

# Significance of Institutionalization and Changes of Chonaikai (Neighborhood Association) in Japanese Society

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## I . Introduction

Chonaikai in Japan are 'ambiguous associations or state-society straddler organization'. They are not considered to be a part of state; though they are linked to the state (Pekkanen R., p. 28, 2009). Established during World War II period, Chonaikai have different functions in Japanese society. Thus, changes of chonaikai's functions depend on existing society which is can be discussed in positive or negative points of view. Roles and functions of chonaikai in Japan have changed accordingly through situations on different period of times; for example the role of chonaikai as second ties of state in World War II period, in disaster management, in contributing traditional and cultural activities, or the role as a community development agent. However, this paper focuses on the roles of chonaikai based on current situation. The reason why this paper excludes former roles of chonaikai during the war period is because the perception towards chonaikai was somehow negative such as social enforcement, mechanism in political affairs, which even these days such perceptions are still attached to chonaikai. Nevertheless, negative viewpoints of chonaikai functions are not useful to lead the society any benefits or merits. From author's perspective, chonaikai can find their possibilities to give merits to Japanese society.

As a result, this paper will state on positive functions of chonaikai in current situation of Japanese society. That is the reason why this paper uses particular case studies; supporting this point of view of positive functions of chonaikai, as a usefulness of institutionalizes chonaikai organization. In order to move forward, chonaikai should be somehow useful in today society. According to this way of thinking, the question is what kind of roles and functions of chonaikai will be useful in today's society. It is interesting to clarify how chonaikai can institutionalize in the current situation of Japanese society.

Therefore, it leads to **the main question of this study of 'how does a chonaikai's functions with or without institutionalization.** This study discusses a significance of institutionalization of chonaikai in order to show not only formal institutionalization of chonaikai but also different kinds of institutionalization. Study approach to solve the question of this study; using suitable case studies to reveal the significances and possibilities of institutionalization of chonaikai together with theoretical approach, evidence-based and primary data from interview. Framework of study is to classify chonaikai functions through different case studies and interpret as a type of institutionalization; formal or informal, direct or indirect institutionalization.

Case studies consist of cases from Kusatsu City in Shiga Prefecture, Kameoka City in Kyoto Prefecture and Iida City in Nagano Prefecture. Methodologies of this study are reviewing secondary data such as; self-government fundamental ordinance (Jishitai Kihon Jorei in Japanese<sup>2)</sup>) textbook, website, report, plan and policy of local government, and interviews with key persons from local government officers and chonaikai' leaders.

This paper is divided into seven parts including an introduction, characteristics of chonaikai, roles and functions of chonaikai in Japanese society, current situation of chonaikai in Japan through specific case studies, status and influence of chonaikai in Japanese society, discussion on a significance of institutionalization of chonaikai and a conclusion.

## II. Characteristics of Chonaikai

In Japan, Chonaikai/ Jichikai (or neighborhood association) is a certain form of civil society organization omnipresent throughout the country. Pekkanen (p. 29, 2009) defines neighborhood associations of Japan that are voluntary groups whose membership is drawn from a small, geographically delimited, and exclusive area (a neighborhood), and whose activities are multiple and centered on specific area. Chonaikai have strong roles in the promotion of social capital, but with limited ability to contribute to policy debates through advocacy. Chonaikai have limited impact on policy-making even though they could potentially serve as a more expansive organizational framework.

Chonaikai have constituted the traditional form of community, in which households were divided into districts and formed as associations. In order to maintain law and order, the totalitarian Japanese government utilized this system to control local affairs during war years (Masland, 1946 cited in Mori 2008). Due to its function of imposing central policies, the neighborhood governing system was dissolved during Japan's post-war occupation. However, since the late 1950s, with rapid economic development, neighborhood associations have started to form voluntarily and by 1970s, they became active in almost all parts of the nation (Kikuchi, 2002 cited in Mori 2008). Now the functions of neighborhood associations are mainly social, cultural, and sometimes political.

As the formation of civil associations became widespread, due to emergent issues arising from urbanization and industrial pollutions, voluntary associations, not bounded by geography, have also increased since the 1970s (UNU, 2005; Imada, 2003 cited in Mori 2008). A rise in voluntary activities began to be seen in the late 1980s. Initially, civil society was politically unwelcomed in Japan. However, the importance of voluntary associations could no longer be denied when many victims of the 1995 Hanshin Awaji Earthquake were rescued and cared for by neighborhood resident and volunteers from all over Japan (Imada, 2003). This tragic disaster provided an opportunity for Japan to open its doorway to the institutionalization of civil society.

Social, political, and cultural factors largely define the role of non-profit sectors or civil society in a country. Unlike the United States that prefer small states and minimum intervention into private sectors, the Japanese non-profit sector gains credibility by working together with the state (Ohsugi, 2007 cited in Mori Yurika, 2008). Japanese non-profit organizations differ in size and role from their counterparts in the United States. They predominantly focus on charitable activities because the government is intolerant of organizations that criticize it, or mobilize to oppose it. Due to limited financial

opportunities for non-profit organizations in Japan, they heavily depend on volunteers (Mori Yurika, 2008). In the same way, Kurata (2000) summarizes the characteristics of Chonaikai as follows: (1) as a unit of household and compulsory participation; (2) as a traditional and uniform system over the country; (3) as a cooperative relationship between public sectors; (4) as a base unit for daily and basic community events (Kurata, 2000 cited in Robert Bajek, Norio Okada, Yukiko Takeuchi, 2007).

