Migrants and Changes in Their Hometown Memories:
A Hometown Remembered by Migrants and Its Changes during Migration

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This paper analyzes how the hometown memories of emigrants who left their homes in modern Japan have changed in the present times and what differences exist between the memories and reality. Hometown memories have been expressed by various media and imprinted in the minds of many urban residents who left or lost their homes. While evolving into different forms, these memories have also been accepted and adapted by people who continued to live in their hometowns and who migrated between regions.

Most prior studies on people’s perceptions and memories of their hometowns focused on the social organizations and views of urban residents who emigrated from their homes; this paper is centered on how the people who continue to live in their hometowns create hometown memories by themselves or in interaction with emigrants. At the same time, this paper embodies the experience of emigration in the present times to analyze how people who are living in new places while keeping the balance between their original and second homes remember their hometowns.

This paper examines some bulletins published by the alumni association of Shitsura Elementary School in Shitsura District, Monzen-machi, Wajima City, Ishikawa Prefecture, to analyze the above-mentioned points. Since its establishment at the end of the Meiji Period, the alumni association has placed its headquarters in Shitsura District and issued bulletins to facilitate communication between local alumni and those who emigrated from the district. This paper examines the articles of the alumni bulletins at their peak in quality and quantity, from the mid-1980s to the 1990s. The results are used to analyze the possibility that hometown memories created by migrants in the early modern times will be broken or imploded by the experience of migration between regions over generations or the experience of emigration that occurs regardless of the family rank or household they were born into. This paper analyzes the bulletins published when the population of the district was declining and aging to reveal how hometown memories changed in parallel with the process.

Key words: hometown, migration, memory, compatriot association, a place of origin