舞います。概ね6月下旬～10月までです。その他、お正月に舞う事もあります』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

Held during the periodic festivals of each shrine. Generally from late June to October. Sometimes it is also performed on New Year's Day. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

『松前神楽の準備は2、3日ルかかる』。(神主さん, 男, 58歳)

Matsumae Kagura preparation takes two to three days. (Shinto priest, male, 58 years old)

Based on the Fukushima City website, there are eleven stages in the Matsumae Kagura dance. The eleven stages consist of *sou shinpai*, *sakaki mai*, *fukuda mai*, *suzu age*, *niwasago mai*, *sambaso mai*, *risou mai*, *yama no kami*, *kan-asobi mai*, *shishi-mai*, and *shime-bara mai*. The procession begins with the Shinto priests bowing and clapping their hands twice in front of the altar. This process is done without musical accompaniment and ends with the priests bowing their heads again. In the next stage, the priest holds the holy stick, the *gohei*, in the left hand and the bell in the right hand. The priest dances forwards, backward, left, and right without sound. The silence emphasizes the elegance of the dance. Every morning and evening, the priest presents the *gohei* on the altar as a symbol of cleansing from sin and impurity. The dance continues with the priest bowing to various directions and corners of the room for cleansing from sin and impurity. This stage is a form of supplication for a bountiful harvest by avoiding drought, natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, and harmful insect attacks.

In the *suzu age* stage or the girls' dance, girls under the age of ten dance by holding a fan and bell in their hands. The movement of lifting the bell and fan in the hand symbolizes the descent of angels from heaven to earth. The next stage is *niwasago mai*. At this stage, the priests dance wearing chicken-patterned head hoods. The chicken is believed to be a symbol of good luck and happiness for married couples. As the priests dance, grains of rice are thrown on the floor as an expression of gratitude for the country's bountiful harvest. Then the older priests dance forward and stomp their feet on the floor energetically and joyfully. The stomp is a symbol of celebration of the family's prosperity and hope for the development of the next generation. The procession continues with the *rishou mai*. *Rishou* means receiving a blessing from the Buddha. Two priests sit facing each other holding a bell and a fan. The purpose is to pray for happiness for everyone. The next step comes the *yama no kami* (mountain god). At this stage, the priest imitates the movements of a bird sea to please the mountain god. As the priest dances by spreading his arms on both sides (mimicking the flapping motion of a bird's wings), the musicians play flutes to create high notes that support the echo of the seabird's voice. There is an element of *Yamabushi Kagura* at this stage. This is reinforced by Satou Yuuki's idea.

『松前神楽は、本州で演じられた様々な舞いが、ミックスされています。特に、「番楽」

(ばんがく) や「山伏神楽」(やまぶしかぐら) など、東北地方と関連しているようです』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

Matsumae Kagura dance is a fusion of various dances performed in Honshu.

Especially Bangaku and Yamabushi Kagura seem to be related to the Tohoku region.
(Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

The description of the dance implementation stage will be explained in detail through the following diagram.

Table 1. Matsumae Kagura Processions

	1. <i>Sou Shinpai</i>	(Bowling before the altar)
	2. <i>Sakaki Mai</i>	(Sacred stick dance)
	3. <i>Fukuda Mai</i>	(A dance to begging for a bountiful harvest)
	4. <i>Suzu Age</i>	(The dance of bells ringing)
	5. <i>Niwasago Mai</i>	(Harvest celebration dance)
	6. <i>Sambaso Mai</i>	(Prosperity dance for families)
Kagura Matsumae Dance Processions	7. <i>Risou Mai</i>	(A dance for the blessing of life)
	8. <i>Yama no Kami</i>	(Dance of the mountain gods)
	9. <i>Kan-Asobi Mai</i>	(Imperial dance)
	10. <i>Shishi-mai</i>	(The lion dance)
	11. <i>Shime-bara Mai</i>	(Cleansing dance)

Source: <https://www.town.fukushima.Kagura.hokkaido.jp>



Figure 1. *Shishimai* or the lion dance in the Matsumae Kagura Processions
Source: Personal Documentation



Figure 2. *Shishimai* Festival

Source: Hakodate City Central Digital Library Archives



Picture 3. The Shinto Priest throws out the rice to repel evil spirits
Source: Personal Documentation



Picture 4. *Sanbaso mai* or dance for family prosperity
Source: Personal Documentation