Existed since the Meiji period, organization like the chonaikai has long been regarded as unique to Japanese cities which can not found in the west. Hachiro (1980) has studied on the development of chonaikai in the pre-war period. His definition of chonaikai is a self-governing association which may be set apart from the self-governing bodies of newly developed residential area and high-rise housing development (danchi) in the sense that they are extensions of essentially compulsory neighborhood organizations (tonari-gumi) set up before and during war in response to the necessities of national policy. This claims that chonaikai are unofficial subsidiary organs of the government, and often controlled by powerful local figures. This understanding of chonaikai prevails not only on a popular level but also among scholars. Ritsuro Akimoto (1973) cited in Hachiro Nakamura (1980) emphasizes on the formative process of the pre-war chonaikai that they were 'a mechanism by which to channel the false spontaneity of the people as convenient for the bureaucratic power structure' and 'played an important role as the fundamental unit in the fascist system'.

Susumu Kurasawa (1970) cited in Hachiro Nakamura (1980) remarks concerning one of the reasons why contemporary chonaikai that do not play a central role in new communities is that 'for most urban citizens, chonaikai are not very attractive because of the roles played during the war by chonaikai and the tonarigumi. Both popular scholarly image of chonaikai, as stated above, are connected with unpleasant memory during wartime as organizations effectively to mobilize the whole population in service of militarist ideology. But these unpleasant memories have had the effect of obstructing a dispassionate understanding of chonaikai and preventing more objective evaluation and awareness of what they were and like. This study had surveyed chonaikai that have different characteristics from those described above. Moreover, Hachiro Nakamura (1980) also defines a major type of chonaikai namely; sanitation, military-related matters, festivals, local security, and matters connected with births, marriages and funerals. Since Showa period, chonaikai had already taken on a strong multi-functional character. Above major type does not include a heading for negotiating with and relaying information to and from government agencies. He also states that chonaikai at that time are multiple-function, all-inclusive group, evolved into a 'pre-modern group' as defined by sociologists. This very similarity is sometimes used as grounds for criticizing chonaikai today. Consequently, in membership and function, chonaikai developed by a process precisely opposite to that described by sociologists in the progression from communal group to modern associations. It is not valid to assert that chonaikai are of primitive communal type because they have multiple-function and all-inclusive membership. In fact, chonaikai acquired these characteristic as their history advances, in order to cope with changing time (Hachiro Nakamura, 1980).

In the period of pre-war, chonaikai is much more positive than general image of these organizations. Yet it is necessary to be fully cognizant of various problems inherent in the pre-war chonaikai. One problem was lack of organizational uniformity, and part of the reason the government began to consider the institutionalization of chonaikai was the desire to bring them under a degree of standardization. There were other problems as well, which had already appeared by the end of Taisho period (1926). These problems, in fact, remain largely unresolved even today, and it is probably because they are an unavoidable aspect of chonaikai-type organizations. One is the use of chonaikai as a springboard for election by local politicians. A second problem is that there are too many tasks delegated to chonaikai by government offices (Hachiro Nakamura, 1980).

In general of today situation, the characteristics of chonaikai are resident groups in certain areas. These groups are based on residential proximity, mostly comprising from 100 to 300 households. Members usually pay dues, choose their

leaders, and participate in a variety of activities altogether. Most chonaikai activities particularly emphasize on local community issues, ranging from cleaning up a local park, to arranging neighborhood-watch programs, organizing local athletic or children's outings and facilitating local festivals. Their activities also include cooperation with local government, primarily in disseminating information from the government to local residents (Pekkanen R., p. 29, 2009). Pekkanen cites survey evidence indicating a great majority of Japanese adults to be members of official neighborhood groups, and asserts that as much as half of the adult population may actively involved in those activities. Moreover, he also aims to debunk the idea that Japan's neighborhood associations are clientelist political vehicles. In his account, the groups are just one forum among many, providing gatherings where politicians have a chance to speak and appeal to voters but not to ensnare them in relationship of mutual dependency. By nature, neighborhood associations have strict limitations. Small local groups of this sort are likely to promote social capital than they are to play a pluralist-style interest articulation role, for which large-membership voluntary associations or advocacy group seem to be better suited. Neighborhood associations cannot develop professional staff needed to extensively research issues, influence mass media, or lobby politicians. Although these groups do have a channel of communication with the local government on local issues, constitutionally they are groups of members without advocates (Pekkanen p. 46, 2009).

Chonaikai are formed through national policy during World War II in order to support national government in local management tasks. Therefore, functions of chonaikai in war period are somehow negative and cause troubles to chonaikai itself. However, today's trend of NPOs is a phenomenon affecting chonaikai functions. It is interesting to study what kind of chonaikai function will be useful in today society and what kind of institutionalization will be possible. However, it should be noted here that the document gathered for this study did not provide sufficient information concerning to the transformation of chonaikai since World War II nor concerning social conditions behind that transformation. But this study aims to raise significant points from today situation of chonaikai focusing on positive functions of chonaikai in order to find a solution for chonaikai to support Japanese society in future.

### III. Roles and functions of chonaikai in Japanese society

Pekkanen (2009) states that neighborhood associations or chonaikai reveal the important roles of state in relation to the spread and continued existence of neighborhood associations and the essence of state in structuring of civil society in a positive case. Any contention that neighborhood associations could be as widespread and vital as they are now without state intervention is historically and contemporaneously untenable. The reasons why neighborhood associations still exist in Japan are discussed by many observers offering several explanations on the existence of neighborhood associations. One popular explanation supported by a number of scholars indicates that neighborhood associations, like their precursors, represent a 'fundamental cultural form of Japanese community'. Another sociological explanation explains that 'the institutionalization of the neighborhood associations itself is a response to the urbanization, the weakening of informal neighborhood ties'. In a similar vein, neighborhood associations add arising as a surrogate or 'some substitute for the security and sense of belonging which a rural community provides'.

