

# Masters of Forests

— Their Wisdom and Arts —



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Organization

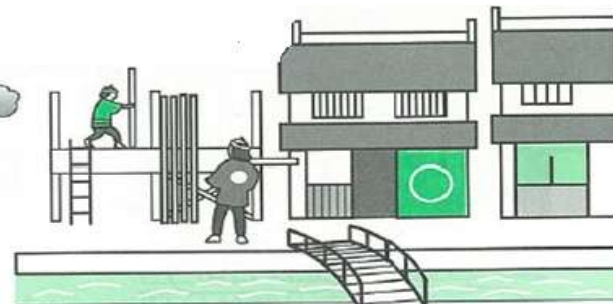
NPO Network for Coexistence with Nature  
(Kyozon-no-Mori Network)

# Forest-based Culture

- In Japan, people have used proper tree species for various purposes since prehistoric age.
- In historic age, various systems were adopted to avoid forest devastation and resulting flood:
- Like this, efforts to maintain a balance between use and conservation of forests have been continued with a lifestyle using wood for many purposes.



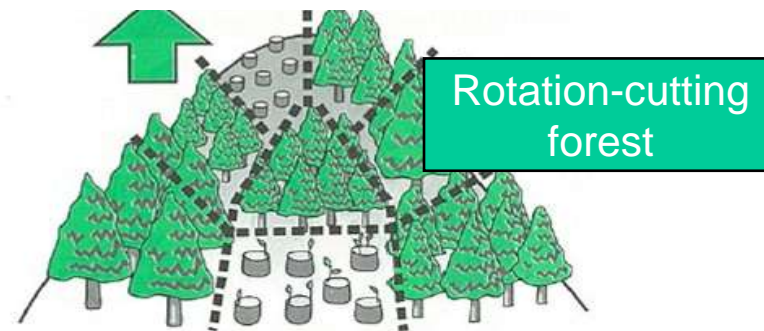
The firewood and litter were used as fuel or fertilizer.



Timber for house construction in town was supplied in a sustainable manner.



Collecting of firewood and litter were restricted by each village.



Areas were divided into dozens of blocks, and each of the blocks was harvested in rotation.

# Wood-based Culture

- For construction of traditional house in Japan, the timber framework method is common.
- 90% of the designated important cultural properties in Japan are made of wood.
- Many of commodities are made of wood (incl. bamboo) as well.



