Satoyama Revival: Living Sustainably in the 21st Century

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Background

- Satoyama models harmony between human activities and nature, where both benefit from each other
- Satoyama is a landscape of rice paddies, ponds, pastures, mixed forests, fields, streams, and irrigation ditches that surround a Japanese village → capable of supporting a community
- Challenges: Depopulation, younger generation leaving the rural communities, aging population, and urbanization
- Newcomers play an important role in revitalizing satoyama lands
- 2 main goals
  - **How to revitalize Satoyama?**
  - **How can Satoyama attract newcomers?**

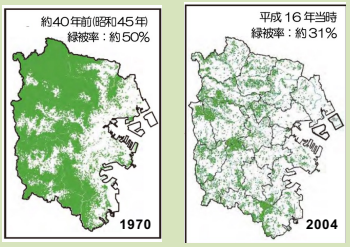

Figure 1. Declining rural areas due to urbanization of Yokohama city.

Methods

Jike Furusato Village
- Satoyama landscape near a major urban center with conservation efforts and a mixed community of newcomers and locals

Field Observations
- Observation of satoyama ecosystems and geographical features
- Understanding/analyzing the ecosystem services satoyama provides

Interview
- 1 hour in-person semistructured interview was held with a long-term foreign resident in Jike (A. San), recorded and analyzed
- Questions asked were about his motivation to move to Japan, his challenges, lifestyle, business, goals, and involvement in the community

Figure 2. Students interviewing A. San, a foreign business owner who now lives a traditional life in a satoyama landscape.

Results

Field Observation Findings

Satoyama Ecosystems:
- Mixed forests, rice paddies, fields, and ponds

Geographical Features:
- Hills, Valleys

Biodiversity:
- Range of wildlife and plants

Ecosystem Services:
- Provision, Regulating, Cultural, and Supporting

Figure 2. Examples of ecosystem services satoyama provides, fertile soil, rice paddies, shrines, & food.

Activities to Revive Satoyama

Workshop Activities
- Offering Japanese traditional activities to revive local crafts/traditions

Food processing
- Made in Jike

Farmland management
- Organic farming WWOOF network → self-sufficiency
- Week-end family-oriented nature/farming experience
- Environmental education; raises awareness

Business & Community
- Jike Marche(local products such as farming, crafts etc...)
- Shop, Cafe, restaurant, shared working space
- facilitates networking & business creation

Figure 4. Photographs of family farming experiences, workshop activities, food processing, and businesses that revive local traditions, increase environmental awareness, and facilitate networking.

Okutama Case Study

A satoyama area 2 hours west of Tokyo
Population declining and aging since 1970s
→ decline of rural activities
Since 2004, **policies to attract newcomers:**
- support/advisory services before relocation for those interested (website for people interested in relocation)
- opportunities to experience rural life before relocation
- financial incentives
  - subsidized housing
  - subsidized day care for children
  - subsidized free health care for children
- events to promote networking between locals and newcomers
- support for new business

Conclusions

- Satoyama remains relevant in the 21st C
→ Provides vital ecosystem services
- Satoyama helps achieve the SDGs
- Satoyama revival is a priority
- Newcomers contribute to satoyama revival
- Policies to attract newcomers to satoyama should be promoted

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