

การกลายเป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำถิ่นของการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่น: ปฏิสัมพันธ์ข้ามพรมแดนระหว่าง การ์ตูนอะนิเมะ “ทะมะยุระ” กับ เมืองทาเคฮาระ ในจังหวัดฮิโรชิมา ประเทศญี่ปุ่น

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการกลายเป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำถิ่นของตัวการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่นในด้านการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการ์ตูนอะนิเมะกับสังคมญี่ปุ่นปัจจุบัน โดยยกตัวอย่างเรื่อง “ทะมะยุระ” ภาพยนตร์อะนิเมะที่ฉายเป็นตอนต่อเนื่องทางโทรทัศน์ ซึ่งมีเนื้อเรื่องเกี่ยวกับพัฒนาการทางอารมณ์ของเด็กหญิงระดับมัธยมปลายที่อาศัยอยู่ในเมืองทาเคฮาระจังหวัดฮิโรชิมา มา เป็นกรณีศึกษา บทความนี้ศึกษาวัตถุประสงค์และกระบวนการในการพยายามสร้างการ์ตูนอะนิเมะของญี่ปุ่นให้กลายเป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำถิ่น ผลการศึกษาพบว่า กระบวนการดังกล่าวเริ่มตั้งแต่ปี ค.ศ.1990 โดยมีสองลักษณะ คือ การนำอะนิเมะไปอยู่โลกแห่งความจริง และการนำโลกแห่งความจริงไปไว้ในอะนิเมะ ผลการศึกษาสรุปได้ว่า การกลายเป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำถิ่นของการ์ตูนญี่ปุ่นทำหน้าที่เปรียบเสมือน “คลังข้อมูล” ที่ทำให้ผู้ชมสามารถก้าวข้ามพรมแดนไปมาระหว่างโลกจำลองเป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำถิ่น

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สำคัญ

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Locality in Japanese Animation: Transboundary Interactions between the Animation *Tamayura* and Takehara City in Hiroshima, Japan

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Abstract

This study explores the locality of Japanese animation in the context of the interaction between contemporary Japanese society and animations. It focuses on the TV animation series *Tamayura* (たまゆら), which illustrates the emotional growth of high school girls in Takehara City in Hiroshima Prefecture. The study illustrates why and how Japanese animations have sought locality since the 1990s according to two aspects: the penetration of animation into the real world and the penetration of the real world into animation. It concludes that locality can function as a “database” to allow the audience to have transboundary interactions between the virtual and real worlds.

Key words

Animation,
Contents tourism,
Database
consumption,
Tamayura,
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1. Introduction

Japanese products, as well as Japanese animations and TV dramas, have been characterized as “culturally odorless”, for not conveying cultural characteristics or locality (Napier 2005: 24-25; Iwabuchi 2002).¹ However, over the last two decades, Japanese animations have been gradually featuring a connection with a set of local characteristics to represent a certain local place, or “locality”. Locality is a core factor in the interaction between the worlds of animation and reality. It is also utilized as a cultural resource to instill animations with a “cultural odor” and to create a transboundary for interaction between the two worlds, broadening the space to form a new imaginary community centering on the animation.

To examine why Japanese animations have sought locality since the 1990s, and how changes in animation have transformed the interrelationship between reality and the animation world by using locality, this study uses the TV animation series *Tamayura* (created by Junichi Sato in 2010),² which has a close connection with its locality in reality. This animation illustrates

the emotional growth of high school girls in the heart-warming community of Takehara City in Hiroshima Prefecture (see Figure 1). This charming old city is reproduced in detail in the animation. The citizens of Takehara have positively received *Tamayura* and now employ images from it as a symbol of their city and as a cultural resource for local development.



Figure 1 Takehara City as depicted in *Tamayura*.

