REGARDING THE CONTINUITY AND FEATURES OF RURAL COMMUNITY PLANS IN ZONES WHERE KOBE CITY RESIDENTS CO-EXIST WITH NATURE
- A case study on Kande northern-village in the west ward of Kobe city -

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In this research, with regards to Kande Northern Village, which has had multiple continued activities for village building until now, from the interchange enterprise in its Rural Community Plan, the details of the enterprise operation outline and the role division between residents of the actual enterprise while focusing on the division of roles between villagers of the actual practical project, and the organizational structure on the actual day of events it was examined as to how these were continued within the village. As a result, from the enterprise operation outline, we have come to know of the interchange enterprise that was being run within the village, which has been put in place as an activity of the Rural Community Plan as an ongoing enterprise, and a new interchange enterprise that was implemented by the local administrative agency.

Keywords : Rural Community Plan, Rural-Urban Interchange, Continuity, Kobe city, Kande Northern village

1. Introduction
This research takes place in Kande Northern Village in the West Ward of Kobe City which has enacted the Rural Community Plan since 1999, as a case study of the area activities for interchange enterprise put in place by the Rural Community Plan, whereas the Rural Community plan is concerned from interchange enterprises, to detail outlines of enterprises undertaken and the actual process of enterprises for which roles were shared among village residents, details of the characteristics of those participating, and where attention will be focused on the organizational structure for enterprise accomplishments, and how the continuity of interchange activities within the village is supported, will be taken into consideration in the next 3 points. (1) The developments and actual situation of the Rural Community Plan in terms of Kande Northern Village. (2) The observation of many developments to, and outlines of detailed interchange activities for the Rural-Urban Interchange enterprises by the Rural Community Plan. (3) The co-operative nature of relationships between related organizations, the various roles of village residents by whom actual enterprise activities are carried out in interchange enterprises, and will take into consideration the continuing area activities being carried out by Rural Community Plans.

2. Methods
Through information gained in hearings with The Current Chairperson for the Kande Residents Association, together with the Previous Residents Association Chairperson, the person responsible at the Kobe City Agricultural Promotion Center, and to organize developments to Rural Community Plans for the Northern Village based on Resident Association documents collected from residents association, the agricultural associations, and the farmers association. Next was to grasp the details of the activities (as contained in the records of activities of Rural Community Planning Conferences, and social organizations starting from Residents Association) of Rural Community Planning through interview questionnaires conducted with local residents, and members who had had experience serving as committee members in the local rural community planning conference.

Through hearing interviews and the collected data, it was possible to grasp the relationships between the roles of the village residents and the details of their efforts for the interchange activities made possible through planning and enterprise, along with the characteristics of the development of the “Rural Community Plan” as it concerns Kande Northern Village.
Careful consideration and analysis was carried out on the continuity of the area activities in the interchange activity. On site investigations were done in Oct 2012, June and Sep 2013, Apr and Nov 2014, and Feb and Sep 2015.

3. Past Research

In the research related to the Rural Community Planning which is the subject of this research, analytical research 3) of the practicality and validity and challenges of using land for planning on a local level was done in Wada (1999), Akita (2004). In Saiki (2002) the distinguishing features of the Kobe City Rural Community Plan are, that based on the individually decided bylaws of each city, it is a model for rethinking the ways of planning utilization of land for rural districts. Rural Community Plans are an orderly way of utilizing land, and it has been noted as being a good place where the process for deciding the plans is one where its prior members pass on its leadership to the people who follow on from them.

In Hoshino (2002) the level of desire to participate in local area resident planning was researched. In Futagami (2007) research was carried out on the effect on residents and the actual situation of Rural Community Planning and Interchange activities. In Miyake (2009) through having analyzed planning documents for Rural Community Planning, analysis was done on the characteristics of the outline of the plans and the effect and challenges that such plans face. In Kuki (2010) attention was placed on the planning support groups and challenges with regards to planning design on a area level, and with relation to structural planning on a village level, the planning deliberation support group is referenced for the influence that was made on what resulted as planning documents and their creation methods.

