

The Importance of Communities being able to Provide
Venues for Folk Performances and the Effect :
a Japanese Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explain how important it is that performance artists have the opportunity to perform regularly and venues in which to do so. It is a crucial factor in preventing traditional performance arts from dying out. Spectators thus learn to understand, enjoy and appreciate the dances and the music, and it is helpful for the performers to have the sense of importance that they get from performing in public. I use one of the Japanese performing folk arts, *Ishioka-bayashi*, as a case study.

This paper is divided into two sections. Firstly I try to illustrate what Yanagita Kunio describes as 'festivalism' by explaining how relatively minor rituals have developed into full blown festivals. Secondly, I investigate the background of *Ishioka-bayashi*, and how it was created. This particular case study demonstrates what can happen when a group of performers is unable to practice their art.

Introduction

Since the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage* in October 2003 by the General Conference of UNESCO, there has been increasingly lively discussion about intangible heritage issues and a growing recognition of their great importance, alongside the realisation that in the past the

focus has been on the preservation of tangible heritage.¹ In fact, it is difficult to deal with immaterial cultural expressions simply because they are basically human activities, which are mainly collective and collaborative, and not static, but moving, changing and dynamic. It is therefore important to consider the socio-historic and cultural background of the people who are involved; this

does not just mean the environment in which they live, but also the particular situations in which the cultural expressions are enacted². It is therefore necessary to examine individual cases in some detail.

This paper examines one of the Japanese performing folk arts, *Ishioka-bayashi*, as a case study to see what might be required to keep similar intangible cultural expressions alive. Before talking about *Ishioka-bayashi*, I need to describe what Yanagita Kunio calls 'festivalism' and investigate its potential to explain how some traditional Japanese rituals have developed into full blown festivals. This also helps us to understand how some performing arts have grown out of traditional rituals in contemporary Japan. I then examine *Ishioka-bayashi* in some detail, and conclude with some observations about the active preservation of this form of intangible heritage.

Yanagita Kunio's 'Festivalism'

Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), is the most renowned Japanese folklorist and the father of Japanese folklore studies, or Japanese 'native ethnography'.³ One of his current theories 'festivalism', or *Saireron*, explains why rituals have developed into festivals. He identifies three key factors; the spectators, gorgeously elaborated artifacts involved in ritual observances (*huryū*), and the size and scale of rituals that involve various sub-events.⁴ These three factors, which are inextricably interlinked, stimulate, or have in the past stimulated, the appearance and development of festivals which derive from what were originally small-scale, exclusive, sacred rituals attended by a few devotees. In other words, the scale of ritual observances tends to expand as the number of the spectators increases, even when those rituals are supposed to take place rarely and in secret. Moreover,

the people who participate in those rituals are affected by the numbers of spectators; they see their own performance through the spectators' eyes and it makes them more critical of their own efforts.

Then, because they expect an audience, they invent ever more elaborate and lavish artifacts for their rituals, and organise special events to attract even more visitors. 'Festivalism' actually provides some useful criteria with which to examine traditional Japanese festivals, forcing us to see how the three factors described above have affected particular events.⁵ It is, however, important to note that the presence of spectators can also lead to the development of some rituals as closed events, for insiders only.⁶ The interplay between participants and spectators can have a profound impact on how rituals develop.

Introduction to *Ishioka*

Ishioka is the name of the region where *Ishioka-bayashi* was created and was originally performed, and is administratively Ishioka-shi⁷ of Ibaraki prefecture. Ishioka is located about seventy kilometers north-east of central Tokyo, the capital of Japan, and in 2006 there was a total population of 83,091 in its entire area of 21,338 square kilometers.⁸ However, it is important to note that this is primarily an administrative district. Ishioka city was formed in 1954 after the amalgamation of Someyamura and Murakamimura into Ishiokachō in 1889, and of Takahamachō and Ishiokachōin 1953, along with the incorporation of Mimura and Sekigawamura into Ishioka-shi in 1954.⁹ In 1955 the total population of Ishioka city was approximately 35,000, but it increased steadily from the 1960s to the 1990s due to an influx of new residents. However, the population has remained stable at roughly 53,000 since the late 1990s. It was with