Picture 5. Music players of Matsumae Kagura
Source: Personal Documentation

The ninth stage is referred to as *kan-asobi mai* or imperial dance. In this stage, two priests play the role of a nobleman who uses a bow and three arrows to drive evil spirits from the world and restore justice to the world. This dance also symbolizes the dignity of the Matsumae Clan and a plea for world peace. The procession continues with the *shishi-mai* (lion dance). This dance aims to drive away evil spirits, a wish for world peace, happiness, and prosperity. It is also said to serve as a shield against flu and other infectious diseases. The next stage is referred to as *shimei-bara mai*. The priest purifies the place by waving a white fan in the four directions and the center point. Then the priest cuts paper ribbons hung with a sword to ward off evil spirits and celebrate the four seasons. The cut paper ribbons are auspicious for the birth of children and prevent fire disasters.

『まず神職（神様に仕える人々）が神様の前に全員集まって、礼拝します。それから、榊舞、福田舞・・・というように、ある程度決まった順番に舞っていきます』。(佐藤雄生,男,39歳)

First of all, all Shinto priests (people who serve God) gather before God and worship. Then they dance in a set order such as *sakaki ma*, *fukuda mai*, and so on. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Overall, the Matsumae Kagura dance procession begins with the gathering of Shinto priests and continues with worship. After the service, the Shinto priests dance according to the order of the procession. Each procession uses different equipment to symbolize the rejection of bad luck and illness, purification, and requests for blessings. Matsumae Kagura dance equipment consists of *torimonomai* (objects held by dancers during the dance procession), fans, small bells, swords (*naginata*), *fubako* (boxes for letters), *okina* (old man's mask), *sanbaso* (energetic-looking male mask), and *burimono* (a kind of lion dance costume).

『採物舞（とりものまい）といって、手に道具を持って舞う演目があります。扇や鈴、刀や薙刀（なぎなた）、文箱（手紙を入れる箱）などがあります。また、翁（おきな）という長寿の老人のお面や、三番叟（さんばそう）という精力絶倫の老人のお面をつけて演じる舞いもあります。獅子舞（ししまい）には、権現様（ごんげんさま）といって、獅子の姿のかぶり物を付けて舞います』。(佐藤雄生,男,39歳)

There is a procession called *torimonomai*, a dance movement while carrying tools in hand. These include fans, bells, swords (*naginata*), letterboxes, and others. In addition, there is a dance movement using a mask of a long-lived old man called *okina* and a dance movement wearing a mask of an old man with unlimited energy called *sanbaso*. At the *shishimai* procession, there is an individual (*gongen-sama*) who wears a lion-like headdress. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

The diverse symbolic meanings of the tools also indicate the different purposes of the procession. Differences in purpose can be adjusted to social status. For example, a nobleman performs the Matsumae Kagura dance as a prayer for the safety of the region and the end of infectious diseases. If a merchant, the dance is performed as a form of supplication for prosperous business and a large catch. The essence of the whole dance procession is the rejection of misfortune and the wish for a good and peaceful life (may be always overflowing with blessings). This statement was made by Satou Yuuki.

『松前神楽の舞いは、五穀豊穰、大漁満作、夫婦円満、立身出世、健康長寿など、めでたい意味を持っています。また、神様に捧げる舞いもあります。』(佐藤雄生,男,39歳)

Matsumae Kagura dance has the meaning of bringing good luck such as a bountiful harvest, a large catch, a happy marriage, success in life, and a long and healthy life. There are also dances dedicated to the gods. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

『病魔を祓い、悪霊を退散させ、その場所を清め、集まった人々に幸福をもたらす意味があります』。(佐藤雄生,男,39歳)

It expels diseases, drives away evil spirits, purifies the place, and brings blessings (happiness) to the people gathered. (Yuuki Satou, Male, 39 years old)

『その目的は様々です。殿様であれば、領内の安全や感染症の終息を祈って松前神楽を行わせたことがあります。商人であれば、商売繁盛や大漁祈願として松前神楽を依頼しました』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

The purpose is obviously different. If you are a nobleman, you might perform Matsumae Kagura to pray for the safety of the region and the end of infectious disease outbreaks. If you are a merchant, the dance is performed to pray for a prosperous business or a large catch. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

3.3 Aging Society, Urbanization, and Matsumae Kagura Dance Continuity

Matsumae is a city located in southern Hokkaido Prefecture. According to the Matsumae City Hall website, the city faces the Sea of Japan to the west and the Tsugaru Strait to the south. The area reaches 295.35 km² consisting of villages along National Route 228. According to the 2020 population census, the total population was 6,260 with 3,196 households. However, the population is in continuous decline and is dominated by the elderly.