Pekkanen also discusses the roles of neighborhood associations as advocacy group in three aspects: (1) the 'transmission belt' by which neighborhood associations communicate local issues and make demands on local government, (2) the instances in which neighborhood associations oppose government initiatives and (3) a framework by which we can understand why neighborhood associations are inherently disposed to be cooperative with government, except under a very limited circumstance. Moreover, he highlights the importance of neighborhood associations in generating social capital in Japan. Social capital is a contested concept, particularly when applied to new cultural contexts. Neighborhood associations also have implications for social capital theories. Through their cooperation with local government,

neighborhood associations can improve government performance while lowering costs. At the same time, neighborhood associations can directly and indirectly contribute to social capital. Neighborhood associations - particularly Japanese variety, with their extensive ties to local government – are connected to governance in several important and understudied ways. First, neighborhood associations benefit from public policy support, and not merely or even primarily through financial support. The legitimation derived from the state sustains groups' vitality by bolstering membership and participation, and it practically excludes the formation of rival neighborhood associations within a single geographical area. Second, neighborhood associations sustain enormous amounts of social capital, and do so in ways that enhance governance. The role of the state in creating such organizations calls into question generally prevalent views on the relationship between the state and social capital generation (Pekkanen, 2009).

On the other hand, Kuninori Inouchi<sup>3)</sup> categorizes the roles of chonaikai in Japanese society into two roles: (1) *an official role* as a linkage between local government in terms of information disclosure, budget management, sport activities, activities of elderly people, etc. and (2) an *additional role* through local initiatives such as festival, event, visioning, planning, etc. Regarding the so-called official role, each chonaikai has specific responsibility and is obliged to be a mediator between residents and local government. However, not every chonaikai succeeds in its additional role that significantly depends on the leaders. Still, most active chonaikai are able to play both sides of roles while cooperating with local government and other sectors.

Ueda (1989 cited in Pekkanen R., p. 41-42, 2009) calls what neighborhood associations do for government as '*administrative cooperation activities*' and divides them into three categories; 1) First is for contacting citizens and disseminating information. This is the primary service neighborhood groups do in favor of the government. Naturally, it is because of their nature as inclusive, locality-based organizations that they can provide an effective and low-cost means of disseminating and collecting information. 2) Second category is for doing 'other tasks,' which include (a) various surveys, (b) personnel recommendations for committees, such as electoral monitoring committee, (c) all kinds of mutual aid, disaster-response schemes, and collections. 3) Third category is to 'work organizing the locality'. This includes *nemawashi* or to build supports for public projects through prior consultation. Local government officials visit neighborhood associations in the area to gain support for such endeavors. This category also includes mobilizing citizen for large-scale events such as sport feasts, and enlisting private individuals to help purchasing land for public purpose by supplying information on property coming up for sale. (Ueda, pp.444-448, 1989 cited in Pekkanen R., pp. 41-42, 2009)

#### **IV. Situation of chonaikai in Japan through specific case studies**

This paper discusses the significances of chonaikai focusing on positive functions of chonaikai in current situation. Analysis viewpoint of this study is based on three case studies by comparing the liveliness of chonaikai activity by the situation of each district, comparing the advancement of chonaikai activity, and also comparing local government organization support. Case studies are; Kusatsu city, Shiga Prefecture; Kameoka City, Kyoto Prefecture and Iida city, Nagano Prefecture. This study intends to discuss changes of chonaikai's roles in present situation and in each geographical ground in order to investigate significant points of the institutionalization of chonaikai. These three case studies have different nature and characteristics. They are not typical cases of chonaikai in general but suitable to discuss according to positive function of chonaikai. The reason why these three case studies are suitable to discuss the significance of institutionalization of chonaikai will be explained in this part.

First of all, this paper does not describe common chonaikai in Japanese society but focuses on positive functions of chonaikai. The reasons why only three case studies were chosen are because they can represent positive functions of chonaikai, which is the purpose of this study. Kusatsu and Kameoka city are a good example of positive chonaikai in

institutionalization in the area. Moreover, Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self-government fundamental ordinance) is also a good example because many cities in Japan attempt to make this kind of ordinance. Now, Kusatsu city is on the proceeding of enactment. Therefore, Kusatsu city is a good case study to think and study about positive chonaikai within the ordinance. Kameoka city is a good example showing the relationship and collaboration between Kyoto prefecture, Kameoka city, and chonaikai. It is an example of positive function of chonaikai in cooperating with public administration based on public policy implementation as a safety community policy in Kameoka city. Iida city is a good example of introducing new structural organization for community development as Kominkan (Public citizen house) in Iida city. The approach of this study is based on positive function of chonaikai regarding to current situation of Japanese society. So, today's situation of Japanese society is a possibility to think about positive function of chonaikai.

Current situation of chonaikai in general, the participation of neighborhood associations in terms of a number of groups, are one of the most common forms of civil society organization in Japan. There are 298,488 neighborhood associations operating in Japan, even though their names differ from place to place. In short, the majority of Japanese participate in neighborhood associations whilst a substantial minority of them very actively. Yet, almost all Japanese are members of a neighborhood association. However, groups that are legally founded often acquire it to assist with management of assets such as land (Pekkanen R., p. 30, 2009). However, situations in each area are difference. Even chonaikai exist in Japan but their roles are geographically different; some have strong power and influence but some do not and decreasing a number of chonaikai and less participation of residents.

