

***Chōnaikai* at a Crossroad: Rethinking the Japanese Traditional Neighborhood Association in Urban Governance**

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A *chōnaikai* 町内会 or *jichikai* 自治会 is a Japanese neighborhood association which covers various aspects of every day life and is supposed to be the community's self-governing association. However, the association is also being criticized as merely serving the government through its comprehensive functions. Such critical arguments position the traditional neighborhood association at cross road of its own existence. This paper will try to explore the so-called traditional neighborhood association with focus on urban community, to look at the potential of *chōnaikai* in urban governance. The case being observed in this paper is a *chōnaikai* in Morioka city in implementing its project of building a public park.

1. Introduction

Being the representative form of Japanese neighborhood association, the *chōnaikai* has always been subject to multiple interpretations. For a while following the 1995 Hanshin Awaji earthquake, neighborhood associations enjoyed a rise in reputation due to their significance during an emergency such as an earthquake. However, at the same time, *chōnaikai* were also being criticized as old-fashioned traditional associations that are no longer applicable to the present situation. Throughout Japan, many *chōnaikais* are losing members. One important example is a case in April 2002 of a neighborhood association in Saga where a member refused to pay the membership fee on the grounds that a portion of the fee would be used to pay for some religious practices. The case was brought to court, and the court decided, based on the law of freedom in religion and belief, that it was the neighborhood association which was guilty. Disputes between *chōnaikai* and their members have always existed in Japan. However, the case in Saga in 2002 was exceptional since it involved a law suit. Along with those ups and downs of *chōnaikai*, it does not need to be further argued that in the daily life of Japanese people, the *chōnaikai* tends to be seen as a 'top heavy' association, in which members in general are apathetic and do not show any interest towards the association, while only a small number of executive staff actively participate in *chōnaikai*'s activities. It is clear that *chōnaikai* is now standing at a cross-roads of going into extinction, or surviving in a present condition of *chōnaikai*, or surviving as one of actors in governance.

In this paper we will try to see (im)possibility of Japanese traditional neighborhood association in governance, mainly in urban area. To answer the question, this paper will

take a close look at a *chōnaikai* in Morioka city with its project of reviving a neglected public park in their area, and building the park into a newer one. Before looking at the *chōnaikai* in Morioka city, we will first get to know *chōnaikai* in general, and afterwards we will have some brief discussion of the idea of governance. The latter half of this paper will then look into the case of *chōnaikai* in Morioka city.

2. *Chōnaikai*: traditional and feudal neighborhood association?

a. Some characteristics of *chōnaikai*

Before rethinking the significance of Japanese neighborhood association known as *chōnaikai* in urban governance, it is important to clarify some aspects of neighborhood association. We will begin with some general characteristics of neighborhood association, followed by characters that can only be found in *chōnaikai*, also looking at functions of *chōnaikai*.

According to Nakata Minoru¹ in his book *Sekai no jūmin soshiki: Ajia to Ō-Bei no kokusai hikaku* (世界の住民組織—アジアと欧米の国際比較), a neighborhood association:²

1. occupies exclusively a certain area (character of locality: spatial);
2. undertakes the solution of various common problems faced by the residents (character of community cooperative management; function);
3. is acknowledged by both residents and the government, as the representative of the community and the residents, based on the above characteristics (character as representative for the community: relation)

Looking further into characters of neighborhood association, which are specifically belongs to *chōnaikai*, there are five points to be highlighted. Those characters are as follows:³

1. The unit membership is not individual but household;
2. Membership is determined by residence within a defined area and is semi-compulsory;
3. There is no specialization of function (other items used to denote this aspect are ‘all-inclusive and multi-objective’, ‘compound functions’ and ‘multiple functions’);
4. They act as the lowest-level auxiliary bodies in local government administration;
5. They act as the basis for, and help to preserve conservative tradition under the leadership of the old middle class.

1 Nakata 2000, pp. 18–19.

2 Furthermore Nakata mentions that these characteristics do not belong exclusively to Japanese neighborhood association or *chōnaikai*, but it can be said to have their objectivity since they exceed the boundary of nation.