In the diagram below, it can be seen that from the 50th of Showa year to Reiwa, the population of Matsumae City has decreased significantly. The peak population occurred in the 50th Showa era with a total of 18,307 people. This number consists of 1,578 people aged 65 and over, 11,293 people aged 15-64, and 5,436 people aged 0-14. Entering the 55th Showa era, the population decreased to 17,524. In this era, the number of people of productive age (15-64 years old) began to decline dramatically to 10,904 people but again experienced an increase in the 60th Showa era of 10,096 people. If you look closely, the decline in the working-age population (15-64 years old) occurred from the 2nd Heisei to the 2nd Reiwa era. There were 8,487 people of productive age in the 2nd Heisei era but this decreased to 2,611 in the 2nd Reiwa. In the 2nd Reiwa era, the number of elderly people aged 65 and above reached 3,256. This surpassed the population of 15-64 years old and 0-14 years old. The dominance of the elderly population over the productive age is worrying because it has an impact on the sustainability of Matsumae Kagura dance. Based on interviews with respondents, the population of Matsumae is expected to continue to decrease by 5,000 people.

『現在、6000人を切ろうとしています。2024年のうちには5000人台に乗ると考えられています』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

Currently, there are an estimated 6,000 people. By 2024, it is expected to reach 5,000. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)



Chart 1. Populations trend based on age and class

Source: Matsumae Government Office

The population, which is expected to decrease to 5,000, is dominated by the elderly. The dominance of the elderly population over the productive age population (aging society) is now a major problem in the preservation of local culture. This happens to the Matsumae Kagura dance which is increasingly threatened with its existence due to the reduction of the next generation. In addition to depopulation, urbanization is a challenge to the inheritance of Matsumae Kagura dance. Kingsley Davis (1965) argues that urbanization is a continuous process as a population changes from an agricultural society to an urban society. The movement of people to urban areas can lead to the extinction of Matsumae Kagura dance. In addition, it also affects the community around the shrine and the existence of other local cultures in Matsumae City.

『松前神楽は、基本的に各神社の神職が伝承してきました。しかし、一部では神社がある集落に住む一般の人々が伝承している場合もあります。少子高齢化により、伝承が途絶えようとしている集落もあり、これは神社を中心としたコミュニティの維持に大きな影響があります』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

Basically, Matsumae Kagura is passed down by the priest at each shrine. In some cases, the inheritance of the dance is done by the people living around the shrine. Due to the declining birthrate and aging population, traditional folklore in some villages is also on the verge of extinction and has a great impact on the survival of communities centered around shrines. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Based on the quoted statement above, depopulation and urbanization hindered the process of inheriting the Matsumae Kagura dance. At first, the inheritance of the dance was carried out by Shinto priests. However, the decline of successors led to the inheritance of the dance also being carried out by the community (not from the Shinto priest family). The main cause is the decline of the younger generation as actors of preservation. This is due to the low birth rate and thus the aging of the population. The lack of a next generation means that local cultures such as folklore and communities around shrines are also endangered. The extinction of a culture can be interpreted as a cultural disconnection because there is no generation capable of passing on the culture. When described in the form of a chart, the problem of the sustainability of Matsumae Kagura Dance is as follows.

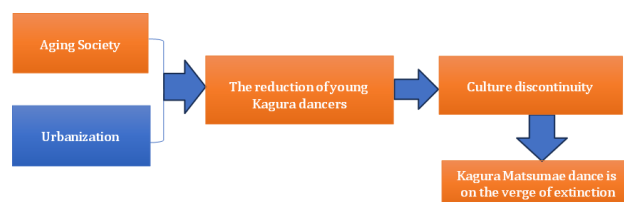


Figure 6. Matsumae Kagura Dance Continuity Challenge

People move out to cities because they are motivated to find work and get a higher education. As a result, people who move to the city tend to find it difficult to return because their thoughts are centered on careers and education. This phenomenon happens to individuals who are the successors of Matsumae Kagura Dance. However, some individuals are willing to return to Matsumae in order to perform the Kagura dance during the festival.