With regards to research relating to the continuity of Rural Community Planning and Village activities, Shibata (2008) paid attention to Rural-Urban Interchange brought about by Rural Community Planning, and analysis related to interchange activities can be seen to have been carried out. In Chibuka (2003) the village activities continued and an investigation was carried out from the relation of mutual groups within the village that do the practical management of the village activities, where observations were done as to adaptations made to deal with changes in the social environment.

While referring to the above research, this research will re-observe the developments to plans for the Rural Village Planning which are mainly carried out by the resident groups, whereas the residents as the main body of members continue the village building activities, and in what kind of interchange activities they actualize in and out of the village area, and with a focus on the cooperative relationships between organizations and roles of the village residents that support these kinds of activities.

4. The Outline of the Areas which are the subject of the research

Kande Town Kande Northern village (Fig.1) which belongs to the West Ward of Kobe City is located on the west side of National Highway Route 175 which runs alongside it. It is found in the area from the central part of Kande Town down to the West side.

It is sandwiched between the Akashi river and the Kako river at part of Plains, and is at the East area of Harimada. At about the centre of the township is Mt. Meko (249m) and Mt. Oko (241m). Due to the climate from the Seto inland sea the yearly rainfall is extremely low, and what is more it has no large rivers and for that reason there were many water reservoirs made to deal with the shortage of water. These can still be said to be a substantial part of the landscape of the area even to date.

What is more, in so far as transport is concerned, it is found approximately 4.5km North West of the Kobe City Subway Seishincho station, taking about 20 minutes by car and is comparatively closer to Seishin New Town.

Kande Northern Village since The Edo Period was a place that had its main industry centered on agriculture but, due to the scarcity of water until the Taisho Period it focused on sweet potato, cotton, tobacco and other such industrial crops. Upon entering the Showa Period, it started to specialize in the production of “Watermelon”, and currently produces and harvests cabbage and broccoli as its main wet-rice crop. The surface land area dedicated to agricultural management is 407,373m² (of which 396,925m² are in wet rice paddy fields, and 10,448m² are used in cultivating of vegetable paddocks).

Currently, amongst the 70 households in the village, 53 of those are farming households. Including all part time farming households, there is a total population of 360 people, of which 250 people are of farming families.

5. The Special Characteristics of Rural Village Planning in so far as Kande North Village is concerned

5.1. The Background and Past examples of Rural Community Planning in so far as Kande North Village is concerned.

Here I will clarify what measures were taken within the Village by residents that accompanied the development of the area building in so far as Kande Northern village is concerned.

In 1970 the Kande Northern Village had in and around it, 7 water reservoir ponds (approx. 7,500m³) owing to the largest farm land equipping activity on record. A land reclamation that was carried out and an Inner village level conference was formed, and with that conference at its core a
prefectural farm land equipping project was promoted.

In 1982 the farm land equipping was completed, and because of the farm land equipping within the village and the reclamation of the reservoir ponds which caused a transition to usable lands, from the time of change until now and while thinking about the new layout of the village, and while meeting to talk about how to move forward into the future, and the gained assets due to the reclamation of the reservoir ponds at its base, from 1987 within the area the residents association hall was rebuilt and the setting in place of Misaka shrine’s office equipment facilities were promoted.

Amidst this “the Law for the promotion of Municipal agricultural parks “ was set in place in 1990, and according to this the situation became easier for the creation of a Municipal Agricultural Park, and as a result of a reduction in the consumption of rice, known as “Reduction of Rice plants Solution” it became possible to use rice field land without having to let it go fallow, and it became necessary to think of different uses for it, so in 1998 the Municipal Agricultural Park which is Misaka Farming Village was established.

After that, due to challenges arising in the area of Kande Northern Village such as “The inflation of Agricultural machinery prices”, “A lack of people to carry on work”, “the management of the farming village”, in 1999 “the Kande Northern Village Community Planning “ was formed to take care of the rural community plan and tasks such as the farming village management, the rural-urban interchange activities, and agricultural management activities. The management and activities at the municipal agricultural park at Misaka farming village is used to aim for a “one village one agricultural area”, utilizing a co-operative village management style to continue the activity of and task of Rural Community Planning, and to positively take actions as a whole village for the Rural Community Plan.