the inclusion of Yasatomachi¹⁰ in 2005 that the population of Ishioka city changed dramatically. Local people do not regard Ishioka-shi as Ishioka. Although Ishioka city includes four villages and two townships, through the various amalgamations, each village and township sees itself as an independent local community, regardless of the administrative changes.¹¹ The area known as 'Ishioka' generally corresponds to the western part of Japan Railway. Ishioka station, and especially the area situated within roughly one kilometer of the station, is known locally as *machiuchi* or *machinaka* which literally means 'town centre' or the 'inner town'. The area west of the station is the historic centre for the native population of Ishioka, and, by extension, for all residents of the district. The area on the other side of the station is now a large new residential area, built since the 1960s to ease the housing shortage in the historic town centre.

After the Reformation of the Taika Era in 645, the local central government, called the *kokufu*, was established in Ishioka. Along with the establishment of the *kokufu* as the political and administrative centre of *Hitachi-no-kuni*¹², the *Sōsha* shrine was founded in the late 11th century.¹³ There are also other historic buildings like the *Kokubun* temple. Legends about the *kokufu* and the other old buildings are still current in Ishioka and the local people, the natives rather than the new residents living in eastern Ishioka, still see their hometown as a place with a long and glorious history. This is important because the local economy has declined drastically because of the rapid economic growth at national level. Ishioka, as the flat basin area surrounding farming villages, was the main local market for rice and other agricultural products from the middle of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) onwards. Many households in Ishioka made *sake*- and *shōyu* (soy sauce), using the abundant farm produce from the neighbouring villages, and there was also a flourishing brewing industry. Despite its prosperous

history, Ishioka has suffered from severe social changes that have come with urbanisation and industrialisation. Many people have moved to the metropolitan cities and the local economy has declined. Nowadays Ishioka presents itself on the official website as an ancient cultural centre with 1300 years of history.

The Background to the Ceremonies

Hayashi and *Ishioka-bayashi*

Ishioka-bayashi is a form of *hayashi* which was created, and is performed, in the Ishioka region. *Hayashi* is a type of Japanese musical performance with an ensemble that usually consists of a flute (*hue*), a gong (*kane*), two small flat drums (*tsuke-daiko*) and a big drum (*ō-daiko*). They create lively musical rhythms and play on special occasions such as traditional festivals. In Ishioka, this *hayashi* music is played with three types of dance-dramas (*odori*) performed on a wooden festival wagon (*dashi*)¹⁴ (Fig. 1). The first type is danced by a performer wearing an *okame*, or *otahuku* mask, which represents an ugly woman with a flat nose and chubby cheeks (Fig. 2). It is believed that the *okame* brings happiness and good fortune as the name *otahuku* means 'much good fortune.'

The second dance, usually paired with the *okame*, is performed by a dancer wearing the mask of a *hyottoko* - which means a funny-faced man with a pointed mouth (Fig. 3). This distinctive clown's mouth is so shaped because he tries to blow fire through a narrow bamboo tube.¹⁵ These two types of dances are performed very humorously, telling short comic stories, or 'dance-dramas'. Finally, the third type of dance is performed by a dancer who wears the mask of a *kitsune*, or Japanese fox, a creature which often appears in Japanese folk lore (Fig. 4). The *Kitsune* has both benevolent and malicious qualities and is believed to be the messenger of the God



Figure 1
A wooden festival wago, or *dashi*, in front of its shed in Ishioka

Figure 2
Okame dance on a *dashi*.



Figure 3
Hyottko dance on a dashi.

Figure 4
Kitsune dance on a dashi.

of Rice, who has been transformed into a human being to trick and deceive people. This dance often frightens children because of its scary gestures.