『少子高齢化もさることながら、進学や就職で松前町の外に引っ越してしまうことが問題です。松前神楽を舞うことができる人たちが、そういった理由で松前町を離れると、なかなか戻ってくることはできません。それでも、お祭りのときに松前神楽を舞うために、わざわざ松前町に一時的に里帰りしてくれる人もいます』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

In addition to the declining birth rate and aging population, the problem is that many residents are moving to areas outside of Matsumae city to obtain higher education and find work. This also happens to those who are experts in Matsumae Kagura dance and it is difficult for them to return. Despite this, some of them still try to return to Matsumae to perform Matsumae Kagura during festivals. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

3.4 Local Wisdom Teachings As Matsumae Kagura Dance Revitalization Method

Local wisdom is a community's worldview that contains noble values. Local wisdom comes from local knowledge that is integrated with belief systems, norms and culture, and expressed in traditions and myths (Sunaryo et al, 2003). The practice lasts for a long time. The important role of local wisdom is as a community identity and life guide. Based on its form, there are two types of local wisdom: tangible and intangible. Tangible local wisdom refers to physical forms such as ribbon, traditional buildings, and cultural heritage while intangible is in the form of songs and advice delivered orally. According from the Kagura history website, the Matsumae Kagura dance was designated as intangible local wisdom on March 8, 2018. The determination of the status aims to preserve the existence of the dance.

The potential extinction of Matsumae Kagura dance due to the reduction of the next generation led to the initiative of the dance preservation community to introduce dance from an early age. Community members began teaching the dance to elementary and junior high school students in Matsumae City. Revitalization efforts are carried out by teaching the locality to elementary and junior high school students in Matsumae City. Teaching the locality is carried out by members of the Matsumae Kagura dance preservation body. In the learning process, students learn the history and observe Kagura dance equipment directly. After learning about these two aspects, students were asked to share information about the dance. Overall, these actions aim to attract new members to the Matsumae Kagura dance preservation body in order to maintain the existence of the dance. According to respondents, this effort is important to foster interest in children learning and appreciating Matsumae Kagura dance. In this aspect, there is no special method used by members of the Matsumae Kagura dance preservation body. Through learning the locality of Matsumae City, students are taught to raise awareness of the existence of local culture independently. The positive impact of this revitalization effort is that several elementary school students have joined as members of the Matsumae Kagura preservation. Currently, the elementary school students are active junior high school students and core members of the Matsumae Kagura preservation body.

『郷土の歴史を学ぶ「松前学」という授業で、松前神楽の道具に触れてみたり、実際に舞いを鑑賞することで情報発信しています。清部神楽保存会では小学生2名が加入して、現在は中学生になって保存団体の中心メンバーとなっています』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

In the classroom there is a subject about Matsumae City, where students learn the history, see the Kagura dance equipment in action, and share information about the dance as a token of appreciation. Two elementary school students have joined the Kiyobe Kagura Preservation Association and are now junior high school students and core members of the preservation group. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

『子供たちは、自分で興味をもって松前神楽を始めています。保存団体は特別なことはしていません』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

Children themselves develop interest in Matsumae Kagura dance. There is no special method used by the preservation agency. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Overall, the revitalization efforts of Matsumae Kagura dance can be explained in the following chart.

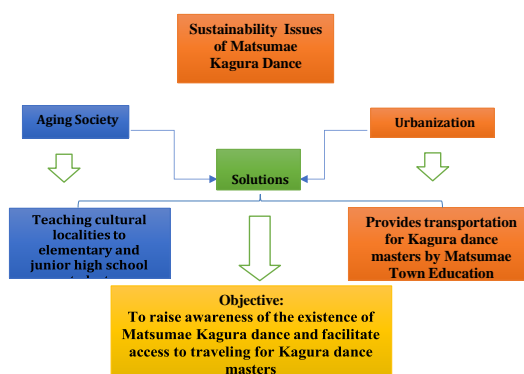


Figure 4. The teachings of Matsumae Kagura Dance in 2017

Source: Matsumae City Education Institute Archives

Currently, there are three organizations affiliated with the Matsumae Kagura Dance Preservation Board, including Matsumae Shrine, Kiyobe Kagura Preservation Society, and Haraguchi Kagura Preservation Society. Members of each organization range from elementary and junior high school students to the elderly, so it can be said that dance preservation efforts involve intergenerational roles. Most of the members are male. Based on respondents' statements, the age range of members of each community varies. The age includes intergenerational (from productive age to elderly). Each community has a different number of members.