#### IV.1 Kusatsu city

Kusatsu city is located in Shiga Prefecture. The city has high growth of development through industrialization and is a well-known tourism attraction for Biwako lake. The situation of chonaikai in Kusatsu city, Shiga Prefecture is become worse because of a decreasing number of chonaikai, high increasing of new comer in apartment which less participate to chonaikai activities<sup>4)</sup>. The reasons why chonaikai in Kusatsu city hardly participate and cooperate with Kusatsu City government are; (1) Traditional chonaikai in Kusatsu city are decreasing because of new comers according to high growth of industrialization in Kusatsu city. (2) There is no actual feedback from chonaikai as one reason is due to the representative of chonaikai itself. (3) There is no obligation to join or make chonaikai because chonaikai has no legal based so lesser new comers participate in chonaikai. In this situation, the problem is that it is not necessary to deliver official information. At present, 90% of organizations of chonaikai have been decreasing. Moreover, chonaikai are seen as 'closed society' and 'limited theme oriented' from viewpoint of government officer<sup>5)</sup>. Chonaikai in Kusatsu cannot play official role in information dissemination and obviously have no additional role. Situation in Kusatsu is a result of high growth and high number migration. Context of Kusatsu city is a main reason; it is industrial area and a node of transportation. Moreover, it is a suburb area of Kyoto which the cost of living is cheaper for new young workers. Therefore, chonaikai cannot smoothly drive in this city according to changed environment or phenomena of current society.

Therefore, the direction of Kusatsu city government are not directly focused on chonaikai but attempt to establish a *new frontier organization* as a 'New NPOs' which has broader theme and with more flexibility. However, there are some alternatives for chonaikai in Kusatsu city to be an *intermediate organization* or intervening organization among different sector, according to their strengthening characters of area-based organization. Consequently, Kusatsu city government attempts to enact the 'Self-government fundamental ordinance' (or Jishitai Kihon Jorei in Japanese) that focuses on the role of citizen-based cooperation with other sectors. This ordinance is seen as a constitution of local government. According to this ordinance of Kusatsu City, (now, on the proceeding to enact) there will be another possibility of chonaikai in the new direction of cooperation with local government. This ordinance can be a doorway for chonaikai and Kusatsu city government to start thinking about new functions and institutionalization of chonaikai that can be useful to

Kusatsu city. This is one of the positive functions of chonaikai from this case study.

#### IV.2 Kameoka city

Kameoka City is located in Kyoto Prefecture. As of 2008, the city has an estimated population of 93,323 persons. The total area is 224.90 km<sup>2</sup>. The city is known as one of Japan's foggiest cities. Today, the city serves as one of the fastest growing suburbs of Metro Kyoto, and Metro Osaka. Kameoka is the first city designated as a "Safe Community" by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Collaborating Center on Community Safety Promotion in Sweden. The city has continued to gradually develop various programs to further the promotion of "safety and security" at community level<sup>6</sup>.

The situation of chonaikai in Kameoka city, Kyoto prefecture is totally different from Kusatsu city. Pilot chonaikai named 'Shino-chonaikai' is a very active chonaikai in both official and additional roles. This Shino-chonaikai is one of 19 neighborhood associations in Kameoka city chosen as the urban area model of safety community. Shin-chonaikai is an outstanding chonaikai according to the program of safety community. They had *changed the way of management* from traditional beliefs and went beyond an ordinary chonaikai. Since 2004, the starting point of Shino-chonaikai was the leader's initiative in evaluation of current management style. They took additional role of chonaikai out of official role related to local government by initiate community plan, vision and program related to safety community. Community members decided to form a committee to promote safety at neighborhood level after participating the workshop for safety promotion. Residents agreed to further activities for the improvement of safety within the community in the first meeting. They also drafted an annual plan for safety promotion of the community. Moreover, additional role of chonaikai was a learning center on safety community; they accepted study visitors from other chonaikai and municipalities.

The characteristic of Shino-chonaikai is *self-operation* and act as a linkage with local government. They have strong leader, clear vision, close relationship with the residents and also a strong bond with local government and other associations. Recently, the cooperation between chonaikai and Kameoka City is growing rapidly as chonaikai is getting stronger and becomes more self-reliance while Kameoka City government also changes attitudes towards cooperation with chonaikai instead of providing and facilitating as traditionally done. This case study shows the significance of social capital through Putnam (2000) ; the connections among individuals and network, the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. Thus, trust between Shino-chonaikai and Kameoka city government through cooperation reveal their social capital that is a fundamental need in the process of institutionalization of chonaikai. This case study reveals a strong bond and close relationship and collaboration between Kyoto prefecture, Kameoka city and chonaikai in implementation of safety policy. Positive functions of chonaikai from this case study are a virtual practice of new chonaikai management function beyond traditional chonaikai as former period.

#### IV.3 Iida City

Iida is a city located in southern part of Nagano Prefecture. Most of area in Iida City is mountain area; village was divided according to mountain topography. Thus this case study is different from both mentioned case studies; situation in Iida City is rather unique. In 2007, the reformation of organizational structure in Iida City shows a unique structure of local organization. The year 2007 is the year of change in Iida city by 1) introducing Jishitai Kihon Jorei (Self-government fundamental ordinance), 2) establishing a new local autonomous organization, and 3) making ten-years development plan of Iida city. Those are a new approach of area-based development in Iida.

Iida city has chonaikai same as other cities but it not a main organization running activities of community development in Iida City. There are Kominkan (public citizen house) and Machizukuriinkai (Community development committee), which take a main role in every development activities of Iida city together with city government cooperation instead of chonaikai<sup>7</sup>. Kominkan were introduced immediately after the World War II, all over Japan. However, some municipalities

do not have Kominkan. In every part of Iida City, each Kominkan has sub-divisional activities; mean activities done by smaller groups of resident all through the city. Their functions are similar to chonaikai functions, an area-based organization. Kominkan have a huge role in community development or community activities in Iida city especially in solving local problems, which is not common among other municipalities in Japan. In urban area, it is unique that Kominkan can solve area-based problems. Main roles of Kominkan are based on education and learning which call social education. However, Kominkan has other roles of education because in most of the community people are expected to make contribution to the community. Therefore, the initiation through local contribution – joining Kominkan is considered as a first step for responsible pass in a community.