The Sōsha Shrine and Hitachi-no-kuni Sōshagū Taisai

Ishioka-bayashi is performed at the local shrine festival of *Hitachi-no-kuni Sōshagū Taisai*,¹⁶ which means 'the main festival at the Hitachi-no-kuni Sōsha shrine', or the *Ishioka no omatsuri* (the Festival of Ishioka)

The Sōsha shrine was originally established to reduce the burden on the governor of the territory in ancient times; he had previously been expected to pay homage at all the local shrines. However, the role of the shrine changed from political to communal as the *kokufu's* authority weakened - the Sōsha shrine is believed to house the guardian deity of the community.¹⁷ There are a variety of Shinto rituals related to the calendrical system, and traditional seasonal observances, that take place at the shrine.¹⁸ In addition, other ceremonies, like Shinto wedding celebrations, the first celebration to pay homage to the local guardian deity on the 32nd or 33rd day after the birth of a child, special rituals to pray for the safety of

a new car, or to ward off the evil spirits when one reaches an inauspicious age, all take place at the shrine from time to time. All of these Shinto ceremonies and rituals are called *matsuri*.¹⁹ The biggest and most popular *matsuri* at the shrine in Ishioka is *Taisai*.

Taisai is held annually on the third Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in September. Since the third Monday in September is a national holiday (*kērō-no-hi* which mean 'Respect for the Aged Day'), the residents are free to participate in *Taisai* and it also attracts a large number of tourists over the three days.²⁰ The ceremony is in two parts; one is a Shinto ritual held inside the shrine and the other is a festival performed outside the shrine²¹ around the local neighbourhood.²²

The first day is called *shinkōsai* which means that the *mikoshi*, a portable palanquin bearing the guardian deity, is escorted by *dashi* (elaborately carved and decorated wooden wagons on which dancers and musicians perform) and *shishi* (lion dancers who perform with a huge wooden lion's head and a lion's body made from a covered cart) from the shrine to its temporary resting place, called the *okariya*, within the town (Table 1). While the deity resides in

when	where	what
15th September	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual at the Sōsha shrine (<i>rōtaisai</i>)
The 3rd Saturday in Sep.	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual at the Sōsha shrine (<i>shinkōsai</i>)
	From Sōsha shrine to <i>Okariya</i> through the streets of the participating neighbourhoods the streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Procession of a portable palanquin accompanying a series of <i>Shishi</i> and <i>Dashi</i> Parade and competition of <i>Shishi</i> and <i>Dashi</i>
The 3rd Sunday in Sep.	Sōsha shrine	<i>Kagura</i> & <i>Sumo</i>
	<i>Okariya</i> The streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Shinto ritual Parade and competition of <i>Shishi</i> and <i>Dashi</i>
The 3rd Monday in Sep.	From Sōsha shrine to <i>Okariya</i> through the streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Procession of a portable palanquin accompanying a series of <i>Shishi</i> and <i>Dashi</i>
	The streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Parade and competition of <i>Shishi</i> and <i>Dashi</i>
	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual of Sōsha shrine (<i>kankōsai</i>)

Table 1
Schedule and major events of *Taisai*

the *okariya*, to be in touch with its worshippers, the *dashi* and *shishi* move along the streets all day long performing a variety of dances to the tunes of the *Ishioka-bayashi*. On the second day, there is a Shinto ceremony in the *okariya* to invoke the support and blessing of the deity for the neighbourhood and its residents.

Over and above this, *kagura* and *sumo* performances, which are put on for the entertainment of the deity, attract many tourists. But it is the parade and the competition of the *dashi* and *shishi* that most of the locals consider the most spectacular and important part of the festival. This is because most local residents enjoy joining in the action, being an actor, (but less commonly an actress) playing the rhythms, dancing, shouting and yelling in the crowd. There is competition between the various neighbourhoods which makes it all even more exciting. The third day is the day of *kankōsai* when the *mikoshi* is on its way back to the shrine to the accompaniment of the *dashi* and *shishi* (see table 1). In the shrine, the last Shinto ritual is held, to celebrate that the deity is safely back in his shrine.