3 Nakamura 1968, p. 191.

b. Internal and external functions of *chōnaikai*

As for the functions of *chōnaikai*, this can be roughly divided into two, which are the internal function and external function.⁴ The internal function can be further sub-divided into two functions of meeting the every day needs of the residents, and the function of unifying the community. Whereas the external function can also be divided into the function of helping the community and function towards its role in assisting the administration. Furthermore, the function of meeting everyday needs of the residents include maintenance of community facilities, maintenance of amenities, risk management, and the function of unifying the community includes fostering residents' interaction, coordinating various associations or groups in the neighborhood, working for mutual agreement, maintenance of norms, representing the community. On the other hand, function towards community points out to supporting function and development function (its role in helping the community is to support and to the develop it), while function forwards the administration include supporting and pressing function, and participating function (to support but also to put pressure on it and to cooperate with it).

c. *Chōnaikai* in the eyes of scholars

We will continue with examining previous studies on *chōnaikai* by Japanese scholars after the second world war, to have an introduction on what kind of position has this Japanese neighborhood association been put into. Referring to Yoshihara, the mainstream position of scholars in sociology and political sciences towards *chōnaikai* considers '*chōnaikai* as retrograde association from modernization and urbanization'.⁵ This point of view can be traced back to arguments advanced in the early 1950s by Suzuki Eitarō, Okui Fukutarō, and Isomura Eiichi in *Toshi mondai* 都市問題 (see vol. 44, no. 10, 1953). To put it briefly, Suzuki, Okui and Isomura stressed that modern and democratized associations should be functional groups, which have a certain goal-oriented function, and the organizations are based on respect on individual freedoms. Accordingly, they saw *chōnaikai* which does not have those characteristics, as pre-modern and feudalistic, in other words, it is a moving backward from modernization. The arguments from Suzuki, Okui and Isomura clearly put *chōnaikai* in oppositional position towards modernization. This point of view is actually a supportive response to a policy from the General Headquarters launched in May 3, 1947 as Government Ordinance Number 15.⁶ The Ordinance abolished *chōnaikai*, because it is considered as a part of militarization during the Second World War.⁷

4 Kikuchi 1990, p. 223.

5 Yoshihara 2002, p. 163.

6 Yoshihara 1989.

7 The point of view which tends to consider *chōnaikai* as a backward association, leads us to look back into the period of war regime in Japan mainly during the second world war. In a report called "Preliminary Study of the Neighborhood Associations in Japan" published in 1948 by a section in the GHQ/SCAP (Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), the neighborhood association in the war regime of Japan is regarded as 'the neighborhood system of community organization was the government-regulated hierarchical structure that controlled the daily lives of the Japanese people

Yoshihara further classifies this point of view as *kindaika ron* 近代化論 or ‘argument based on idea of modernization’. Along a series of this ‘argument based on idea of modernization’, it is perhaps the argument from Matsushita Keiichi that is most influential, since Matsushita tries to bridge the bipolar positioning of *chōnaikai* towards modernization (feudal-modern continuum theory), by pointing out that both feudal and modern aspects existed together in the post war reforms for democratization in Japan. He asserts that the rise of democratic political campaign could not result in the spread of democracy to the grass roots level in Japan, because of the continuing existence of the *mura* ムラ and its reorganization in the form of *chōnaikai* or *burakukai* 部落会. And based on original regulations of ‘Mura’, there are three overlapping regulations which are regulations of everyday live, of administration, and of politics.⁸

Opposite to the above *kindaika ron*, we can see another stand point developed by urban sociology which sees *chōnaikai* as a form of culture. This is called *bunkagata ron* 文化型論 or ‘argument based on form of culture’.⁹ According to this argument, *chōnaikai* is perceived as the basic organization that carries the traditions of communal living (*seikatsu kyōdō* 生活共同) in Japanese culture. This stand point tries to look further into the background of characters of ‘coercion’ in *chōnaikai* as asserted by the *kindaika ron*, and digs up the ‘communal’ character that has been submerged along the way. Several scholars to be mentioned here as having the *bunkagata ron* point of view are Nakamura Hachiro, Yasuda Saburo and Kurasawa Susumu.¹⁰ Nakamura tries to see *chōnaikai* more comprehensively than a mere organizations which has been in close and cozy relationship with political circles, and points out *chōnaikai* as the base for preserving and cultivating conservative traditions of Japan. While Yasuda and Kurasawa try to look at the history, in order to understand the background of how and why *chōnaikai* can cover the people in the area, which is one of characteristics of the organization.