This paper, Kominkan is seen as a specific theme organization and specific structural organization. It is somehow related to functions of chonaikai. Even, it has more uniqueness but their functions are still similar to chonaikai or referred to areas-based organization. Through this viewpoint, Kominkan in Iida city is another model to learn in order to start thinking about institutionalize chonaikai organization.

As a conclusion of case studies, different contexts of the city and different characters of chonaikai or neighborhood association or community organization or area-based organization or even Kominkan reflect the possibilities and approaches of doing through self-governing approach. Those three case studies show different ways of utilizing civil society organizations; by using possibilities through ordinance in Kusatsu city, by changing the way of cooperation and management in Kameoka city and by reforming and introducing new organization in Iida city. Different situations showing one important point is – not only comprehensive and fundamental structures are necessary but also specific and uniqueness of area-based development. It is not necessary to limit chonaikai roles only to link and support public administration. Chonaikai can be more flexible and can be structured as an organization which usefulness in area-based development. Consequently, chonaikai might need to be institutionalized. The main reason is, since World War II, the roles of chonaikai are still ambiguous in terms of practices. Chonaikai are using in different purposes based on communities and city governments in certain area. Therefore, roles of chonaikai in Japanese society should be specifying as an organizational institutionalization to have more specific theme, to be useful in each own area development and to link with existing specific theme organizations. In order to achieve such goal, it is also essential to clarify chonaikai's status.

## V. Status and influences of chonaikai in Japanese society

Status of chonaikai in general, almost all local governments work with neighborhood associations in some form or another; 95% of all local government used them in their administrative work. Even other 30% apparently employed them at least as a means of contacting citizens. That means by which local government worked with neighborhood associations varied (Pekkanen R., p. 41, 2009). The Ministry of Home Affairs surveyed 3,278 local governments in Japan utilizing neighborhood associations in these two categories of tasks. The result revealed that almost all (90.9%) use neighborhood groups to disseminate information of some kind. Most local governments also tried to get neighborhood associations to assist them in communicating with local residents (74%). A smaller but still substantial number aimed more broadly, attempting to utilize neighborhood associations for dissemination of tax notices (52.3%), for gathering survey information (53.7 %), or even for exhorting resident to participate in disaster preparedness schemes (45.4%) (Ueda, pp.444, 1989 cited in Pekkanen R., pp. 41-42, 2009)

In case of chonaikai in Kameoka city, the reason why Shino-chonaikai was able to successfully change the style of management and to play their additional roles effectively was because of the strong supports from Kameoka City Government. If Kameoka city government still pursued traditional government-oriented bureaucracy, it would definitely affect the cooperation with Shino-chonaikai and obstruct the association's additional roles<sup>8)</sup>. In consequence, the status of



chonaikai in Kameoka city is more influential and allows more opportunities for development. In Kameoka city, neighborhood associations are taking some parts of public service, which create an opportunity for community member to work together in solution seeking towards problems within the communities. Additionally, they are supporting communication among residents. Therefore, neighborhood associations are considered to be an indispensable organization aiming to promote safety at community level in collaboration with Kameoka City government. In some neighborhood communities, workshops held by residents are conducted to make an action plan for safety promotion. Because of the workshops, residents are able to discuss issues about problem in their communities, goals and strategies of safety promotion.

However, an unequal cooperation between community organization and public administration is what the leader of Shino-chonaikai concerns; Shino-chonaikai's principle or ultimate goal is to become an *equal partner* with local government<sup>9)</sup>. Since 2004, Shino-chonaikai has started to make plans, even if, the main role of planning still belongs to local government planning sector. It leads to a question that once each chonaikai can initiate their own plans, what kind of roles will remain for Kameoka City government. It implies that the additional roles of chonaikai: planning and decision-making, are *overlapping* with the main roles of city government. This point shows the influence of chonaikai comparing to city government in term of planning and decision-making.

Consequently, if chonaikai become an equal partner with local government, they will have much influence on city development. Pekkanen argues that Japanese neighborhood associations do not evince much of an advocacy role. Several reasons seem to underline this, in Japan and elsewhere. Association leaders may need government supports, whether in order to keep their positions or to obtain resources. There are formal guidelines and informal norms that govern their behaviors and that stipulate duties they own to administrative higher-ups (Pekkanen R., p. 15, 2009).

Cooperation with government is an integral part of many neighborhood associations, while opposition seems a more intermittent phenomenon. There are two main reasons; one is the close relationship between government and neighborhood associations, which instills a predilection for cooperation. Second reason for cooperation with government is structural: neighborhood associations are small groups without professional staff that include all residents of a limited geographical area. Except for issues on which all residents of the neighborhood agree, neighborhood associations are not a good vehicle for advocacy, which explain why their opposition is limited to NIMBY (not in my backyard) – style activity (Pekkanen R., p. 48, 2009). Neighborhood committees were supposed to be a true democratic option for neighbors, authorities and social organizations interested in working as community mediators between official and public interests (McLaverty P., p. 63, 2002).

The horizontal and vertical linkages have been considering referring to the structural relations within and among local organizations. Esman M. and Uphoff N. (p. 153, 1984) also consider linkage to government agencies and staff, looking at the frequency of communication and cooperation with officials as well as government control over local organization resource. The degrees of linkage include (1) *autonomy*, with effectively no interaction and no government control over local organization resource. (2) *Direction*, where there is a heavy interaction controlled by the government. (3) In between is a *low linkage* with little interaction, (4) *moderate linkage* with some but not regular interaction and (5) *high linkage* with much interaction but some reciprocity - that is, local organizations are able to maintain some control over the flow of resource to and from themselves.