In addition to this, the management committee of the region (*ujiko-sōdai*) and the representatives of each association, including the Mayor of Ishioka, have a ceremony where they express their great delight that their collaboration has gone well and the festival has been a success. There are speeches and a show of local pride. Even though this ceremony ends at around five in the evening, there are still a great number of locals and spectators out on the streets until midnight. There is an air of festivity and celebration, created by the rhythms and the dances of *Ishioka-bayashi* and by the exuberance of the *shishi* performers, which just stops short of descending into chaos.

***Ishioka-bayashi* Flourishes, *Taisuke-bayashi* Disappears**

Background

Ishioka-bayashi was designated a 'Prefectural Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Property' in 1980.²³ Traditionally this was not one single event in Ishioka, but a number of events were made into one distinctive performance by amalgamating several separate *hayashi* troupes.²⁴ To understand the background, we should explain who the *hayashi* members are, what they do, and how they come to be involved in *Taisai*.

There are twelve *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka at present, which means there must be twelve *dashi* on which they can perform.²⁵ As we have seen, Ishioka consists of two main residential districts, which we could call 'Old Ishioka' and 'New Ishioka'. Although these two districts can be differentiated in various ways, in the context of the festival it is the festive artifacts and performances that distinguish them. 'Old' Ishioka, situated in the west, has *dashi*, while 'New' Ishioka, in the east has *shishi*. Neighbourhood associations, *-chō* or *chōnai* maintain the *dashi* and *shishi*, and each district has their own. However there are some exceptions; two neighbourhoods own only *shishi* and six neighbourhoods in 'Old' Ishioka maintain both *dashi* and *shishi*.²⁶ It is much more complicated to operate *dashi* in the festival, due to the prohibitive cost and the shortage of manpower. It is said that a *dashi* costs, at the very least, about three to five times as much as a *shishi* in terms of money and manpower. In one way, however, *dashi* are less of a burden than they used to be because of the *hayashi* troupes. In the past there were no *hayashi* troops in Ishioka. Most *hayashi* performers came from the countryside but they were not professionals, they performed for fun at festivals and taught themselves to perform when times were slack on the farms. Ordinary farmers who were interested in this traditional local amusement made a great effort to learn to perform. They were, however, often treated with contempt by their neighbours, because they were regarded as lazy and negligent, men who preferred drinking, singing, dancing and clowning to working the land. And for them, the most exciting and honorable thing was to participate in a large well-known festival like *Taisai* in Ishioka. They would be invited to amuse the townsfolk of Ishioka and warm the festival up by performing *hayashi* on *dashi* owned by the various neighbourhoods within Ishioka city. This system of working *dashi* owned by the townspeople by hiring *hayashi* groups from the countryside, is by no means uncommon in the Kantō area.

Although it is difficult to clarify how many *dashi* existed in eastern, or 'Old' Ishioka it is reasonable to deduce, from an analysis of local newspaper articles, that ten neighbourhoods possessed their own *dashi* by 1931 at the latest. However all ten neighbourhoods could not operate their *dashi* every year, even though they wanted to, because there were not enough *hayashi* troupes to go round. Most of them, therefore, took part in *Taisai* with *shishi*, so there would only be a small number of *dashi* at the festival - probably only two or three as that was the

number of *hayashi* groups in the neighbouring rural area. The most popular and regular troupes were from *Mimura* and *Someyamura*; so they were called *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi* respectively. Although most *hayashi* members were despised by their neighbours in their own villages, they were very welcome guests at the festival. In other words, the townspeople of Ishioka, especially wealthy people who wanted to show how prosperous Ishioka was, needed them to join in the celebrations.²⁷ Because of this, there was a mad scramble for neighbourhoods to find *hayashi* groups and to establish their own *dashi* in advance of the festival. This kind of competition used to cause friction between districts and destroy the harmony of the town. Moreover, it cost a lot of money to get the *hayashi* to perform during the three days of the festival; the host neighborhood had to pay for their accommodation, food, and travel expenses as well as for the performance itself. But gradually the situation changed.