『現在、「松前町松前神楽保存会」という団体があって、その傘下には松前神社・清部神楽保存会・原口保存会の3つがあります』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39 歳)

Currently, there are Matsumae Kagura Preservation Society affiliated with Matsumae Shrine, Kiyobe Kagura Preservation Society, and Haraguchi Kagura Preservation Society. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

『清部保存会では、中学生の男女から80代まで、約20人弱が加入しています。原口保存会では50代～80代まで、約10人です。松前神社は神職さん（宮司1名、禰宜1名）です』。(Satou Yuuki, Laki-laki, 39 tahun)

The Kiyobe preservation community consists of high school students and elderly people aged 80 and has approximately 20 members. The Haraguchi preservation community consists of ten elderly members from 50 years old to 80 years old. Matsumae Shrine is managed by a Shinto priest with one head priest and one other priest. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Revitalization efforts are also supported by the Matsumae City Education Institute by helping to provide transportation for Kagura masters to perform and practice. Providing transportation is needed because the location of the Kagura dance experts' residences is far away. In addition, understanding local culture from parents and schools is very important for children's awareness to preserve the Matsumae Kagura dance. Love for local culture needs to be built from an early age so that the next generation has insight and pride in their culture. It aims to preserve memories for the Matsumae Kagura existence. People that have returned to Matsumae during the festival can be said that they were appreciated the moment. Thus, it became the most important moment in their life (Wijaya et al., 2024).

『子供たちの加入には、保護者や学校の理解が必要不可欠です。松前町教育委員会では、補助金を出したり、公開公演や練習の際、遠方に住んでいる伝承者を送迎することもありました』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

For children to join, understanding from parents and schools is essential. Matsumae City Education Institute sometimes provides transportation for Kagura masters who live in remote places to perform and practice. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old).

『まずは郷土の歴史に自信を持つことです。松前藩は、アイヌ民族との争いを経て、彼らを支配下に置き、富を収奪したことがあります。明治新政府は、さらにアイヌの同化政策を進めました。こうした経緯から、松前町の歴史を良く思わない町民もいます。しかし、ポジティブな歴史もネガティブな歴史も、どちらも大切なことです。一つの面にとらわれず、松前町の全体の歴史を俯瞰してもらいたいと思っています。松前神楽という点では、公開公演の時に里帰りしてくれる人々がいます』。(佐藤雄生, 男, 39歳)

First of all, a sense of pride in local culture must be established. After conflicts with the Ainu, the Matsumae Clan colonized and controlled their wealth. During the Meiji period, the Ainu assimilation policy was promoted. Because of this, most people have a negative view of Matsumae City's history, but both positive and negative history are important. I would like people to focus not just on one aspect but on the entire history of Matsumae City. In the case of the Matsumae Kagura dance, some people return to their hometowns during public performances. (Satou Yuuki, Male, 39 years old)

Revitalization efforts such as the teaching of cultural localities containing the history and introduction of Matsumae Kagura dance equipment and the provision of transportation by educational institutions have not been fully successful due to the high

rate of urbanization. Nonetheless, a novelty emerged in the form of continuing to teach the dance by forming groups and inviting Shinto priests as dance mentors. The formation of new Kagura dance groups led to stylistic assimilation between the Matsumae style and Hakodate City. However, the awareness and efforts of the people and the government are very high towards the sustainability of Matsumae Kagura dance.

4. Conclusions

Matsumae Kagura dance is a local wisdom that contains the values and beliefs of Matsumae's inhabitants. However, this dance is in danger of extinction due to the decline of the next generation due to depopulation and urbanization. A sense of pride and love needs to be built from an early age to maintain cultural sustainability. In the case of Matsumae Kagura dance, learning cultural locality containing the history and introduction of Kagura dance equipment is very important to foster knowledge of cultural history to maintain the sustainability of local culture. In addition to teaching the locality of Matsumae Kagura dance, the local government, namely the Matsumae City Education Institute, also supports preservation by providing access to transportation for Kagura experts who live in remote places. However, revitalization efforts have not been fully successful due to high urbanization for access to employment and higher education. However, revitalization efforts have continued and led to the formation of a new group of young Shinto priests in Southern Hokkaido. This shows that the people and government of Matsumae City are very aware of the existence of the Matsumae Kagura dance.

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