d. *Chōnaikai* in the daily life of the people

Looking into a more recent trends on the study of *chōnaikai*, we can see a booming since 1995, that is after the Hanshin Awaji great earthquake.¹¹ As widely known, during the critical situation following the earthquake, *chōnaikai* has been rediscovered due to its significance in such emergency situation. However, the fact remains that in the daily life of Japanese people, *chōnaikai* tends to be seen as a ‘top heavy’ association, in which

from 1940 until its abolition in 1947’. It is clear in this sentence that during the Second World War, *chōnaikai* served the war time regime as a device for mobilization of people in their community. The process of establishment of state control over neighborhood association in Japan is explained in detailed in the GHQ/SCAP report. In the last part of the report there is an explanation on the condition of *chōnaikai* during the post-war period, when the association still functioned as a quasi-government agency until its abolition.

8 As quoted in Yoshihara 1989 and 2004.

9 As summarized by Yoshihara 2004.

10 See Nakamura 1965; Yasuda 1977; Kurasawa 1990.

11 The earthquake in January 1995 is more popularly known as Kobe earthquake for non-Japanese people.

members in general are apathetic and do not show any interest towards the association, while only a small number of executing staff are actively participating in *chōnaikai*'s activities.¹² While at the same time, *chōnaikai* has been taken as an example of 'supplementary' association, which is the smallest unit at the far end in the political structure of 'grass roots conservatism'. From this point of view, *chōnaikai* is again seen as a pre-modern and undemocratic association. It is seen as a pre-modern association possibly because it fulfils comprehensive functions for the community, and it is an undemocratic association due to its characteristic as a supplementary for the administrative and its overlapping functions with those of the government. In this sense, the aforementioned characters of neighborhood associations provided by Nakata, at the very least the 'character of community cooperative management' and 'characters as representative for the community' are regarded more as negative sides of the *chōnaikai*.

As we can see in the above paragraphs, due to its historical background, that is *chōnaikai* during the second world war, opinion among people of Japan towards the Japanese neighborhood association tends to be a negative one, even though there has been some positive point of view due to the role of *chōnaikai* in Hanshin Awaji earthquake of 1995. While opinions among scholars has been divided, with *kindaika-ron* point of view adopted more often. With such more negative image being applied to this neighborhood association, will it be able to take part in urban governance. Before we can answer the question, we will have to know first what urban governance is.

3. Urban governance: a governing style

a. Government style of governing

To have a better understanding on the concept of urban governance, we will start with looking at shift of style of governing from government style to governance style. The concept of 'governance' emerged as one of styles of governing that emerged at the time when nation-states in western-Europe faced decline in its governability based on 'government' style of governing. 'Government' style of governing refers to the state-guided top-down hierarchical form of governing. In this connection, Stoker makes his comments on government as follows. "Anglo-American political theory uses the term 'government' to refer to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power. Government is characterized by its ability to make decisions and its capacity to enforce them. In particular government is understood to refer to the formal and institutional processes which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action."¹³

Such 'government' style of governing had been able to be implemented in western-Europe Keynesian welfare national states in various degrees. However, the wave of globalization, involving significant changes in Fordist technical paradigm, has brought some consequences to these national states. With the changes in the paradigm of Fordism, production system become more flexible, accompanied by flexibilization of international

12 Yoshihara 1997.

13 Stoker 1998, p. 17.

currency and capital, together with liberalization of commodity market-labor market-service market, which then brought transformation to economic and political space. As the results, national state is no longer able—and no longer expected—to secure domestic full employment. Instead, national state should give priority to realization of international competitiveness. These further brought consequences points out by Bob Jessop, that on the one hand, national state has to delegate authority to lower level of local government, on the other hand, national states has to delegate authority in policy making to extra-national organizations.¹⁴ To put it in other words, the decline of such ‘government’ style of governing points to the ability of nation-state in various decision making and their implementation process, and shrinkage in the role of nation-state in relation of management of economic and social relations.

b. Shift to ‘governance’ style of governing

With the hollowing out of nation-state apparatus, the ‘government’ style of governing such as in the above mentioned argument of Stoker, is no longer as adaptable as before. More dispersed forms of governing begin to emerge, in which national state is put in a horizontal position with various organizations which carry out the role of diverse form of partnership. In this condition, state intervention becomes non-hierarchical and more decentralized, in which policies are made based on local initiatives. Style of governing turns into a ‘co-government’ style, which can be called ‘governance’ style of governing.