The creation of *Ishioka-bayashi*

A few young men from the town tried to learn *hayashi* from members of troupes in the countryside. They visited them with bottles of sake to try to persuade them to give lessons in *hayashi*. It is said that at first the farmers were stubborn, and reluctant to share their skills, and it was very hard to persuade them to teach, but after a time they began to enjoy instructing the newcomers. However, they had great difficulty in finding a suitable place for the lessons, especially in the villages where most of the members of the troupes lived. The training itself was noisy and the local residents complained. The groups therefore looked for places outside the villages where the lessons could take place - and they began to use the courtyards of shrines or temples in Ishioka city. The students worked hard and soon they could perform *hayashi* on their own. That meant that some neighbourhoods no longer needed to invite, and pay, *hayashi* from the countryside to operate their *dashi*. Soon many townspeople began to see the advantages of having their own troupes of *hayashi*. It seems that by 1970 there were seven *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka itself who performed at the festival that year.

It seemed a good idea to integrate these troupes into the one large corporate group, the *Ishioka-bayashi*, which was inaugurated in 1972. It consisted of seven *hayashi* troupes along with the *Mimura-bayashi*, the *Someya-bayashi* and *hayashi* troupes which played for the *for shishi* or lion dance (*Tsuchibashi-shishimai-ren*). This

unified *hayashi* group was designated as an 'intangible heritage' in 1980, and that gave it the status and authority to develop and expand its activities.

At present there are twelve *hayashi* troupes, of which half are affiliated to the *Ishioka-bayashi* and the rest are not. Most of the unaffiliated groups were formed after the inauguration of the *Ishioka-bayashi*. They have been invited to join the unified group, but they have refused to, due to disagreements between the directors of the big corporate group, who are mostly elderly, and the members of the new troupes who are mainly young. However, these groups tend to be reluctant to say exactly why they do not want to join the larger group. It is necessary to note here that it is possible to regard all twelve of these *hayashi* troupes as '*Ishioka-bayashi*' in so far as they all perform in Ishioka. Consequently I shall not differentiate between the two types of group in this paper.

The significance of *Ishioka-bayashi*

The appearance of new *hayashi* troupes, forming the *Ishioka-bayashi*, altered the character of the festival and also the relationships between the various groups that participated in it. We can see that the formation of new local *hayashi* groups has alleviated the problem of communities competing to find performers to operate their *dashi*. But there have been other consequences too.

Today, each of the neighbourhoods which owns a *dashi* has their own exclusive *hayashi* troupe. This means there are no more *dashi* for the musicians from the countryside. As we have seen, *Ishioka-bayashi* as a unified performing group, consists of ten *hayashi* sub-groups, and of these, two, *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi*, are from neighbouring villages. There is one more sub-group which does not belong to any district within Ishioka and does not come from the villages either, this is the *Taisuke-bayashi*. Although these three performing groups are still listed as groups affiliated to the *Ishioka-bayashi*, they do not - and are no longer allowed to - give their performances on Ishioka's *dashi*. None of them appears in *Taisai* at the moment. However, there is a noticeable distinction among the three groups. *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi* have continued to perform *hayashi*, even though they are not allowed to do so in Ishioka. Since their activities are based in their own local communities, they still perform *hayashi* in their own shrine's festival, though it is said to be *much less exciting and thrilling* than the *Taisai* in Ishioka. But the *Taisuke-bayashi* is not based in a local community, and so can no longer perform anywhere.