Hiroshi Kakegawa cited in Hachiro Nakamura (1980) states that chonaikai play a significant role and any attempts to transplant the neighborhood organization of rural village into the environment of big city would be difficult. He points out that many problems arise in large cities that are confined to small, localized areas. He also argues that since the municipal government of a large city could not possibly handle the burden of so many small problems, there is merit in relying on town residents' organization such as the chonaikai to attend to these matters. He indicates that since government tends to

be highly specialized and compartmentalized, which creates a wide gap between the government and the people in large cities, chonaikai are ideally suited to the role of fostering interest in community government among local resident. Some of those advocating the institutionalization of chonaikai and leading the movement seek to recreate the traditional social over of small villages. But the point most emphasized by Kakegawa is that chonaikai portrayed as a means of promoting self-government.

Even so, the status of chonaikai are not legal founded but their influences in city government administrative still exist. However, chonaikai are still ambiguous according to their roles and functions. Therefore, both chonaikai and city government have limitations, which lead them to cooperate and re-organize. In this study, to reorganize chonaikai's roles, function, status, and influences mean the institutionalization of chonaikai.

## VI. Discussion - Significance of institutionalization of chonaikai

The reason why this study focusing on institutionalization of chonaikai can be answered by the viewpoints stating that 'institutionalization is a possible solution for today chonaikai in order to be one of organizations supporting Japanese society in future; especially in a period of crisis such as disaster'. Functions of chonaikai have changed through occurred situations. In current situation of Japanese society; chonaikai are decreasing and growing to have uncertain functions. Therefore, the institutionalization of chonaikai structure will be helpful in utilizing chonaikai in the society as suitable as possible.

In the pre-war period, chonaikai gradually spread, and as they began to consolidate the function of earlier organization, they began to undertake various public services such as sanitation, local security, liaison and negotiation with government agencies. At the same time, administrative authorities gradually began to take greater interest in these organizations. Chonaikai also became the subject of debate discussing the institutionalization of chonaikai. However, the institutionalization of chonaikai was not initially considered a part of war preparation and apparently did not proceed particular smoothly. It became apparent from a perusal of materials published on the chonaikai in the period before war mobilization that they were then regarded as important forums for promoting self-government among local residents (Hachiro Nakamura, 1980).

The institutionalization of chonaikai included the plan to establish an organization in each town, to regularize the size of membership, and to standardize the regulations and dues of chonaikai, to regulate the nomination and selection of officials, and to establish a chonaikai federation. These plans were also aimed at preventing the outbreak of disputes and the intervention of party politics in community affairs, advocates of institutionalization believed that after these measures were taken, it would be possible, with the help from government subsidies, to promote the development and efficient functioning of chonaikai. Direct responsibility for implementing these measures belonged to the ward offices, but aside from the formation of chonaikai federation, most plans never materialized. Most of the irregularities, which the governmental authorities believed should be corrected, were practically growing out of the needs of each town based on specific local conditions, and it was extremely difficult to ignore conditions in order to carry out a uniform government policy. Government officials, moreover, were well aware of the complexity of these conditions and although they hoped to implement standardizing measures, they could in fact do little (Hachiro Nakamura, 1980). In the same way, Noboru tanigawa (1938) cited in Hachiro Nakamura (1980) states in his essay called 'Incorporating the chokai system into Metropolitan Administration' describing that 'policy for chonaikai does not take into account the current level of chonaikai development. The policies made were designed for the chonaikai as they were in the early phase of their development. The lack of specific policy measures, the government did have a serious concern for the chonaikai, even if its interest was basically focused on the promotion of self-government'.

However, the situations from case studies show the differences of chonaikai in Japanese society, as there is no specific role in the organization of chonaikai. Therefore, this study aims to raise the significance of the institutionalization of chonaikai as one possibility to respond to changes in current situation of diversity of chonaikai's functions in Japanese society. First of all, this paper will clarify meaning of the institutionalization of chonaikai; particularly related to case studies as follows.

### VI.1 Meaning of Institutionalization

Institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. In consequence, they structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic. Institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time and hence is the key to understand historical changes (North, 1990, p.3). An institutional is a system of social factors that conjointly generate a regularity of behavior. The term system highlights the interrelations among an institution's various elements, but an institution need not have all elements of the system (rules, beliefs, norms, and organizations). In other word, an institution is a system of rules, beliefs, norms, and organizations that together generate a regularity of (social) behavior. Organizations differ from other institutions as associated rules, beliefs, and norms lead to differential behaviors toward members and nonmembers. Organizations are institutional elements with respect to the behavior we seek to understand, but they are institutions with respect to their members' behavior (Greif, 2006, pp.30-31). That is the reason why institutionalization needs social capital as a fundamental need. This question can be answered by the process of institutionalization itself.

In other words, institution are social structure that have attained a high degree of resilience composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life (Scott, 2001 cited in Timo and Risto, 2007). The major role of institutions in a society is to reduce uncertainty by establishing a stable (but not necessary efficient) structure for human interaction. But the stability of institutions in no way gainsays the fact that they are changing. Institutional change is a complicated process because changes at the margin can be consequences of changes in rules, in informal constraints, and in kinds and effectiveness of enforcement (North, 1990, p.6).

More generally, the definition advanced here encompasses many of the multiple definitions of the terms used in economics, political science, and sociology. These include defining institutions as the rules of the game in a society; (1) as formal or informal organizations (social structure), such as parliament, universities, tribe, families, or communities; (2) as belief about others' behavior or about the world around us and the relationship between action and outcomes in it; (3) as internalized norms of behavior; and (4) as regularities of behavior, or social practice that are regular and continuously repeated, including contractual regularities expressing themselves in organization such as firms (Greif, 2006, pp.39-40).