If ‘government’ style of governing is a hierarchical form of governing, ‘governance’ emerges as a non-hierarchical style of interrelation connection and adjustment between diverse organizations. Based on the fact that no single actor, public nor private, has the knowledge and resource capacity to tackle problems unilaterally, and the fact that boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred, Stoker views ‘governance’ as a multiplicity of governing with each other influencing actors. Furthermore he points out that partnership between actors who influence each other includes: (1) principal-agent relations based on contracting-out and not on subordinating relations, (2) inter-organizational form which involves organizations in negotiating joint projects, in which by blending their capacities they are better able to meet their own organization’s objectives, and (3) a systemic coordination in which organizations develop a shared vision and joint-working capacity, in which orders or structures among those organizations are intentionally chosen and adopted.¹⁵ In a broad sense, ‘governance’ can be understood in the context of organizations as a whole, including hierarchical organizations and system, which form important factors of government. And as Ueki argues, at the root of governance approach, lies the system formulating thought from the point of view off identifying the adequate modes of institutional organization and formation of order during the carrying out of concrete strategies and performing of policy’s tasks.

As authority being delegated from national state to local government, or in this case to urban government, and the idea of ‘urban governance’ is becoming more heterar-

¹⁴ Jessop 1998.

¹⁵ Stoker 1998.

chical¹⁶ instead of hierarchical, based more on self-organizational interpersonal networks, inter-organizational co-ordination which can always be negotiated, does *chōnaikai* have its own place to play a significant role. A true story on a *chōnaikai* in Morioka city can be observed in order to answer the question.¹⁷

4. Chōnaikai: a possibility for urban governance?

The case to be observed is a *chōnaikai* in Nishi Matsuzono residential area in Morioka city. The *chōnaikai* in this case adopted a technique of groundwork to build a small public park in 1999, while it is facing a problem of progressively aging society.¹⁸ In the following paragraphs, we will first look briefly into the history of *chōnaikai* in Nishi Matsuzono area, then we will take a much closer look at the process of building a small public park in the area.

a. Chōnaikai in Nishi Matsuzono

The area where Nishi Matsuzono is situated, began to establish its *chōnaikai* in the first half of 1970 when the area was developed into a new residential area of Morioka. In July 1972, the first 98 families moved into the Matsuzono new town, and the second batch involving 102 families moved into the area in November the same year. Along with this, Matsuzono neighborhood autonomy association or *jichikai* 自治会¹⁹ was set up the following year, in March 1973. The main reason for the setting-up of the *jichikai* was to represent the residents in lobbying the administration for public facilities in the area. The

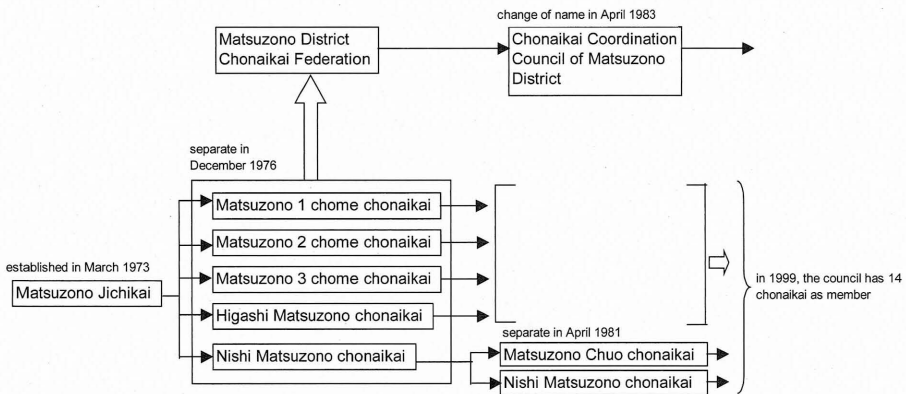


Figure 1. History of Matsuzono *chōnaikai*.

16 Jessop 1998.

17 Data for the case are based on field study in the year 2000.

18 Groundwork in this case refers to an action for regeneration and preservation of the environment by a group of professionals who positioned themselves as mediators for a partnership between administration, enterprises and residents, so that all of these actors can implement their plans together. For a more detailed description on groundwork see Koyama 1999 and Senga 2000.