Source: TYA/Tamayura Production Committee (2013)

¹ Susan J. Napier (2005: 24-25) notes that Japanese commentators discuss the weak national identity in Japanese animation by using the term *mukokusekisei* (無国籍性), or “culturally odorless”. For example, Iwabuchi (2002) uses *mukokusekisei* to explain that Japanese products including animations do not evoke images of Japan or ideas of the Japanese lifestyle.

² Animation director Junichi Sato (1960-) has worked on many famous animations, including *Sailor Moon*, *Sgt. Frog (Keroro Gunsou in Japanese)*, *Kaleido Star* and *Aria*.

This study focuses on locality from two aspects: the penetration of the real world into animation, and the penetration of the world of the animation into the real world. First, the penetration of reality can be seen in the development of methods to show the landscapes or local symbols of the real world as the background of the animation. Before the 1990s, the setting of animations was thought to be an imaginary location, and both the creators and the audience generally did not pay attention to location. However, locality is now used in story making and marketed to animation fans, much like film locations. Furthermore, through their original magic-realistic methods, animations have succeeded in enhancing the attractive features of a location by the power of story and fantasy.

Second, the penetration of animation into the real world means that animation fans, the animation company, and the local community create channels to approach the animation world in reality by involving the elements of the animation and transforming the local identity in the real world. The “media-mix” or “mixed media” advertising approach to Japanese animation, which sells the animation itself or related products by using various media, has widely prevailed since the 1980s in Japan. It also propelled the phenomenon of “contents tourism”, or *Seichi Junrei*

(聖地巡礼, literally “pilgrimage”), that is, visiting the locations featured in animations or TV dramas. Animations have become cultural resources for the local governments of the locations they feature. Local governments also link with animations to create new channels to the imaginary world in order to draw the attention of animation fan tourists and businesses.

This study illustrates why Japanese animations have started to feature geographic locations and how locality is utilized to communicate between the animation world and reality for various stakeholders. The locality in animation can be a channel to the freedom to experience the real and imaginary world simultaneously.

2. Emerging Creative Consumers and Connections to Locality

Before discussing *Tamayura* and locality, this study examines theories of the transboundary interrelationship between animation and reality in contemporary Japanese society. Since the 1990s, Japanese society has faced a rapid and unstable transformation of lifestyle and mentalities not only due to the economic depression and the Aum Shinrikyo Cult’s terrorism, but also due to the transformation of global ideological environments.

Many Japanese scholars point out the transformation of animation consumers' perception of the relationship between the real and imaginary worlds during the 1970s to 1990s. Hiroki Azuma (2001) analyses Japanese behaviors of consuming *Otaku* culture such as animations, games or light novels since 1995 as behavior seeking to substitute “small narratives” for the collapse of the “grand narratives” of the 1970s. In his book, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, Azuma argues that in the 1970s, modern industrial societies still had “grand narratives” or “dominant thoughts” that should be shared by all members in a society, namely global hegemonic ideologies or value systems such as capitalism, socialism, democracy, development or revolution.³ After the 1970s, these grand narratives had declined with the collapse of mass social movements in the world. Instead, a post-modern society without dominant thoughts started to appreciate the self-determination of individuals and the diversity of values. Therefore, since 1995, people have no longer been seeking “grand narratives” of ideologies that can be shared by everyone, but solitarily and passively they have to consume “small narratives” of games, animations or mangas, which are individual and fragmentary.

Azuma (2007) proposes the concept of “database consumption”, which means when people consume many “small narratives”, they actually consume a combination of various elements from the database, namely the worldview (世界観 *sekaikan*). Thus, the audience does not simply consume the stories and characters when they are watching animations or reading light novels, but also accesses the database behind the characters. Consequently, characters can retain their identities even if they appear in derivative works such as novels or cosplays. Azuma's “database consumption” also leads to the death of the author, who had the dominant power over the readers or consumers. The consumers gain the power to create their own small narratives by combining elements from the database. In this situation, both authors and consumers have equal power to consume and produce works with weak discrimination between the original and derivative works.