On the other hand, it can be understood that efforts within the village on a softer side, such as the farming culture have been successful such as in the Rural-Urban interchange, promoted at the center of the interchange activities.

5.2. The Development in the direction of an interchange activity which was placed within the setting of the Rural Community Planning.

In 1998, at the Misaka Farming Village, simultaneously with the opening of the park, 150 rental agricultural garden spaces were opened, and as a result in the village as an interchange activity, they held a clover festival (now renamed the Cherry Blossom viewing festival), and in December they made a Shimenawa and a Mochitsuki taikai as rural-urban interchange events. The Kande Northern Village Rural Community Planning activities and their interchange enterprises have been passed on to the next people to do, and are being continued even at the writing of this thesis. Moreover, while continuing the activities, the number of new interchanges has increased too, such as that arranged with the local government acting as agent with the Suma Temple Business Friends Association, the care of a mandarin orchard, a soba cutting experience, the interchange activity with the Hyogo Ward Children’s association and some other activities.

5.3. The Characteristics and Summary of the Interchange Activities in Rural Community Plans

The Rural-Urban interchange activities as an activity of the Rural Community Plans that have been continually carried out in Kande Northern Village, are as stated below, with detailed measures for their interchange enterprises (table 1) and actual enterprises, each with its own division of roles for the village residents, a certain percentage of work undertaken by the residents association and local government, and local government, and advances under observation with a focus being placed on the organizational structure for the purpose of enterprise execution.

5.3.1A Summary of Each Interchange Activity

| Table 1 The match contents of exchange activity of a Kande northern village |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Shimenawa and Mochitsuki taikai | It's held in December every year | Kande farm village and farming depot | This year, the 20th time (It begins in December, 1997) | Exchange with in the area, in a designated area and in the city |
| Cherry Blossom Viewing Festival | It's held in April every year | Around the farm village and the barbecue square | This year, the 14th time (It begins in April, 2002) | Exchange with in the area, an area and a city |
| Suma Temple business friends association interchange activity | The traveling sales of vegetables once every month | Suma-dera shopping area | This year, the 11th time (It begins in 2004) | PR and sales promotion of vegetables produced by the center |
| | Participate in Suma Rakuichi market | Suma-dera shopping area | Exchange with an urban area | Vegetables are sold direct in Suma-dera shopping area square. |
| | Agricultural experience in Sep&Jun | Kande farm village | This year, the 11th time (It begins in 2004) | A rural community experience of city residents, Rural community exchange |
| | Interchange activity with the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association | It's held in summer every year | Kande farm village and farming depot | This year, the 7th time (It begins in 2009) | Rural community experience of a children's association and area PR |
| | | | | Straw Japanese sandals making experience, potato digging and rice reaping. Have a meal together provided by the cropper who has been just adopted. |
(1) Shimenawa and Mochitsuki taikai summaries
Immediately after the grand opening of the Farm Village Garden, an interchange with some residents of urban area residents was planned and carried out. As its special characteristics, Shimenawa making was done as the main event, and so people from the elder’s association and some members of the fire brigade who could lead others in the Shimenawa making, were in the spotlight while the activity was going on. So not only was it a way for leaders of the Shimenawa making to pass on a traditional craft, but also it was a way for them to have some cultural interchange across generations. Also, on a rotational roster system between each neighbor they prepare it every year. This interchange activity has been continued with the help of receiving grants received from the local government and the residents association.

(2) The Summary of the Cherry Blossom Viewing Festival
As with the Shimenawa making and the Mochitsuki taikai, as an interchange activity held immediately after the grand opening of the Farm Village, it was used for the main objective of having an interchange activity between the users of the agricultural gardens. At that time a portion of the surrounding fields around the agricultural village were planted out as clover fields, and it was held as a clover festival but, depending on the kind of rice being planted clover won’t grow so well, and so it was a challenge to secure enough paddocks for clover planting. At that time, some Cherry trees which had been planted at the same time as the farm village park had been opened, had matured, and so the festival name was changed to The Cherry Blossom Viewing festival, and is carrying on even to this day. This interchange activity is run by rotating the roster of responsibilities between neighbours and has been continued with the assistance of money grants from the local government and the residents association.