Horyuzi Temple :  
the oldest wooden  
architecture in the world



A house built with the  
timber framework method



Winnowing basket,  
Creel



Bamboo hat



Lunch box



Tub, Pail



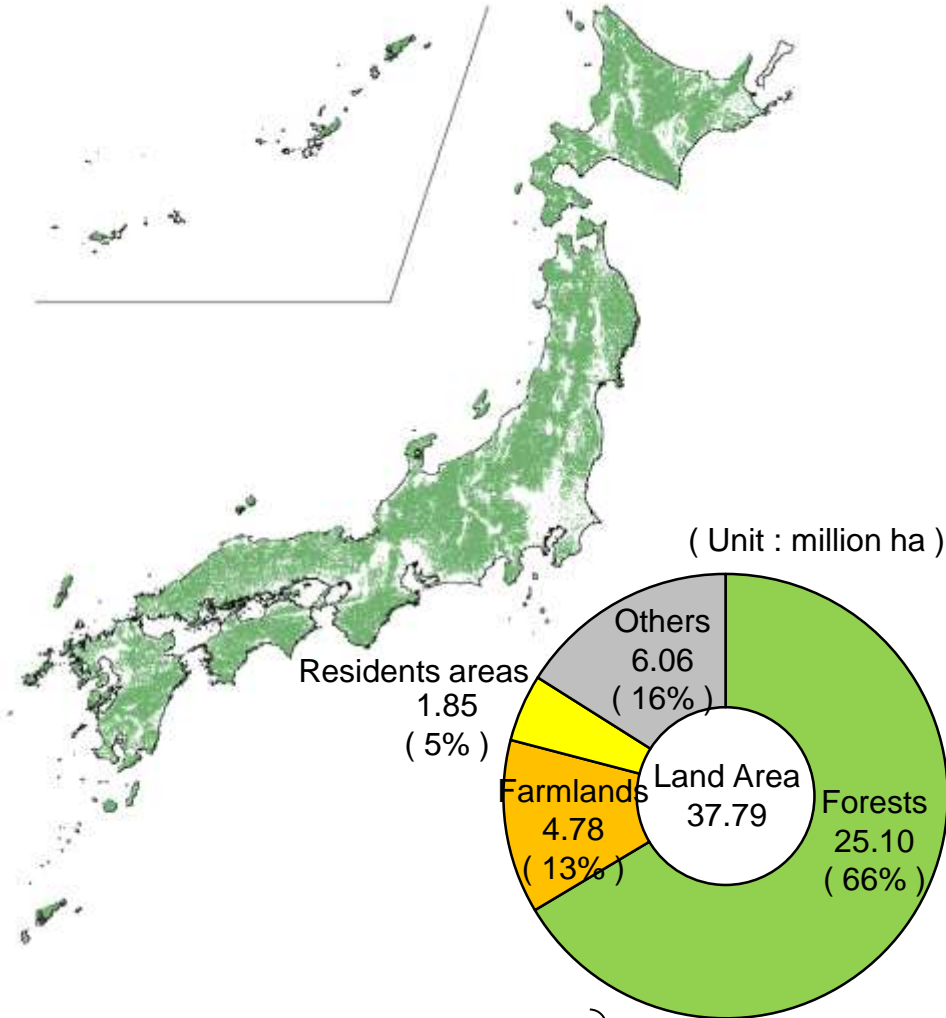
Lacquered tray



Charcoal  
(used for fuel)

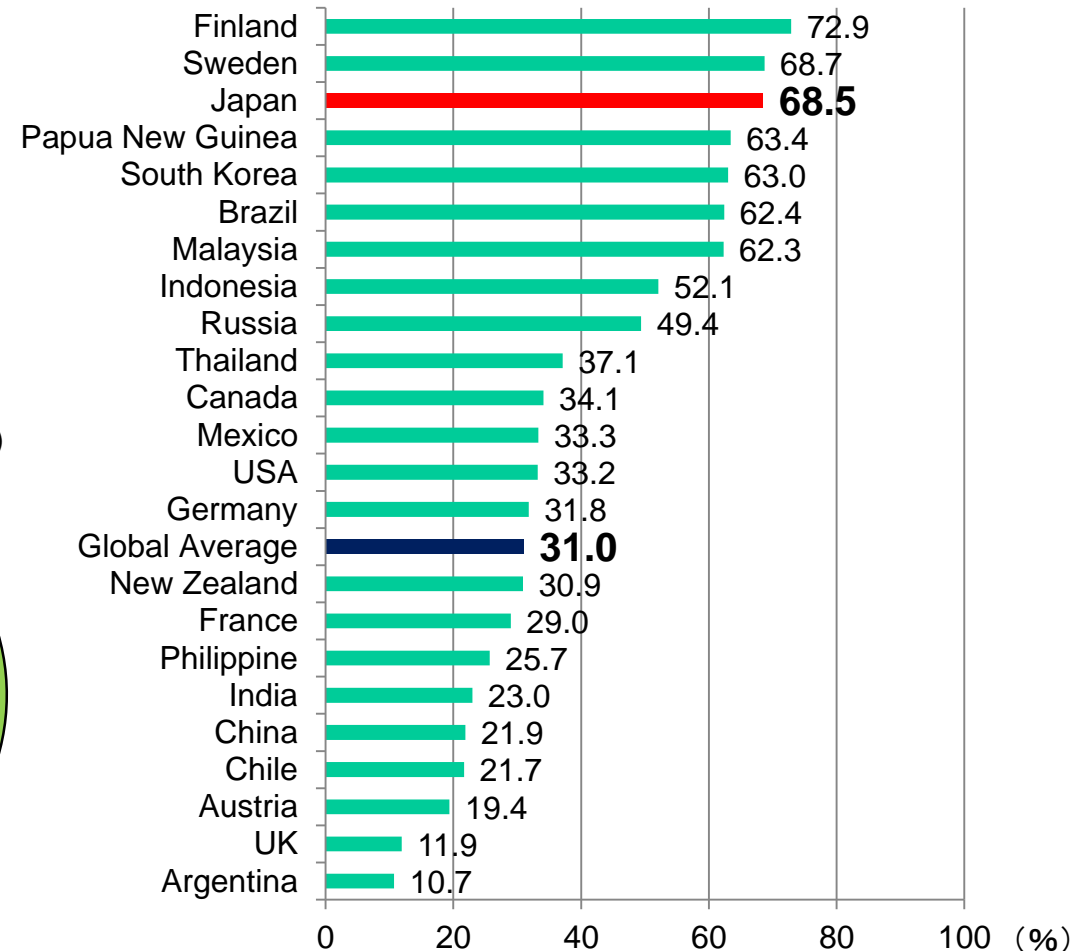
# Japan : One of the Most Forest-Rich Countries

○ Japan maintains forest ratio near 70% as a result of ancestors efforts and favorable climate conditions.