Interestingly, consumers are now assuming the role of creators to produce their own derivative small narratives based on a “database.” Eiji Otsuka (2012) focuses on the consumer's desire to publicize their narratives, which they create by combining small extracts from the “world view”,

³ Azuma (2007) argues that these “dominant thoughts” should not be considered by a specific ideology like “capitalism” or “socialism”. When these thoughts, which were once regarded as “grand narratives”, lost their dominant position, they were transformed into “small narratives”, or thoughts with partial and temporary correctness.

which is a similar concept to Azuma's "database,"⁴ such as collecting game cards, characters' goods or creating derivative story books called *dōjinshi* (同人誌, literally "fan's magazine"). Through a detailed study of Kadokawa Corporation's marketing strategies for Otaku, Otsuka (2012) argues that consumers started to change themselves into "creative consumers", paying money not only to consume narratives, but also to create their own narratives by arranging small narratives from the "database" or "world view".

The studies of Azuma and Otsuka mainly focus on the autonomy of "characters", but they do not consider the settings of the animations. A focus on characters links to the database created by the imagination of original and derivative works, whereas a focus on location reorganizes the interaction between imagination and reality since the concept of location is deeply embedded in the physical geography of the real world. Sociologist Kensuke Suzuki (2013) also examines the interaction between the virtual and real worlds through the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by using the term *takōka* or "porousness", which means that

ICT creates numerous channels in the real world to connect with virtual space. Providing examples of smartphones, TV or advanced mapping technology in the internet, Suzuki (2013) shows how the reality of our lives at a location is overlaid with various meanings of the location from both real and virtual spaces.

The location can be an important node of information in the "database" in the same manner of consuming "characters". Information about a certain location from animations also reorganizes its locality by providing new meanings for the location. The new locality becomes the channel between the real and imaginary worlds. The locality in the animation has been featured in a mass social movement, called *Seichi Junrei*, or "pilgrimage", since 2007. With the great popularity of the animation *Lucky Star* (*Raki☆Suta* in Japanese), produced by Kyoto Animation in 2007,⁵ many fans rushed to Washinomiya Shrine in Kuki City, Saitama Prefecture, which became a model of the imaginary shrine where the protagonists of the animation live. Journalists sensationally broadcasted this movement and scholars also started to focus on the interrelationship between real and imaginary worlds.

⁴ Otsuka (2012:49, 2014:24) regards the "database" and "world view" as the same concept.

⁵ Several works of Kyoto Animation also strengthened the *Seichi Junrei* movement after *Lucky Star*. For example, Nishinomiya City in Hyogo Prefecture featured in *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* in 2007, and Tomisato City in Shiga Prefecture featured in *K-on!* in 2009.

Okamoto (2011) explains the *Seichi Junrei* movement of *Lucky Star* in terms of community development. At first, animation fans gradually contributed to community development by empowering local festivals or collaborating events. After the success of *Lucky Star*, other local communities in Japan started to accept the use of real names of locations in animations for the development of contents tourism.

Furthermore, some communities directly invite animation production companies to create an animation related to their location for their community development (Okamoto 2011; Horiuchi et al. 2014). Although there are numerous studies on the *Seichi Junrei* movement in the context of local community development, most studies do not rigorously analyze creative consumers' behaviors through the interaction between imaginary content and locality in the real world.

In summary, theoretical studies on animation have shown that “creative consumers” try to make their own small narratives by arranging various elements from the database of real and virtual worlds. Against this background, the present study further explores the meanings of

locality in the interaction between these two worlds, reality and animation.

3. The Penetration of “Reality” into Animation

Through a discussion of *Tamayura*, this study examines several techniques for creating “reality” in an animation that features locality to enable interaction between the animation world and the real world. It then examines techniques for inserting fantasy into the “realistic” expression of the animation to be an attractive feature of Takehara in the animation, and also in reality.