The fate of the *Taisuke-bayashi*

It is useful to examine the list of members held by the *Ishioka-bayashi* Preservation Association (*Ishioka-bayashi rengō hozonkai*) to understand what happened to those three *hayashi* groups. In the 1976 edition, ten of the twenty-three members of the *Someya-bayashi* lived in Someyamura, and nineteen of the twenty-two members of the *Mimura-bayashi* lived in Mimura. Most of the other members of the *Someya-bayashi* came from nearby farming villages rather than from Ishioka city. By contrast, fifteen of the twenty-three members of the *Taisuke-bayashi* lived in western Ishioka and the rest of them were from other local villages and towns. So the members of the *Taisuke-bayashi* were mostly local residents of Old Ishioka and the rest their company lived outside the town. All the members played *hayashi* because they enjoyed it, but they were not based in any particular district.

The *Taisuke-bayashi* was important because it played a crucial role in reviving the *Mimura-bayashi*, in fact it was originally organised as the *Mimura-bayashi* Preservation Association. In 1959, two young men from 'Old' Ishioka visited the leader of the *Mimura-bayashi* to ask him to teach them *hayashi*. Although it was not easy to persuade him, they were eventually allowed to join the group as pupils. In the 1950s the *Mimura-bayashi* consisted of about ten people, all aged over sixty. The group was dying because its members were elderly and there was a shortage of new, young, local members. Given that the group was at risk of vanishing forever, the two newcomers felt they had to do something to keep this *hayashi* alive. They made up their minds to be the new *Mimura-bayashi* and to continue to perform. The original members, including the leader, allowed them to take over because they did not want to see the group disappear. In 1965 the *Mimura-bayashi*, formerly the *Taisuke-bayashi*, was revived and gave a *hayashi* performance on a *dashi* owned by one old neighbourhood (Kōmaruchō) the following year. However, this encouraged young people in Mimura to form a new *Mimura-bayashi* of their own, with about fifteen local members. It was set up in 1969. That meant there were two *Mimura-bayashi* troupes, so the members who did not live in Mimura, and came mostly from 'Old' Ishioka, changed the name of their group to *Taisuke-bayashi* in 1973.

Local *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka have steadily increased in number since the 1960s. At present every old neighbourhood possessing a *dashi* has its own

hayashi troupe. It seems that all the *hayashi* troupes from the countryside had disappeared by about 1986.

From my analysis of local documents and interviews, it was *Someya-bayashi* that gave a performance on a *dashi* owned by Aokichō- in 1986, and this seems to be the last time an out-of-town group performed in Ishioka. As for the *Mimura-bayashi*, it has not had the opportunity to perform *hayashi* in *Taisai* since 1972. However it is notable that the members of the new *Mimura-bayashi* have succeeded in reviving the local festival at their Suga Shrine, as a new venue for their performances. The Suga festival had been moribund for several decades. The *Someya-bayashi* case is very similar; they perform at their own festival.

However, the *Taisuke-bayashi* completely lost the opportunity to perform. It continued to give a *hayashi* performance on a *dashi*, chiefly the one owned by Nakamachi, until 1980. Since then, the group has not appeared on a *dashi* in Ishioka at *Taisai*. The group celebrated the 30th anniversary of its foundation in 2003 in the middle of Ishioka. At the ceremony the former leader said to the - mostly elderly - members:

It is now impossible to keep on performing on the dashi in Ishioka like we used to, because of the current situation. But I truly believe that we did something important in Ishioka, for the sake of Sōshagō Taisai. It is sad and painful for us to leave, but our name will remain on the list of the Ishioka-bayashi as an 'Ibaraki Prefectural Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Heritage' forever, which is a great honour for us.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to illustrate the ups and downs of one of Japan's performing folk arts, *hayashi*, which was created, and is still performed, in Ishioka. I have endeavoured to shed some light on the twists and turns of the development of the *Ishioka-bayashi*, as well as on the disappearance of the *Taisuke-bayashi*, even though they were inextricably linked to each other in the beginning.