19 The term *jichikai* is used here since the area of Matsuzono uses this term instead of *chōnaikai*.

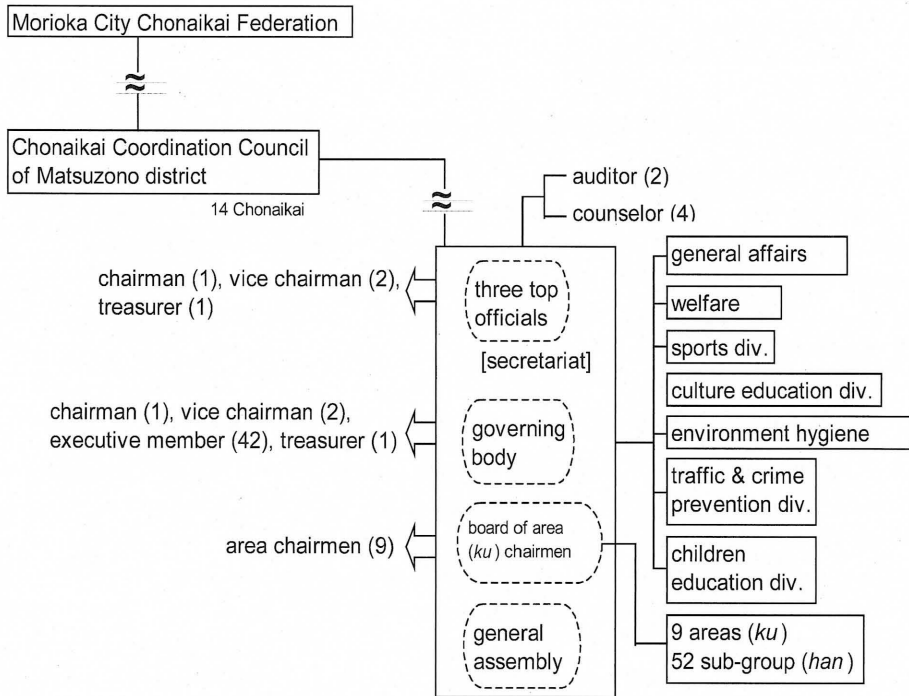


Figure 2. Organization of Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai*.

secondary reason of the setting-up was to promote mutual friendship among residents.

Since that time, living environment in the new town has improved, leading to an expansion of the residential area, and resulting in a total of more than 2000 households in October 1976. This considerable increase in number of households could not be covered anymore by the existing *jichikai*. In December 1976, the existing Matsuzono *jichikai* was dissolved and reorganized into five neighborhood associations, which were Matsuzono 1-chome *jichikai*, Matsuzono 2-chome *jichikai*, Matsuzono 3-chome *jichikai*, Higashi Matsuzono *chōnaikai*, and Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai* (refer to figure 1).

Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai* at the time of observation, had a governing body or *rijikai* 理事会 with members drawn from head and deputy-head of each division, who hold discussion meetings on enforcement of various task and work. The *chōnaikai* itself consists of nine areas or *ku* 区 with 52 sub-groups or *han* 班 in which each area has around seven *han*, and each *han* covers about ten households. In meetings, the chairman of *chōnaikai* or *chōnaikaichō* 町内会長 calls all of area chairmen or *kuchō* 区長, and in the board meetings, these *kuchō* study proposals from the governing body and make necessary decisions. The office term for *kuchō* is one year and position is rotated among sub-groups. Position for head of sub-group or *hanchō* 班長 is also rotated among residents for the term of three months. Thus, every head of household will have their turn

to become head of the sub-group once every two years. The task of the *kuchō* includes distributing bulletins of information to the *hanchō*, and being responsible for conducting social gathering in each area. Whereas the task of *hanchō* consists of distributing any materials accepted from the *kuchō* to every household, collecting membership fees from households and submitting them to the *kuchō*. In addition to this, *hanchō* also has to maintain hygienic daily environment.