The heroine of *Tamayura* is Fuu Sawatari, a high school student who loves to take pictures (see Figure 2). The storyline mainly focuses on her everyday life among her friends and the local community of Takehara City. This animation can be categorized as *nichijō-kei* (literally “everyday life type”) animation.⁶ *Nichijō-kei* animation is defined as “an animation in which the protagonist’s striving for growth or the description of conflict is minimal” (Cinema Junpo Film Research Institute 2011:10). There are no large events in the story of *Tamayura*, such as the destruction

⁶ In contrast to *sekai-kei* (literally “world type”) animation, in which personal matters like romance between the hero and the heroine tend to develop into a large event such as the destruction of the world, *nichijō-kei* animations simply illustrate the “realistic” ordinary life of protagonists.



Figure 2 Fuu Sawatari with her camera.

Source: The opening credit of
Tamayura-Hitotose

of the world or passionate love. Junichi Sato and his production team are famous for producing *nichijō-kei* animation. They also produced the science fiction fantasy animation *Aria* (2005-2008) (HMV Online 2011), which features three girl trainers who hope to be professional gondola navigators in the city of *Neo-Venezia* on the planet *Aqua*, formerly Mars, which was terraformed into a habitable planet. The calm pacing, weak storyline and optimism in *Aria* were well accepted by fan as “healing animation”. Sato also repeatedly says that the themes of *Tamayura* are the kindness of the people and the warm hometown feeling represented by the greeting *okaerinasai* (welcome back). *Tamayura* was intentionally planned as a *nichijō-kei* or healing animation like *Aria*.

Despite the simple storyline, the whole series of *Tamayura* also has a realistic high school theme. The first Original Video Animation (OVA) series focuses on Fuu’s recovery from the loss of her father. This was followed by the first TV series, *Tamayura-Hitotose*, which shows how Fuu builds new friendships and trust with surrounding adults. The second TV series *Tamayura-Moagressibu* focuses on her and her friends’ efforts to envision their future lives. Each theme is rooted in their everyday life and each series also has a realistic conclusion without any miracles.

This animation is set in Takehara City without changing its name or local characteristics. Beautiful historical buildings, old Japanese-style townscapes and traditional festivals are drawn in detail by digitally tracing photos. It is also utilized for story making, as the heart-warming story of the imaginary character Fuu is interwoven in the virtual reproduction of Takehara City.⁷ By digital techniques, Fuu’s life in virtual Takehara was well associated with Takehara city in the real world we live. However, there are still some visual gaps between Fuu, imaginary character, and townscapes of digital-traced Takehara city in the texture

⁷ Digital tracing is also one of the favorite techniques of the *Aria* production team of HAL Film Maker, which merged to become TYO Animations with director Junichi Sato after creating *Tamayura* in 2009 (Cinema Junpo Film Research Institute 2011:100). The production team developed their unique expression by employing digital photo tracing techniques in animation, such as their depiction of Shimo Kitazawa Ward, Tokyo, in *Someday’s Dreamers: Summer Skies* (in Japanese: *Mahōtsukai ni Taisetsu na Koto: Natsu no Sora*) in 2008 (Cinema Junpo Film Research Institute 2011:100).

of drawing. Yohei Kurosawa (2009) points out this as “a noise of imaginary world” that is caused by introducing the digital tracing techniques into the animation. He also argues the noise becomes a mechanism to lead fans to search the information of the connection with the animation in real world.

The “reality” in *Tamayura* is also created by a framing technique. Since most of the scenes in *Tamayura* were composed of the viewpoints of Fuu or her friends, the eye level is set lower than that of the surrounding adults (see Figure 3). Therefore, the audience also looks up to reliable adults such as mothers, school teachers and shop owners from the children’s viewpoint. Framing technique by low angle shot stimulates the nostalgia of audiences based



Figure 3 Utilization of low angle shot.

Source: Sato and TYA/Tamayura Production committee (2011)

on their real childhood experiences of their hometown.