By those definitions, chonaikai can be considered as one institution of Japanese society related to certain structure of public administration. Institution of chonaikai in Japanese society is an important social factor<sup>10)</sup> that is embodied in Japanese society after World War II. However, since post-world war era, chonaikai's role changed according to modernization and urbanization. Therefore, traditional chonaikai should adopt and adapt, in order to be an effective cog of Japanese socialization. In other words, chonaikai might need to institutionalize their roles and functions to utilize Japanese society.

Institutionalization refers to the process of embedding something (concept, role, value, etc.) within an organization, social system as a whole. Institutionalization can also refer to organization development or organization establishment stabilization. Indeed, the institutionalization refers to both the implementation and the internalization of new practices (Kostova and Roth, 2002), and the institutionalization cannot be completed in the event of decoupling (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). An institutionalized structure can be defined as a structure "that has become taken for granted by members of a

social group as efficacious and necessary” and that “generate action” (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996). According to Hasselbladh and Kallinikos (2000), the institutionalization process is supposed to build on a new ideal that develops into discourses and then techniques. Internalized beliefs influence behavior indirectly, as individuals who have power – who can influence institutionalization process – act on their convictions (Greif, 2006, p.36). Considering institutions as system of interrelated rules, beliefs, norms, and organization, each of which is a man-made, nonphysical social factor, encompasses the definition most widely used in economics, which states that institutions are formal and informal rules together with their enforcement mechanisms (North, 1990 cited in Greif, 2006, p.39).

Hachiro Nakamura (1980) believes that the usefulness of chonaikai in community society cannot be ignored, since they can undertake problems beyond the capacity of government agencies to resolve. While not openly supportive, viewing chonaikai activities as trivial, he does admit the merits of chonaikai functions. However, it is difficult to make an adequate judgment of the merits of chonaikai. Nevertheless, considering the fact that they received very little government assistance before wartime, chonaikai achieved remarkable development. Similar to today’s situation, chonaikai as perceived from three case studies also have remarkable development as ones from pre-war period. However, if the majority of city resident and local government did not supported and approved chonaikai, this development would not have been possible.

In this study, the institutionalization has two meanings: (1) formal or hard or strong institutionalization – such as law, regulation and rule of organizations that is a concrete set up by authority. It is a fundamental and general institutionalization but it also has some paradox. This study is focusing on Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self government fundamental ordinance) which is a basic ordinance of each local government in Japan. This ordinance are using by many city government in order to be a basic guideline for roles of Mayor, parliament and citizen to the city administrative. The reason why this study defines this ordinance as a formal institutionalization is because the functions of this ordinance are as a constitution of local government; it is a fundamental principle of local government. (2) Informal or soft institutionalization such as routine activities and cooperation which is non-structure organizing by locality. It is not a main structure of organizational management but it is flexible and convenience to use as additional functions. These two meanings reveal through the case studies; (a) the meaning of institutionalization of chonaikai in Kusatsu city is a formal institutionalization according to functions of Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self government fundamental ordinance), (b) the meaning of institutionalization of chonaikai in Iida city is also formal institutionalization according to functions of Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self government fundamental ordinance) though it has some differences. Chonaikai in Iida city is not a main actor as their functions of area-based organization, while Kominkan (public citizen house) takes these functions effectively and (c) The meaning of institutionalization of chonaikai in Kameoka city is informal institutionalization. Kameoka city did not utilize the functions of Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self government fundamental ordinance) yet but chonaikai in Kameoka city are effectively take their functions of area-based organization and cooperating with Kameoka city government actively. Therefore, this study defines such types of institutionalization of chonaikai into two types.

## VI.2 Significance of Institutionalization

According to case studies, chonaikai functions are different: formal and informal institutionalization. This study classifies types of institutionalization as showing in table 1.

(1) Chonaikai in Kusatsu city is represented with  $\Delta$  symbol. It means the situation of chonaikai’s functions in Kusatsu city are not completely organized yet according to current situation of decreasing number of chonaikai, lesser participation of young generation and lack of new comer involvement with chonaikai membership. However, there are possibilities according to current attempts of Kusatsu city in process of making Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self-government fundamental ordinance). The meaning of  $\Delta$  symbol represents an opportunity for Kusatsu city to re-organize chonaikai

function by using this ordinance as a formal institutionalization of chonaikai function in Kusatsu city.

(2) In Kameoka city, X symbol representing that - they did not enact Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self-government fundamental ordinance) yet. However, O symbol represents that chonaikai's functions are very useful in this city according to the policy of safety community. Collaboration between Kyoto Prefecture, Kameoka city government and chonaikai are close cooperation through the main goal of safety community. This is because active leaders of chonaikai, strong bond and relationship with city government. They have routine cooperation that is a different kind of institutionalization; it has more flexibilities comparing to hard or strong institutionalization by law. Thus, functions of chonaikai in Kameoka city are seen as an informal institutionalization through *routine cooperation* between chonaikai and city government.

(3) In Iida city, O symbol represents Jishitai Kihon Jorei (self-government fundamental ordinance) is a formal institutionalization of chonaikai; even if, it is not automatically effective to chonaikai functions directly. Therefore, different kind of functions will be useful. Another O symbol shows the possibility of Kominkan as an area-based organization. Role of Kominkan (public citizen house) instead of chonaikai functions are effective organize and work as area-based organization. Although Kominkan is a functional division of Iida City government, their role can organize tasks that should be done by chonaikai effectively. Thus, Kominkan can support chonaikai work in some area effectively; up to area-based condition.

Consequently, effective functions of chonaikai in different conditions of case studies are showing the possibilities of institutionalization both formal and informal types. This classification explains the usefulness and the significance of each different types of chonaikai institutionalization through conditions of case studies as simulated in table 1.