(3) The Summary of the Suma Temple business friends association interchanges activity.
The special characteristic of the interchange with the Suma Temple Shopping Street is that it is planned to create an opportunity for both the farmers’ side and the urban side to see each others’ culture.

A chance for the Suma Temple Business friends association to enliven their shopping street with fresh new vegetables as eye catching items, along with the mingling with urban folk, allows the villagers to do some PR work for their lifestyle too. With a mind to bringing their village back to life the Kande Northern Villagers feel a mutual benefit and with the local government being the agent this interchange was begun.

At this time it was only direct sales of vegetables, was mostly carried out by those who grew the vegetables themselves, but thereafter there was a shared movement to and fro from both sides, to allow for both sides to have their needs realized, and this interchange is also continuing on still now. For the interchange enterprise going on in Kande northern village the residents association and the executive members are participating.

Also, in this exchange activity, the support grant “urban-rural interchange enterprise” is being received from the local government to help with its continuity.

(4) The Summary of the interchange activity with the Hyogo Ward
Children’s Association From amongst all the interchange activities at Kande Northern Village, this is the newest activity.

The scope of this event is that the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association wishes to make an opportunity for children to get in touch with agriculture, and through receiving advice from the Hyogo Ward office, and through the agriculture promotion centre they approached Kande Northern Village.

Still comparatively few days have gone by since the start of this interchange, and the interchange activity is mainly being run centering on the residents association members, and on a meeting level, the local government is acting as an agent. Also this interchange activity is receiving a partial grant from the local government to use on the activity.

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**Table 2 The features of the participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Participants outside the village</th>
<th>Participation in the village</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shimenawa and Mochitsuki taikai</td>
<td>Farm users, Suma-dera trade friend meeting member, surrounding city</td>
<td>Residents all members (About 300 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Blossom Viewing Festival</td>
<td>Suma-dera trade friend meeting members (about 5 people)</td>
<td>Mostly, all the members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suma Temple business friends association interchange activity</td>
<td>Suma-dera trade friend meeting members (about 21 people)</td>
<td>Council officials of Residents association, Kande kids circle (about 29 people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Interchange activity with the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association | 30 children and 20 adults | Council officials of Residents association, Aged people’s organization |

5.3.2 The main Special Characteristics of Each Interchange Activity
As is shown in Table 2, the participants joining in the interchange enterprises in Kande Northern Village, in the Shimenawa and Mochiuchi taikai events, were the biggest interchange events in the area in the year where all the village residents attended, and also welcome approximately 300 visitors including agriculture park users, Suma temple business friend association members and some people from surrounding local townships.

The Cherry Blossom Viewing Festival attracted agricultural park users, Suma Temple business friend’s association members, village residents, and almost gained a full turnout from those. On the other hand, of the Rural Community Plans that have been continually carried out in Kande Northern Village, are as stated below, with detailed measures for their for the Suma Temple Business friends Association interchange, the Suma Temple Business friends Association members, the Hyogo ward children’s association and exchange, these activities were carried out with a particular set group of members.

5.4 The Division of Roles by the Village Residents.
In as far as the division of roles taken on by members for the Shimenawa, Mochitsuki taikai and Cherry Blossom Viewing Festivals, it was decided within the village, and so it is carried out in almost totally the same fashion every year, and is advancing where neighbors take progressive turns at running it.
Resident association committee members would discuss at regular monthly meetings and decide the division of roles to be undertaken. After that, by members of the residents association preparations would be run centered on each neighborhood leader.

On the other hand, in the case of the interchange event for the Suma Temple Business Friends Association, and also in the case of the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association, it was not possible to make decisions only inside the village, so without fail, both sides gathered together and created an opportunity to hold a meeting together. On those occasions, on the village side the chairperson for the agricultural park would represent the villagers’ position. They would directly contact with the Suma Temple Business Friends Association Chairperson and make arrangements to meet, but, in the case of the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association, the local government stepped in to be the go between agent. Where a meeting with the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association was concerned, the Hyogo Ward Office and the Agricultural Promotion Centre persons in charge would also participate.