As the above discussion suggested, *Tamayura* is a work that shows the “realistic” life of an imaginary protagonist, Fuu Sawatari. However, seeking “reality” in animation does not mean avoiding the use of elements of fantasy. Fantasy is sometimes used as a means to express the “reality” of human beings under certain possible conditions. Otsuka (2012) and Azuma (2009) explain that animations or manga in Japan have had a tendency to seek the “reality” of human beings in their imaginary works since Osamu Tezuka’s manga work after the Second World War. Since Japanese animation and manga characters are expressed with their “real” body and soul, the body is wounded, bleeds and dies fighting. We can imagine and wish that the protagonists worry about their lives or identities as we do, even though they are imaginary characters in a fantasy world.

For the audience, elements of fantasy do not affect the “realism” expression of the animation. In creating *Tamayura*, Sato explained that he planned to add more “reality” into the worldview with several elements of fantasy that he used for *Aria*. The audience of a Japanese animation accepts such elements of fantasy as the fiction in the “reality” of

an animation, as an *oyakusoku* (お約束, literally “promise”). The audience accepts certain actions, events or imaginary objects as typical expressions or conventions of the animation world.

Fantastic expression is sometimes used to express invisible emotions. The title *Tamayura* means a small ball of light, which sometimes appears in Fuu’s photos (see Figure 4). Taking photos with *tamayura* is one of her objectives. *Tamayura* is not explicitly explained but several hints are mentioned throughout the series. Showing a photo of Fuu’s father with many *tamayura*, the photo shop owner explains that “the gentle emotion between Fuu and her father might have appeared as *tamayura* in this photo”.⁸ The existence of these imaginary light balls expands this animation to fantasy to some extent. However, Fuu’s neighbors and friends naturally accept the existence of *tamayura* as the appearance of her gentle emotion even though it is totally a creation of fantasy. They just appraise her photo with *tamayura* by saying, “Yes, I love this photo”, or “This can makes us gentle”. Nobody questions the existence of these extraordinary objects. Thus, the “reality” of the animation is created by *oyakusoku*.

Another element of fantasy is a humorous pink cat called Momoneko-sama



Figure 4 Photo of Fuu’s father with *tamayura*.

Source: Volume 1, *Tamayura* OVA series

(see Figure 5). This cat is usually wandering in the street, but when Fuu tries to take a photo of him, he quickly runs away from her camera. While the *tamayura* is usually invisible and appears in her photos occasionally, Momoneko-sama usually stays near the protagonists but is invisible in photos. This is naturally accepted as one of the significant elements of constructing the world of the animation.



Figure 5 Momoneko-sama.

Source: Sato and TYA/Tamayura-Sotsugyoshashin Production Committee (2015)

⁸ This is mentioned in the volume one of OVA series. In addition, in the volume one of *Tamayura-Hitotose*, the narration by Fuu explained that “while we are feeling happy, the children of small lights appear in photos. These are *Tamayura*. The person who taught it to me is my father”.

In this way, Fuu’s camera, which is a keepsake from her father, plays an interesting role in the interrelationship between reality and the “reality” of the animation. In this story, the camera is no longer a tool to reflect the reality of things or events objectively. Rather, it is a tool to show Fuu’s mindscape, connecting with her childhood memories of when she lived with her father. Through taking photos of Takehara, she remembers her father and finds new meanings of the photos. It effectively reunites her with the community of Takehara. The city is overlapped in her mindscape with a mini fantasy of gentleness.

In summary, *Tamayura* is set in three parallel dimensions of Takehara. As seen in Figure 6, the virtual Takehara in the animation crosses the border into the real Takehara by the narratives of the everyday life of high schoolers and the digital tracing techniques that reproduce it. Furthermore, fantasy and memories extend into Fuu’s mindscape of Takehara. The audience shares the experience of these three

dimensions simultaneously by watching the animation, which overlaps with the real geographic location of Takehara City. As a result, the interaction creates a new attractive feature for the location as channel to connect between reality and the animation.