**Table 1: Classification of chonaikai's institutionalization**

|              | Chonaikai<br>(Neighborhood association) | Jishitai Kihon Jorei<br>(Self-government fundamental<br>ordinance) | Kominkan<br>(Public citizen house) |
|--------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Kusatsu city | Δ                                       | Δ  | -                                  |
| Kameoka city | O                                       | X  | -                                  |
| Iida city    | X                                       | O  | O                                  |

Source: By author

This paper discusses a reasons and significances of why institutionalization is important to chonaikai. The argument is that chonaikai needs to be institutionalized as a community organization by structuring of leader election, management within an organization, formal role in society, networking of chonaikai in the city and region. This study aims to interpret chonaikai functions as different types of institutionalization; both by law or by active key persons and routine cooperation. Consequently, this study argues that chonaikai functions in present are different from ones during World War II period. Chonaikai have already changed direction to be a helpful organization to the society. Therefore, it is a good opportunity to start thinking about the institutionalization of chonaikai. Thus, formal institutionalization of chonaikai is not absolutely necessary and not automatically effective. For this reason, different kinds of institutionalization will be useful and possible. This study shows three case studies representing various types of institutionalization of chonaikai. Even if, formal or informal, with law or without law; functions of chonaikai are still useful as area-based organization. Therefore, chonaikai's functions with or without institutionalization are both useful to drive Japanese society. It is the answer to the main question of this study of 'how a chonaikai's functions with or without institutionalization'.

## VI. Conclusion

In brief, this paper clarifies roles and characteristic of chonaikai, and presents case studies that are a representative of positive function of chonaikai. Those positive functions of chonaikai stimulate the possibilities and significances of institutionalization of chonaikai in current society. The discussions go through the organization, status, influence and current situation of chonaikai based on a focusing point of positive function of chonaikai. Finally, the description of the significance and types of institutionalization of chonaikai are discussed; in viewpoint of restructuring of organization of chonaikai through a focus point of possibilities in case studies.

In conclusion, it is important to state that the significance of chonaikai's institutionalization is useful for chonaikai to function according to law or ordinance and also through embedding in routines of (a) activities, (b) new creative activities of chonaikai and (c) routines of cooperation with government sector. Although roles and numbers of chonaikai in Japanese society are now decreasing, according to rapid growth of urbanization and modernization, they are still embedded in Japanese society. Thus, the institutionalization of chonaikai is depending on the roles of chonaikai itself in routine activities and new creation of roles and activities beyond obligations. Additional role of chonaikai also leads their useful functions as informal institutionalization.

Two meanings of institutionalization (formal and informal) is a new notions and ideas of the usefulness of institutionalization that are not only limited within the structure. It has the possibilities to utilize additional functions of the institutionalization of chonaikai in Japanese society as informal institutionalization or routine cooperation as mentioned. One of important routines is the learning process. Learning by doing in organizations, as the term implies, means that an organization acquires coordination skills and develops routines that work as a consequence of repeated interaction (Nelson and Winter, (1982) cited in North, 1990, p.74).

Moreover, the process of institutionalization of chonaikai might need elements of leader, knowledge, network, policy, planning, management and communication. However, the most important thing is that young generation in Japanese society can understand and continue this traditional association of Japanese in order to drive forward future society. Roles of chonaikai will change accordingly to the changes of chonaikai routine activities that need to institutionalize through active young generation. Moreover, active supports from local government also needed as a fundamental factor in the institutionalization of chonaikai. Therefore, it is not entirely wrong to say that the institutionalization of chonaikai needs collaboration between active and innovative movement from both chonaikai (civil society) and city government.

In closing, while attempting to investigate those case studies focusing on merit of chonaikai in current Japanese society, the document were limited both in quality and quantity, making it difficult to offer a reliable evaluation. The problems is that the variety of chonaikai characters and functions in each areas lead to the difficulty of standardization or generalization; a kind of fundamental law or regulation for whole chonaikai throughout the country. This weak points are also opened for further study according to maintain chonaikai formal status in Japanese society.

### Notes

- 1) Doctoral Student of Graduate School of Policy Science, Ritsumeikan University, E-mail: pun-puntita@hotmail.com
- 2) Self-government fundamental ordinance (Jishitai Kihon Jorei in Japanese) is a basic ordinance of each local governments in Japan. In Japan, this ordinance are using by many city governments in order to be a basic guideline for role of Mayor, parliament and citizen to the city. Position of this ordinance is as a constitution of local government.
- 3) Kuninori Inouchi, Ex-President of the Shino Neighborhood Association, Kameoka City, June 6, 2011
- 4) Mr. Kimura Hiroshi, The Head of Group (Counsellor), Machizukuri Division, Kusatsu city government, June 1, 2011
- 5) Soul Yoshihiro, Group leader and Deputy Secretary of Civic Activity Promotion Group, Section of Machizukuri Collaboration, Department of Machizukuri Collaboration, Kusatsu City Government, June 1, 2011

- 6) Application to the World Health Organization, Collaboration Center on Community Safety Promotion for the designation of Kameoka, Kyoto, Japan, 2007
- 7) Mr. Takeshi Sakurai, Deputy Director of Public citizen house (Kominkan) of Iida city, August, 2011
- 8) Mr. Hidekado Tanaka, Assistant manager of Planning Section, Department of Planning, Kameoka City, June 6, 2011
- 9) Mr. Yoshiaki Makino, President of the Shino Neighborhood Association, Kameoka City, June 6, 2011
- 10) Institutional elements are social factors as they are man-made, non-physical factors exogenous to each individual whose behavior they influence (Greif, 2006, p.34).

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