Source: "White Paper on Land 2007" MLIT  
Note: The table of land area is as of Oct. 1, 2005.

## Forest Ratio in Each Country

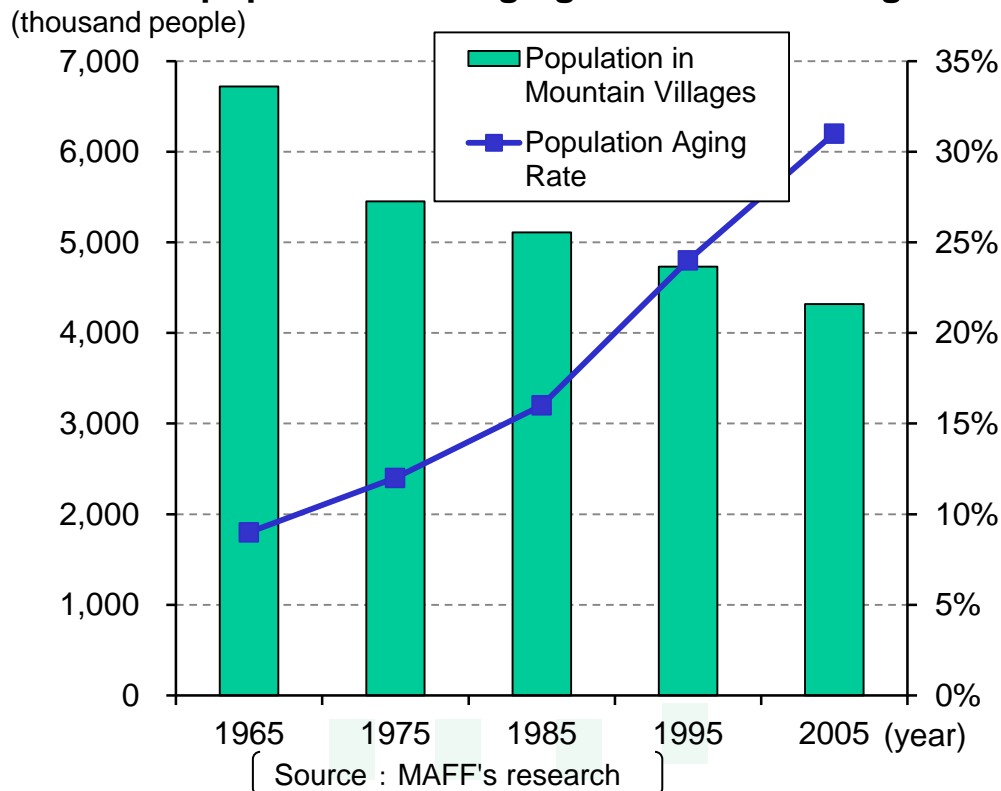


Source: "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010" FAO

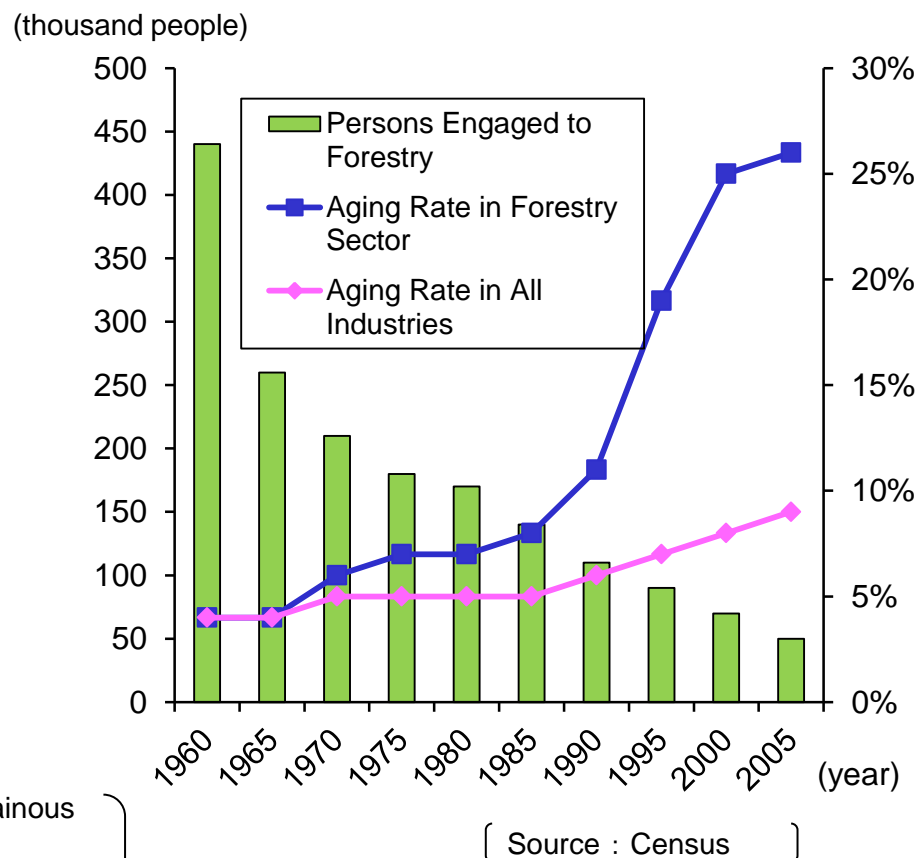
# Vanishing Ancestor's Wisdom

- The number of persons engaged to forestry is decreasing, owing to deterioration of forestry's profitability and depopulation and aging in mountain villages.
- With this, our ancestor's traditional knowledge on forest and forestry is vanishing, as well.

### Depopulation and aging in mountain villages



### Decreasing of persons engaged to forestry



Note1: "Mountain villages" means the village designated under the Mountainous Villages Development Law  
 Note2: "Population aging rate" means the ratio of population over 65 years to the total population.

# Starting of Recording of Ancestor's Wisdom

- Forestry Agency started a program to select "Masters of Forests" and to let high school students to record their wisdom.
- There was a model "FOXFIRE" in USA.
- Our program, which is called "Kikigaki-Koshien", is conducted under the cooperation between public sector and private sector.

- In FY2001, Forestry Agency planned to select "Masters of Forests" who inherit the traditional knowledge from ancestors.
- Then, an author, Mr. Yonematsu Shiono, made a proposal to let young people to interview those Masters, like FOXFIRE program in USA.

**【FOXFIRE in USA】** <http://www.foxfire.org/>

- Since 1996, high school students have been interviewing self-sufficient old people in Georgia, and recording their knowledge in a series of books named "Foxfire".
- These books are precious documents about traditional culture around the Appalachian Mountains.
- Based on this proposal, Forestry Agency and Ministry of Education started to "Kikigaki-Koshien" program in 2002.
- Since 2003, the secretariat function of the program have been transferred to a NPO, and the program have been conducted with donation from private companies and organizations.



Mr. Shiono

# Selection of "Masters of Forests"

## 【Criteria for Selection】

- Being over 50 years old
- Having experience engaged to a job related to forests over 20 years
- Having excellent and distinctive skill on the job they have been engaged to
- Being a role model for people in the same profession or community



<b>Forestry Practices Section</b>	Planter, Nursery Maker, Cable Yarding Operator, Sawman, etc.