4. The Penetration of Animation into Reality

The world of animation also penetrates into the real world in three phases. First, fans consume the imagination of the animation for their satisfaction in the real world by exploring channels connecting them to the animation world by visiting Takehara, buying related products and uploading their experience on their SNS or websites. Through these activities, fans create their small narratives. Second, animation studios or production companies seek to make profit by collaborating with local communities with mixed-media strategies, which sell the animation content through various media. Third, the local community of Takehara also consumes the locality of the animation for local development such as tourism or new product-making.

Seichi Junrei has attracted much media attention. “Wow, this is the same as the animation”, a young male fan excitedly exclaimed to an NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) interviewer. “I came here to picture how protagonists in the animation

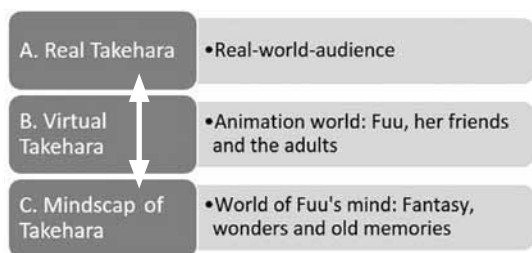


Figure 6 Three dimensions of the *Tamayura* world.

thought and felt while seeing this scenery”.⁹ After *Tamayura* was broadcast in 2010, the number of visitors to Takehara rose from about 537,000 in 2010 to about 709,000 in 2011, and most visitors were young (*Chu-Nichi Newspaper* 2013). On the internet, there are also many fan websites or SNS to share reports on Takehara visits with the narratives of *Tamayura*. A search of the keywords “*Tamayura*” and “*Seichi Junrei*” leads to websites such as “*Tamayura Seichi Junrei Report*” or “*Travels of the Anime ‘Tamayura’ Seichi Junrei*” There are also several English websites with titles such as “*Tamayura: Takehara and Onomichi*” or “*Tamayura Pilgrimage to Takehara in Hiroshima*”, written by international visitors.

In the *Seichi Junrei* movement, animation fans extract locational information in the scenes of the animation from their “database” on the internet. Even though ordinary residents cannot see anything important, fans can find out the significance of the location by extracting knowledge from a short scene of the animation from their “database”, and take pictures with the same framing and angle to upload onto the internet.

At this point, the development of ICT changes the meaning of locality. James Scott (1999) mentioned “metis” as the accumulated knowledge embedded with

locality like the knowledge of small alleys in a town, the subtle difference between arable lands or unique techniques for appropriating certain locations. As he mentioned as “metis”, the locality has been generally thought to be constructed by the knowledge of local residents. However, ICT has allowed knowledge of locality to be accumulated in a “database” on the internet and disseminated to outsiders who are interested in the location through mobile computers. Utilizing the internet creates a new way to accumulate the knowledge set of locality and form a new imagined community. Okamoto (2014) argues that this virtual community also has the autonomy to create a rule to govern the fans’ behaviors to find harmony with real local communities. By uploading the experiences of interaction with local residents during their visit, they share the information of appropriate behaviors during their visit or opportunities to collaborate with local communities in local events.

The fan community autonomously bridges the real and virtual worlds of animation. However, to some extent, fan behavior is led by animation production companies and local communities.

The animation company seeks to profit by promoting the interaction of the real and animated worlds of Takehara. This trend emerged from the mixed media

⁹ On March 7, 2012, NHK broadcast a 30-minute documentary titled, “*Gekihen Anime Sangyo ‘Seichi Junrei’ Bumu no Nazo* (The transformation of the anime industry-the miracle of animation pilgrimage)”, which focused on the *Tamayura Seichi Junrei* in Takehara, Hiroshima.

strategy of animation companies and the rapid growth of the animation industry. First, the mixed media strategy is to sell the same content in various media such as animation, film, game, radio, novel or related goods. For companies, this strategy not only increases the types of media by which to promote their commodities, but also possesses an autonomous system to produce derivative narratives as commodities continuously. According to Otsuka (2014), the idea of mixed media was introduced to Japan by Haruki Kadokawa to promote films made by Kadokawa Corporation, the company of which he was president in the 1980s. Tsuguhiko Kadokawa, his younger brother, took over as president in 1994. He further developed Haruhiko's mixed media policy into a system to govern the creativity of consumers by selling the original worldview to produce derivative works since the 2000s.