Nishi Matsuzono residential area can be considered as the oldest suburbia of Morioka city, which has become a matured residential area, with its population undergoing a gradual aging process. In such an area, residents have gathered and built a small public park

b. Chōnaikai in building a public park

The idea of building a public park using the concept of groundwork among residents of Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai* was actually triggered by a small dispute in the community when they were preparing for the twentieth anniversary of their *chōnaikai*. The dispute was on the management and maintenance of neglected public parks in the area. Public parks in this area belong to the municipal government. The dispute faced a dead lock, thus the working division of the *chōnaikai* was forced to bring the problem to the Section for Public Parks and Green Areas in the municipal office. However, the municipal office did not see the problem as an emergency one, and did not give priority to it. The decision on what to do was postponed.

At the same time, a volunteer group named Gaientai²⁰ happened to come to the same section in municipal office, and proposed their intention of getting involved in community building. The group was introduced to the *chōnaikai* of Nishi Matsuzono in May 1999 by the municipal office who acted as mediator for both sides.

At the time there were several sites proposed by the municipal government for groundwork project. Gaientai then meticulously studied those proposed sites, and Nishi Matsuzono area with its play lots was chosen for the project. First, Gaientai explained the technique and significance of groundwork to the staff of Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai*. While *chōnaikai* in the area frequently held meetings between the three top officials of *chōnaikai*, governing body, and *kuchō* in order to have a better understanding of the groundwork technique itself. *Chōnaikai* then conducted a survey by questionnaires among residents, and through the survey residents became more aware of the public park building project. At the same time, *chōnaikai* was convinced of the possibility of achieving mutual agreement among residents for the implementation of the project.

In July 1999 the Nishi Matsuzono park maintenance working committee (Kōen seibi jikkō iinkai 公園整備実行委員会) was set up, with vice chairman of *chōnaikai* as the head of the committee, and Gaientai participated in the committee as an external member. In the committee, the chairman of *chōnaikai* and a professor from Iwate Uni-

20 The official name for the group is Morioka machizukuri ōentai (盛岡まちづくり応援隊). It is a group established in 1999, and was originally a study group under the guidance of a professor in the department of rural planning, faculty of agriculture in Iwate university, Morioka. Core members in the group are volunteers who also belong to Morioka Junior Chamber inc (盛岡青年会議所).

versity acted as advisors. This was the start of groundwork action in the Nishi Matsuzono area.

At the time the working committee was set up, there were actually 6 play lots as candidates for the project in the area. After conducting preliminary inspections in those 6 play lots together with several residents who were interested in the project, the working committee held a workshop to draw a kind of map of the checked area. Having documented the data in a map, the working committee had a meeting with Gaientai, and the result from discussion with the voluntary group, a lot in Matsuzono 4-2, called 'Fureai koen' ふれあい公園 ('friendship park') was chosen for the groundwork project. After the lot was decided, in September 1999, a board of review (Kentō iinkai 検討委員会) consisting of residents in the nearby area was established. Some members from a group called 'Children group for the preservation of nature' (Kodomo shizen mamoru kai 子供自然守る会) also participated in the board of review. Thereafter, the board of review became the core group for the building of the small public park while maintaining cooperation with the Nishi Matsuzono park maintenance working committee, and kept having discussion meetings with Gaientai. Through such process, the plan of public park maintenance (building) was approved during a gathering to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Nishi Matsuzono *chōnaikai* in October 1999.

In connection to the concept of 'governance', several points to be highlighted in the above process are, (1) from the beginning until the end, the planning of the project was done through workshops, and (2) along with the progress of project implementation, the board of review was reorganised, and each time the progress was reported to the residents, while efforts were also made to ensure that the plan reflected the residents' needs. The residents themselves had never known the groundwork action before, and they were not familiar with such groundwork action. Residents were more familiar with projects from 'the top' (the authority) or from 'side' of which they only need to confirm. Whereas in ground work technique, residents have to face a blank paper on which they have to draw and plan everything by themselves through workshops. Even with support from Gaientai, the process was time-consuming, and needed perseverance and patience from the residents in Nishi Matsuzono. However, the groundwork technique promoted a thorough discussion among residents, where each participant is expected to give their opinion. This is new way of communication among residents.

Apart from this, the reorganisation of board of review reflected the opposition and objections from the residents, but as a result, it also became a chance to make the plan into one that considered the residents' needs more effectively. The board of review itself was divided into 3 groups in a workshop held on November 1999. Each group made a proposal on the lay-out and appearance of the park, and based on these 3 proposed models, another survey was done to ascertain the views of the residents. Based on the result of the survey, the model for the public park was decided and the further realisation of the plan was based on the model.