It was *hayashi* troupes from the countryside that played a crucial role in keeping the local shrine festival - *Taisai* - alive in the town of Ishioka. Since they were needed to operate the *dashi*, and the festival could not have been held without them, there were conflicts and

disputes among old neighbourhoods in western Ishioka about finding *hayashi* for their own *dashi* to celebrate the festival. Disputes arose because there was a shortage of *hayashi* troupes, and this encouraged more people to learn *hayashi* and set up troupes. It enabled everyone to have their *dashi* at the festival. This also pushed the village *hayashi* troupes out and meant they had to find other places to perform. However, the *Taisuke-bayashi* failed to find a way to survive, unlike the other village performing groups. They could not find anywhere to deliver their *hayashi* performances.

From this remarkable case, it can be seen how vital it is to provide performance groups with venues where they can perform. Yanagita Kunio's 'festivalism' theory provides some explanations. A group that is unable to perform will not attract new members to keep the tradition alive. However enthusiastic young people may be about traditional rituals, if they know there is no opportunity for them to perform they will not bother to learn the music and the dances, and those who already know them will stop practicing - in the modern world there are plenty of other things for them to do. Performers need an audience, the spectators encourage them to perform well.

Finally, it should be noted that all the *hayashi* groups that are based in local communities keep on performing because governments at national or prefectural level provide performance opportunities for them in local festivals. Moreover, there is a wide range of ceremonies and celebrations held by various organisations and individuals at which they are asked to perform, for example as an attraction for a citizens' festival, for anniversaries, and so on. It is also becoming quite common for shops to use folk performers to attract customers. However, these venues only invite performance groups that they know about, groups that academics have written about or who have appeared in the media. Other groups are less fortunate, and for them it is imperative to ensure that there are community-based performance venues, where they can perform regularly, interact with their audiences and compete with other performing groups. The venues need to be lively places, where there will be enthusiastic spectators, or the initiative will fail. It is the responsibility of communities to provide such venues as an active way of preserving performance arts; doing so raises the performers' self esteem and is a way of making people take a pride in their district and its history. 🇯🇵

NOTES

1. Museums have been particularly important in preserving and displaying historically and socio-culturally significant patrimony, but their main focus has been on the tangible. See Boylan, 2006, pp.54-56. The publication from 2006 of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is an example of the growing academic interest in issues relating to intangible heritage.
2. See Singer, 2006. p.69.
3. For a fuller description of Yanagita's theory, see Hashimoto, 1998. Harootunian, 1998. and Vlastos, 1998.
4. See Yanagita, 1978.
5. This topic was discussed, especially in terms of the spectator as the 'other,' at greater length in another of my papers, Kim, 2006.
6. See also Boissevain, J. 1992. He argued that one of the effects of mass tourism is to give people more opportunities to watch *other celebrations*, and this makes *people more conscious of the performance aspects of their own rituals*.
7. *Ashi* is a Japanese unit of local government, generally translated as 'city' in English publications.
8. See its official website <http://city.ishioka.lg.jp/018English/englishindex.htm>
9. *A-mura* and *a -chō* which literally mean 'a village' and 'a township' respectively, are local administrative units in Japan.
10. *A -machi* is another word for *-chō* and is also one of the local administrative units.
11. For issues concerning local identity in Ishioka city, see Kim, 2007.
12. *A kuni* is an ancient local administrative unit and *Hitachi-no-kuni* is the name of one of the ancient local districts which is now part of the Ishioka region.
13. A detailed illustration of the *Sōshō* shrine will be shown in the next section.
14. The *dashi*, or lavishly decorated festival vehicle, is said to have been invented originally to welcome the deity from the shrine. There is a wide range of similar wagons all over Japan, but the most popular type in the Kantō area (which includes the capital, Tokyo, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, and Kanagawa prefecture) is a two-storied, occasionally three-storied, one. Generally, *hayashi* music and dance-dramas are staged on the lower level and decorations - such as huge puppet (*ningyō*) - are placed on the upper level. Although its religious and ritualistic significance is all but forgotten, *dashi* are still highly treasured because of their elaborate carvings and traditional joinery. They are still seen as symbols of community cohesion, identity and communal pride.
15. *Hyottoko* is an abbreviation of 'Hi-Otoko', which literally means 'Fire Man'. The pointed mouth is a typical feature of this character. However, other comic masks which highlight his silly character have been developed.
16. Hereafter *Taisai*.
17. For a more detailed description and extended discussion of Shinto, Shinto shrines, and *matsuri* as a Shinto festival in Japan, see Ashkenzai, 1993. and Schnell, S.1999.
18. See its official web site <http://www.sosyagu.jp/index.html> (only in Japanese).
19. The original original religious significance and features of Japanese *matsuri* have been lost. Although the ritual was meant to invoke and worship the deity with special food offerings, today it has been extended to take in all sorts of events, both sacred and secular. In Japanese, the word *matsuri* covers both religious rituals (*girō*) and festivals (*sairō*) and refers to people and society as well as to religion. See Kim, H. J. 2005.