Second, the increasing demand of animations led to a decrease in the time available to create an animation.¹⁰ Producers, however, sought to use fascinating local landscapes, narratives or history as backgrounds of their animations to differentiate them from others in a competitive animation market. Okamoto (2013) points out that the increasing number of *nichijo-kei* animations and decreasing time to create animations led to the digitalization of the

producing process of Japanese animation. The digital tracing technique using photos enabled companies to save time and use a fascinating locality as the background of their animations. This time-saving technique unintentionally led to the animation pilgrimage trend mentioned above.

The mixed media strategy thus saves time and costs for small animation production companies with low budgets. In Japan, animation production companies cannot make enough to meet costs by selling their animations for TV broadcasts only. They have to earn supplementary incomes by selling DVDs, music CDs and goods. By involving the local community and the fan community as steady customers, animation companies reduce their production and promotion costs. Since 2007, this animation business style utilizing the locality has attracted a great deal of attention after the pilgrimage movement of *Lucky Star*, which was produced by Kyoto Animation and supported by Kadokawa Corporation. After the success of Kadokawa's mixed media strategy with locality, Shochiku Co., Ltd. and TYO Animations produced the animation with locality, *Tamayura*, in 2010.

Shochiku and TYO Animations value the interaction between fans in the virtual community and the local people

¹⁰ The total annual production of TV animations in Japan increased from 38 titles in 1995 to 124 titles in 2005 (Masuda 2007:126). The number of TV animations that included animation films and OVA increased further.

in Takehara City. According to Hidemasa Tasaka, a Shochiku producer, *Tamayura* is a participatory animation among the local community, company and fans (Mantan Web 2013). The collaboration between companies and the local community, to some extent, is real. However, there are some tensions among companies, the local community and fans. Furota (2013) points out that Shochiku and Takehara City intentionally control the participation of the fan community. Basically, they exclude initiatives of hard-core fan groups, or Otaku, in local events. Furthermore, there are tensions between the company and the city. Since Shochiku strictly controls the copyright, the utilization of *Tamayura* for derivative works or related goods in the local community is limited. In this respect, the case of Takehara is different from Azuma's (2001) discussion of the original and derivative works. The authenticity of the original work still has strong power over derivative works.

Takehara residents have accepted *Tamayura* as a cultural resource of local economy and community symbol. However, according to Furota (2012), when Shochiku first came to negotiate with the city to ask for its cooperation in producing the animation in early 2010, the response of Takehara City was weak. Therefore, NPO Takehara, a town-planning organization, decided to become a counterpart of Shochiku. On October 10, 2010, the first

promotion event “The Day of *Tamayura*” was held in Takehara after the release of *Tamayura OVA* Volume 1. Even though the first event had several problems, such as too early promotion and immature experience in accepting visitors (Furota 2012), the number of fans visiting Takehara gradually increased. Thereafter, the city changed its attitude and began to positively accept the animation as contents tourism.

Takehara City is now very supportive of animation fans' visits and promotes walks around the city. City municipality and related organizations including NPO Takehara are taking a role to bridge the fan community and local community. The official website of Takehara City promotes several sample itineraries for *Tamayura* fans with pictures (See Figure 7). This website is beneficial for both communities. By



Figure 7 Sample itineraries for *Tamayura* fans, created by Takehara City.

