

Residents' Evaluations of a Symbolic Sound Facility:

A Time Bell at Tanagura Town, Fukushima, Japan

Miho Kanomata and Koji Nagahata (Fukushima University)

PURPOSE

• There have been several cases of local revitalization that involve the production of sound from newly created symbolic facilities.

→ How does the local populace evaluate these new sounds and facilities?

The present study analyzed residents' evaluations of the time bell of Tanagura town in Fukushima prefecture, Japan.

SURVEY

Tanagura Town

- Located in southern Fukushima prefecture, Japan.
- It has a population of 16,000, with agricultural and forestry industries.



Figure I: The map which shows the position of Tanagura town

- In the Edo period (17C), Tanagura became prosperous as a castle town.
- Small-scale, family-run shops in the town center have become increasingly difficult to operate, because of the spread of large-scale shops into the suburbs.
- Recently, inactivity of the shopping streets in the center of town has become a problem.

The Time Bell

• In April 2004, a time bell was erected in a pocket park alongside route 118 on the corner of a central shopping street, which stands adjacent to the Tanagura elementary school.

• The bell tower modeled on that of its sister city, Kawagoe, helps to produce the atmosphere of a castle town, and is intended to strengthen contacts with Kawagoe.

• This bell is tolled automatically four times a day: 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 3:00 pm, and 5:00 pm. (In summer, it is also sounded at 7:00 pm.)

• Reportedly, the bell can be heard within a range of approximately 200 m from the bell.



Figure II: The time bell

Miho Kanomata
e-mail: miho-artist.market@deluxe.ocn.ne.jp
Koji Nagahata
e-mail: nagahata@sss.fukushima-u.ac.jp
Fukushima University: Kanayagawa 1, Fukushima,
960-1296, JAPAN

Outline of the Questionnaire Survey

- A questionnaire survey of how the residents evaluated the time bell and the bell tower was administered to local residents.
- Survey area: the Furumachi and Jouseki areas, which are adjacent to the pocket park where the time bell was erected.

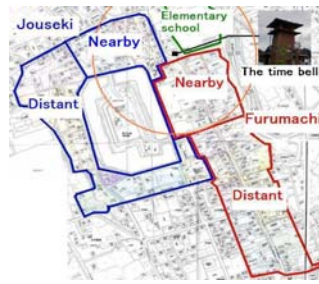


Figure III: The Furumachi and Jouseki areas

• The details of the distribution and collection of the questionnaires are shown in Table I.

Table I: Details of the distribution and collection of the questionnaires

	Furumachi area			Jouseki area			Total
	Nearby	Distant	Unknown	Nearby	Distant	Unknown	
Number of distributed	35	78	—	24	65	—	202
Number of effective answers	16	34	1	14	32	1	98

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Degree of Facility Satisfaction

• Table II shows distribution of the respondents' satisfaction rating of the facility.

Table II: Distribution of satisfaction rating of the facility

Rating	Satisfactory	Neither	Unsatisfactory
n	26	25	26

General Characteristics of the Respondents' Descriptions

• The implicit structures of the respondents' descriptions were independent of their satisfaction rating of the facility.

→ The characteristics of each grouping of the respondents' descriptions grouped according to the KJ method were fundamentally similar irrespective of residents' satisfaction ratings. ※ Figure IV shows the results.

Relation of the Bell Sound Evaluation to Satisfaction Rating of the Facility

○ There were some respondents whose satisfaction ratings of the facility and evaluations of the sounds were opposite.

EX. 'Satisfactory' in regard to the whole facility, although dissatisfaction was noted with the sound. (5 people)

- A-1 and A-9: They heard the bell sound almost every day
• "It would be good if more people were able to hear the bell, as the range in which it is heard is quite small."
- A-3, A-20, and A-26: They heard the bell only a few times per week or month.

• Respondents' evaluations of the entire facility were decided depending on the importance level of each resident's viewpoint. ※ The viewpoint related to sound was only one of them.

Examples of Viewpoints of Respondents' Evaluations of the Time Bell and the Bell Tower

- 'Positive' viewpoints
 - Suitability to the castle town
 - Familiarity with the bell
 - Goodness of sound
 - ...etc.
- 'Negative' viewpoints
 - Dissatisfaction for the volume
 - Financial difficulty
 - Dissatisfaction with the facility other than the time bell tower
 - ...etc.
- The facility evaluations and the time bell evaluations were constructed within a wide variety of contexts.
- The evaluations were determined depending on the importance level of each resident's point of view.

CONCLUSIONS

- The structures of the respondents' descriptions of the time bell and the tower were fundamentally similar irrespective of their satisfaction rating.
- Their facility evaluations and time bell evaluations are constructed within widely various contexts, and the evaluations are decided depending on the importance level of each resident's point of view. The viewpoint related to sound was only one of them.

	Description of the tone quality or volume of the bell	Description of the sound aside from the tone quality and volume	Description about the facility aside from the sound
Positive	Good evaluation of the sound	I feel familiar with the bell Specific recollections of the sound of the bell	Functionality of the facility It is suitable as a symbol for the castle town and I am proud of it
Neutral		Specific recollections of the sound of the bell I didn't know that the bell rings	
Negative	Dissatisfaction and requests for the volume Dissatisfaction with the tone		
Other			

(a) Satisfactory

	Description of the tone quality or volume of the bell	Description of the sound aside from the tone quality and volume	Description about the facility aside from the sound
Positive	Good evaluation of the sound	I feel familiar with the bell	Functionality of the facility It is suitable as a symbol for the castle town
Neutral		Specific recollections of the sound of the bell I didn't know that the bell rings	
Negative	Dissatisfaction and requests for the volume Dissatisfaction with the tone		As it was such a financial difficulty, I wonder why it was made. I don't feel it was necessary. It would be better to have a time bell tower more suited to the image of Tanagura
Other			

(b) Neither

	Description of the tone quality or volume of the bell	Description of the sound aside from the tone quality and volume	Description about the facility aside from the sound
Positive	Good evaluation of the sound	Specific recollections of the sound of the bell	It is suitable as a symbol for the castle town
Neutral		Specific recollections of the sound of the bell I didn't know that the bell rings	
Negative	Dissatisfaction and requests for the volume Dissatisfaction with the tone		Dissatisfaction with the facility other than the time bell tower I wonder why it was made. I don't feel it was necessary. What the symbol of the town should be like
Other			

(c) Unsatisfactory

※ 'A (B, C)-number' is the respondent's reference number.
※ The number in () shows the number of answers in the case where two or more of the same answer were provided.
※ 'A (B, C)-number' is the respondent who hears the sound of the bell almost every day.
※ 'A (B, C)-number' is the respondent who hardly hears the bell sound.
※ 'A (B, C)-number' is the respondent who shows that the sound of the bell has not been heard, or is a person who hears the sound of the bell only several times per week or month.

Figure IV: The Structures of the Free Descriptions of the Time Bell and the Bell Tower