20. The dates of most traditional events have today been moved to coincide with national holidays, as people's lifestyles have changed. This is one of the most significant changes to Japanese traditional events. *Taisai* is no exception. The date has changed five times; from the lunar 9th September to the new (Gregorian) 9th September in 1905; from the new 9th September to the new 9th October in 1911; from the new 9th October to the new 9th September in 1922; from the new 9th September to the new 15th September in 1967; and from the new 15th September to the three new national holidays. The dates of Shinto rituals are not supposed to change, so the ceremony at the shrine always takes place on September 15th.
21. For a discussion of the difference between 'play' and 'ritual', see Manning, 1983.
22. In the case of Ishioka, a neighbourhood is referred to as *-chō* or *chōnai*. 'The participant neighbourhoods' means districts involved in *Taisai*. To take part in *Taisai*, it is crucial that these neighbourhoods celebrate the festival by performing *shishi*, which literally means 'lion', or *dashi* (see footnote 15). There are 15 *chōnai* in western Ishioka. These *chōnai* are characterised by possessing *dashi* along with *shishi*. The 21 *chōnai* in eastern Ishioka maintain only *shishi*, except for one *chōnai* which has a *dashi*. The word *shishi* means 'lion dance'. One performer wears the huge headdress of the *shishi* and goes along manipulating its mouth up and down and swinging the headdress roughly back and forth. This huge wooden *shishi* mask is connected to a big wooden rectangular wagon which is completely covered with a long cotton hood. This *shishi* dance is said to have the power to dispel misfortune and drive away evil spirits (Fig. 5).
23. In Japan, the national government, and the prefectural and municipal governments can all designate Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Properties. For an introduction to Japanese policy on the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, see Saito, H. 2005. and Miyata, 2005.
24. For further information about the formation of *Ishioka-bayashi*, see Kim, 2006.
25. In actual fact there is one more *hayashi* troupe in Ishioka. However, it is exceptional in various ways and so falls outside the scope of this paper.
26. Tsuchibashichō with only *shishi*, Nakanouchichō with *dashi* and *shishi*, and Tomitachō with *dashi* and a distinctive *shishi*, called *sasara*, are responsible for the special mission to purge the deity's path in the procession. Therefore their three *shishi*, even without *dashi*, are considered important and prestigious, and always lead the way before the deity in the procession. We do not know exactly when these three *shishi* were created but it is said to have been about 100 years ago.
27. Generally speaking, a flourishing local festival contributes to the local economy; furthermore, the festival itself can also be used to boost local economic growth. In the case of Ishioka, *Taisai* developed and flourished between 1900 and 1970, despite a period of war.

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