Source: Takehara City (2015)

accessing this website, fans can easily find the locations that channel the world of *Tamayura*. It also reassures local residents, who sometimes feel anxious about young outsider groups wandering around their hometown and happily taking pictures of ordinary houses or streets that hold not special significance for local residents. The website therefore explains the landmarks that animation fans share as a collective memory of the animation to local residents. These efforts have fostered a mood of acceptance in Takehara. Yasushi Sado, president of NPO Takehara, appreciates *Tamayura* fans. He says, “everyone has good manners and desires to support the local community. They travel around other cultural sites in Takehara even though they are not related to *Tamayura*” (Marumoto 2011). The city therefore welcomes fans to visit the city to create their own stories like the protagonists of the virtual Takehara following the guidance of the local community.

The acceptance of the animation also makes *Tamayura* a symbol of Takehara City. Since 2010, the illustration of *Tamayura* has appeared on the front page of the city bulletin several times (See Figure 8). The city held film festivals of *Tamayura* and photo contests to foster understanding of the animation among local residents. In 2012, the annual Takehara “*Dōkei no Michi*”, where bamboo lanterns



Figure 8 The front page of the Bulletin of Takehara City in September 2012.

Source: Takehara City (2012)

light up a historical street founded in the Edo era, was held in collaboration with *Tamayura* (See Figure 9). The event also interactively appeared twice as episodes of the TV series *Tamayuta-Hitotose* in 2012 and *Tamayura-Moaguessibu* in 2013. Furthermore, several local companies succeeded in producing local products branded by *Tamayura* like “Ryusei Tamayura Sake” produced by Fujii Sake Factory in Takehara City (See Figure 10). *Tamayura* transformed Takehara’s identity by developing landmarks connected with the animation. A large signboard with a picture of *Tamayura* was set in the town and a shopping arcade was painted pink to promote contents tourism. However, it also had negative effects for local residents. Horiuchi and Koyama (2014) reported that



Figure 9 A poster of the event *Takehara Dōkei no Michi*, in collaboration with *Tamayura* in 2012.

Source: Sato and TYA/Tamayura Production committee (2011)



Figure 10 “Ryusei Tamayura Sake Part 4” in 2012.

Source: Sato and TYA/Tamayura Production committee (2011)

some residents worry about this transformation of the local landscape and argued that contents tourism must be developed in interaction with the local community and fan community.

In summary, this section has examined the interaction among the fan community, the animation production company and the local community by consuming information from the virtual Takehara in the animation world in the real world. The fan community autonomously constructs a database from both the real and virtual worlds of Takehara through the internet. At the same time, the animation production company took a mixed media strategy to bridge locality and fans, and opened up the opportunity for contents tourism. Furthermore, the local community has started to accept its additional new identity as the city of *Tamayura* and interrelationship between the animation and reality in Takehara.

5. Developing Transboundary Interactions of the Worlds in Takehara

Tamayura has created many channels to connect between reality and fantasy in various places in Takehara. Here and there, you can see signs of these channels, from a small wooden temple, a street corner or a bridge over a river, which hold no significance for people who do not know the story of *Tamayura*. The *Tamayura* fan community shares the

ability to find connections to the animation from the database of locality.

In terms of animation production, digital tracing technology enables the replication of Takehara, and the storyline of *nichijō-kei* animation enables the illustration of life-like high school students with some fantasy. It accumulates attractive information created by the animation in the locality of Takehara as a “database”.

For the real-life city of Takehara, interactions among the fan community, the animation production company and the local community have realized channels to the animation clearly, enabling the successful penetration of the virtual Takehara world into the real world. The animation production company has

adopted a mixed media strategy to bridge the locality and fans, opening up the opportunity for contents tourism. The local community has also started to accept this new symbol of their city and the interaction between the virtual and real Takehara worlds.

The locality can function as a “database” to accumulate the information overlapped with new meanings created interactively in the virtual and real worlds. The channels connecting the city of Takehara to the animation *Tamayura* have become a source of imagination and creation, and enable the animation audience to have a transboundary interaction between the virtual and real worlds.

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