<b>Forest Products Section</b>	Hunter, Japanese Lacquer Extractor, Mushroom Grower, etc.
<b>Wood Processing Section</b>	Wood Turner, Charcoal Maker, Pail Maker, etc.
<b>Forest Culture Section</b>	Thatch Roofer, Paper Maker, Fabric Maker, etc.

## 【Procedure of Selection】

- First, they are nominated by Forestry Department on each Prefectural Government, and then, selected by an experts' committee.
- The selection is conducted by "National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization".



Since FY2010, "Masters of Sea or River" have also been selected.

- The selection of "Masters of Sea or River" is conducted by "National Association of Fisheries Infrastructure" and "National Federation of Inlandwater Fisheries Cooperatives" under the cooperation of Fisheries Agency

# Schedule in a Year

## In FY2013

May to June	Recruitment of participating high school students
July	Selection of 100 students (interviewer)
Beginning of August	Selection of "Masters of Forests" and "Masters of Sea or River" (interviewee)
Middle of August	Training for students as interviewer (Students gather together in Tokyo, and take lectures and exercises on "Kikigaki" method.)
September	Matching between interviewer (students) and interviewee (80 Masters of Forests, and 20 Masters of Sea or River)
October to December	Visiting, interviewing and making reports by students
January	Deadline of submission of reports
March	Forum for presentation of excellent reports



Training



Visiting and Interviewing



Forum



# "Kikigaki" Method

- Interviewer records all the voices of the dialog with interviewee.
  - After the interview, interviewer writes down only the interviewee's words from the recorded dialog.
  - It is allowed to change the order of the interviewee's story.
  - It is not allowed to add the interviewer's impression or opinion, unlike in the case of reportage. A "Kikigaki" report has to be described as the first-person perspective.
- As it is written using the spoken language, it can be easy to read if properly arranged. It can express the local language (dialect) of interviewee or phrases specific to the profession.
  - "Kikigaki" is the same method used in the research of folklore. Its report can be a literature work.
  - The way of question is important to bring out the dignity of the interviewee.
  - A sense of respect to the interviewee is indispensable for successful "Kikigaki".