5.5 The Special Characteristics of Actual Interchange Activities for the Rural Community Planning.

5.5.1 The Existence of Neighboring groups and Undertakings within the Village

Since the time of the grand opening of the Farm Village Park the developing Shimenawa and Mochitsuki taikai and Cherry Blossom Viewing Festival, they are presented by the sponsorship and division of roles between each neighboring group.

For that purpose, as is shown in Fig. 2, for the relationship between those on the sponsor’s side and those on the urban resident’s side, there is the existence of one neighbor sponsor. There is the existence of the task of offering assistance for each sponsors role, but, in actual fact, more than offering assistance, it is for members to join each event spontaneously and enjoy it as a participant.

5.5.2 Interchange inspired by Local Government acting as Agent

In the interchange events of Suma Temple Business Friends Association, and the Hyogo Ward Children’s association, the initial push to start was from the local government standing in as agent.

For this purpose, as is shown in Fig. 3, with the general chairperson being the core member for the agricultural park, only the residents association would sponsor the event.

However, in the case of the interchange which has been going on for 16 years with the Suma Temple Business Friends Association, a situation has come about where the local government could already bow out, leaving the same members as whom started the interchange to carry on the necessary duties. At the beginning it started as an interchange enterprise for the delivered sales of vegetables, but now members from both groups now take part in each others’ festivals, and there is the “agricultural experience” which is carried out on the Farming Village side.

On the other hand, the interchange enterprise with the Hyogo Ward Children’s Association is only in its 7th year, and therefore has not achieved a level of depth of relationship as can be seen with the Suma Temple Business Friends Association example. For that reason, even now the Local Government stands in as the go between agent to make arrangements, but it is predicted that by continuing the interchange from now, that it will be able to spread its influence in a way similar to that of the Suma Temple Business Friends Association.

In this way while attending as a member on the villager’s side, it is possible to see the actual situation where people join in as participants who are enjoying themselves. By having such relationships as these, it is possible for all of the village residents to participate, and what is more it can be said to be contributing to the continuity of the event itself.

6. Conclusion

In this research, in so far as Kande Northern Village is concerned, where continuous interchange activities are carried out due to the multiple Rural Community Plans until this date, from these interchange activities, we have focused on the organization structure and role division between village residents, along with a detailing of the outline of tasks for actual enterprises, and we have observed how these have been continued within the village.

As a result, from the outline of enterprises which have been tried, the interchange activity that has been taking place within the village has been
placed as an interchange activity of the Rural Community Plan. And it is understood that new interchange activities have taken place with the local government acting as agent, following the actualization of enterprise and it’s Rural Community Planning.

Also, from role division among residents in actual enterprises, ① the residents association and the Neighborhood, by both taking on the responsibilities, that almost all of the residents of the village participate, ② the interchange activity, from its planning stage to its running, right through to its continuation, that the local government acted as an intermediary agent in enterprises and plans run by all village residents, but that connections were made between people who took part in activities together, and that those relationships were carried over, and even developed further, ③ due to the establishment and use of the farm village and agricultural land surrounding it, the area has become able to respond to various needs of people trialing use of the Agricultural Park. ④ It is understood that there is a solid base which has been made possible through linking with the residents association and local government and with the support of local government grants, the use of which has allowed a the stable fortification of the interchange enterprise. As has been shown above, the rural community planning and the outline of its interchange enterprises, that their participating residents’ roles reinvestigation can be thought of as an important resource, at the points in time of the introduction of Rural Community Plans, to their actualization stage. However as far as this research is concerned, it has stopped at only picking up on case studies which are advancing. From now on, when the interchange activities of Rural Community Plans settle into an area, it is necessary to investigate their progress and their problems.

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This research, in the rural area of the village where the residents are free to choose whether to engage in agriculture or not can be put between Hanshin- Study 2 on the region of rural-urban mixed area and living environmental policy-, made it possible to observe the real situation and its role of the citizen farm which can be put between Hanshin- Study 2 on the region of rural-urban mixed area and living environmental policy-, and thus it is necessary to investigate the progress and problems.

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