Another aspect to be noted in this case is that residents' responses to the survey showed their enthusiasm for the project. Actually, Matsuzono *chōnaikai* had conducted a similar survey before, but the number of replies were far fewer compared to the survey

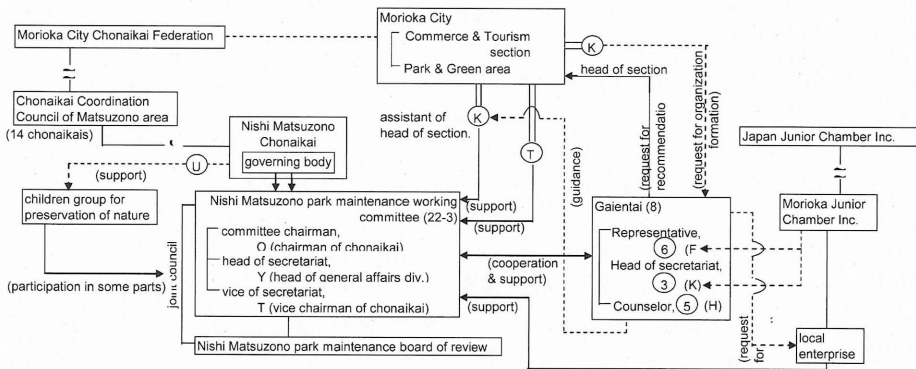


Figure 3. Collaboration in Groundwork project of Nishi Matsuzono chōnaikai.

during the groundwork project. This reveals that the awareness of the residents and the feeling that they were involved in the project had increased.

One thing that should not be neglected in the case of community building through groundwork project in Nishi Matsuzono chōnaikai is the support from municipal government concerning the construction of infrastructure. In fact, the head of section of commerce and tourism in the municipal office has taken some interest in the groundwork for community building, and he recommended that the leading member of Gaientai introduce the technique. At the same time, his assistant was also interested in the groundwork and encouraged the residents to freely redesign public parks in their community, while the park itself belongs to the government. Other staff in the section, who was also a student of the-afore mentioned professor, supported the groundwork project and had given many suggestions on the infrastructure matters. It is undeniable that material and moral support from the administration part also played an important role in the success of the groundwork action in Nishi Matsuzono chōnaikai.

5. Concluding remarks: potential of chōnaikai in urban governance

Looking at the case of Nishi Matsuzono chōnaikai in Morioka city, we can see a kind of organic collaboration between chōnaikai (residents) municipal administration (public) and Gaientai (voluntary association) (refer to figure 3). The collaboration that at a glance looks like nothing more than just a coincidence, turns out to be a collaboration of an inevitable one.

The administration was in a position of having to deal with the multifarious needs of the people while in fact it was facing a tough budgetary restraints, thus people are expected to find measures that will lead them to be the subject in autonomy. At the same time, Gaientai, particularly among young entrepreneurs belonging to the Morioka Junior Chamber Inc, is determined to carry out projects that will stimulate the local economy. On the other hand, chōnaikai is facing the serious problem of an aging society and a decreasing number of children, as the community matured. The problems and expectations of these three different sides somehow intersect and results in an organic collaboration of

a community project namely groundwork action, in which these three sides could make an approach towards each other. To put it in other words, it is because the project took up groundwork technique, that the collaboration of these three sides was then possible. In this case, the involvement of a professor from local university also needs to be emphasized since it provided the professional and expert knowledge needed by the people in the project.

Looking back at the idea of 'urban governance' in which authority is being delegated from national state to local government, relations among actors is heterarchical instead of hierarchical, the style of governing is based on self-organizational interpersonal networks, and inter-organizational co-ordination which can always be negotiated, it can be said that *chōnaikai* in Nishi Matsuzono residential area has the potential to be an embryo of a new kind of *chōnaikai* which has its place in urban governance as one of actively participating actors. However, it is also undeniable that even in the case of *chōnaikai* in Nishi Matsuzono area, the continuity of such *chōnaikai* is still in question. At the same time, if we are referring to a more general *chōnaikai* in Japan, the case of Nishi Matsuzono is still a very rare one. We need a more comprehensive further studies on the potential of *chōnaikai* in urban governance.

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