

The Future of Japanese Rural Society Considerations Drawn from the Experience of Ofuki area, Saijo City, Ehime Prefecture

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

The aging and depopulation progress at all over Japan. There are 10,091 marginal villages of which 50% of the population is aged over 65. People often have negative images on marginal villages such as exhaustion and gloomy place. However every marginal village has different actual condition. If people want to argue about the marginal village, they have to examine its actual condition carefully. Therefore, this research examine about the marginal village which located at Ofuki area, Saijo city, Ehime prefecture. The purpose of research is to grasp the transition and present condition of local lives and occupations, and consider about the future of Ofuki area.

2. THE TRANSITION AND PRESENT CONDITION OF LIFE AND OCCUPATION

Result of literature review and field work could show that there were varieties of occupations until 1950s. People used local nature resources for their daily lives. However, people started to move to urban area at the high economic growth period. After that period, aging and depopulation started at Ofuki area. However, about 100 people are still living, and most of them hope to keep living there as long as they can. They like Ohuki area very much. Even though, there are not many people, people have very strong community. According to the definition, Ohuki area is a marginal village. However, it is not exhaustion and gloomy place.

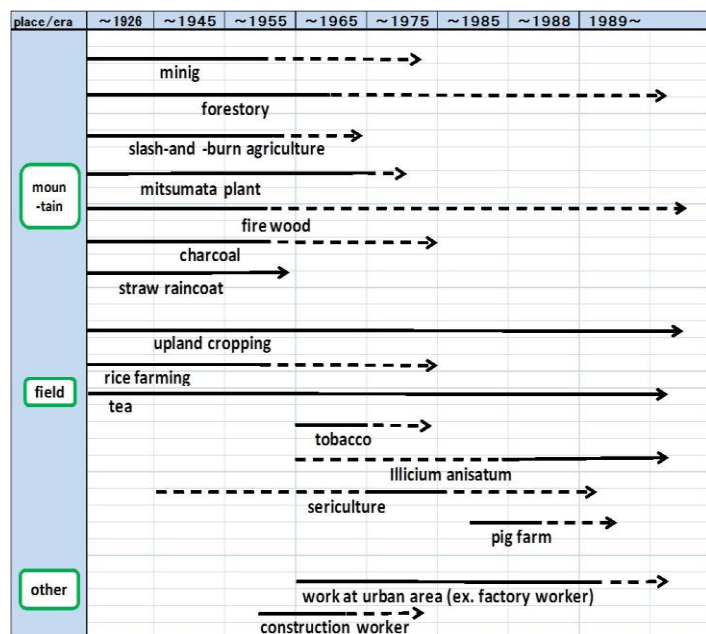


Figure the transition of occupation
(the dotted line means the beginning of decline)

3. THE FUTURE OF OFUKI AREA

People hope to keep living in Ofuki area as long as they can. However it is expected that aging and depopulation will keep progressing in the future. Therefore, it is needed to consider about the support of residents. For example, the improvement of public transportation is important. However, it is needed to pay attention to the ability of the residents. Most of residents are very healthy and they can take care of themselves. Therefore, only minimum life support is needed. At the same time, the preservation of local resources is important. Local resources means such as forest, local knowledge, local culture and so on.