Works by Mr. Shiono,  
a Kikigaki author

# Voices of Students and Masters

## 【Students' voices】

- I felt the cry of forests while hearing the story of the Master. (male)
- I thought that forest is the background of our lives. I felt the existence of forests which is not so far and has natural connection to my life. (female)
- A person is full of story. It may be no wonder, but I think it is something special. (female)
- In the training, I was told "Do not express a person's life in one word." This sentence taught my heart the importance of "Kikigaki" which reveals a dense life of a person. (female)
- I think that skill is not passed down by itself. I am sure that it is always handed on with ancestors' hearts and wisdom. (male)



## 【Masters' voices】

- I could tell the young man/woman the precious connection between forests and people. (79, male, Wood Cutter)
- When I found the sparkle in the eyes of the student, I felt that I could provide him/her a key to the forests. (82, male, Nursery Maker)
- I could make myself clear and re-examine my life. I could get my heart open to a person other than my family, and he/she made it into a written story. (62, male, Woodcrafter)
- I thought over the importance of my work, again. (59, male, Shrine Carpenter)
- I felt freshness in the question with strait eye, and I was impressed by a pure heart. (63, female, Herb Dyer)
- I could have a opportunity to look back on myself, and I thought that I have to devote myself more and more. (62, male, Flower Vase Maker)

# History of "Masters of Forests" & "Kikigaki-Koshien"

FY2001	Planning of "Masters of Forests"; Proposal of the concept of "Kikigaki-Koshien"
FY2002	Start of the selection of "Masters of Forests"; 1st "Kikigaki-Koshien", conducted by Forestry Agency and Ministry of Education
FY2003	2nd "Kikigaki-Koshien", conducted by Executive Committee of which secretariat is NPO "Forests and Environment Network Association", with donation from private companies
FY2007	Change of the Secretariat of Executive Committee to the newly launched NPO "Network for Coexistence with Nature", which was born from the activities by "Kikigaki-Koshien" graduates
FY2010	Start of the selection of "Masters of Sea or River" and "Kikigaki-Koshien on Sea and River"; Making of documentary movie "Mori-Giki" by Director Shohei Shibata
FY2011	10th anniversary of "Kikigaki-Koshien"
FY2013	Excess of total number of "Masters of Forests" over 1,000



# Meaning of "Masters of Forests" & "Kikigaki-Koshien"

- To hand on the knowledge and the skill of Masters to future generation
  - By archiving them as literal information
- To enlighten the people who touched this programme (incl. participating students, readers of the "Kikigaki" anthology) on the value of forests and forestry
  - To recognize the role of the "Sustainable Forest Management" in the construction of sustainable society
  - To discover the value of *Satoyama* Forest and to promote its conservation
    - ✓ *Satoyama* Forest is the landscape and ecosystem of secondary forest which has been maintained through human-induced activities.
- To foster the next generation of young people
  - Some of "Kikigaki-Koshien" graduates have started trying to revitalize local villages in Japan.
    - "Activities of Coexistence with Nature"
  - "Kikigaki-Koshien" can be considered a very good practice of "Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)" promoted by UNESCO.



Anthology of "Kikigaki" Reports



Reports are uploaded on website.  
(<http://lib.ruralnet.or.jp/mori/>)



# Thank you for listening !

## Members of Executive Committee of "Kikigaki-Koshien"

**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Forestry Agency, Fisheries Agency)**  
農林水産省 (林野庁・水産庁)

**Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology**  
文部科学省

**Ministry of the Environment**  
環境省

**National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization**  
公益社団法人 国土緑化推進機構

**National Association of Fisheries Infrastructure**  
公益社団法人 全国漁港漁場協会

**National Federation of Inlandwater Fisheries Cooperatives**  
全国内水面漁業協同組合連合会

**NPO "Network for Coexistence with Nature"**  
認定NPO法人 共存の森ネットワーク

# And, special thanks to the following enterprises and organizations which support the “Kikigaki-Koshien” in FY2013

## Special Support from

Familymart Co., Ltd.

株式会社 ファミリーマート

## Assent and Cooperation from

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東京ガス株式会社

TOYOTA MOTOR CORPORATION

トヨタ自動車株式会社

FUJIFILM Holdings Corporation

富士フイルムホールディングス株式会社

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