

thejapan times

Satoyama Consortium

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BUSINESS MEETS NATURAL, LOCAL HERITAGE

The Japan Times launched the Satoyama Consortium in January to promote the efforts of local practitioners in what is known as “*satoyama* capitalism.”

The term *satoyama* refers to a shared woodlot used and maintained by area residents. This capitalism utilizing *satoyama* is used to describe the creation of new forms of revenue by taking advantage of natural resources that do not necessarily have monetary value.

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The concept, which became widely known following the release of the book “Satoyama Capitalism” in 2013, is said to have revitalized regions by stimulating the use of previously overlooked natural resources and creating jobs for area residents. It is believed to help contribute to a sustainable society, complementing conventional capitalism.

However, the significance and results of these efforts have not been well promoted, meaning the understanding of, and support for, these activities is not widespread. This led The Japan Times to create the consortium for further promotion of the activities, especially in English, by relevant parties across the country.

With this consortium, The Japan Times has organized various events, including the Satoyama Cafe seminars that invite individuals who have been active in the relevant fields, in addition to a symposium in February to commemorate the launch of the consortium.

It also plans to organize exchange events with local *satoyama* practitioners, as well as study tours to sites where these activities are taking place across Japan.

As part of its consortium efforts, The Japan Times hosted the inaugural symposium on May 16 in Tokyo.

This supplement covers the symposium, consisting of three sessions in which advocates, representatives from municipalities and *satoyama* practitioners discussed their ideas and engagements in their respective fields. The supplement also covers some of the consortium’s activities to give relevant parties and readers a clearer picture of its initiatives.

The consortium is headed by Minako Suematsu, chairperson and representative director of The Japan Times. The consortium’s secretariat chief is Yuto Yoshida, former mayor of Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, and current guest researcher at Waseda University’s Environmental Research Institute.

Kosuke Motani, chief senior economist at the Japan Research Institute Ltd., Kyosuke Inoue, executive producer of NHK Enterprises, Inc., and Tadashi Mitachi, senior adviser of The Boston Consulting Group K.K., are on its advisory board. The management committee of the consortium is chaired by Tadashi Matsushima, representative director of Setouchi Jam’s Garden Co., while Eikei Suzuki, governor of Mie Prefecture, and Masataka Ota, chief consultant of JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co., serve as vice-chairmen.

Satoyama in Japan and beyond

Minako Suematsu
CHAIRPERSON,
REPRESENTATIVE
DIRECTOR OF
THE JAPAN TIMES



We believe there are many clues in the activities of municipalities and practitioners engaging in the revitalization efforts through utilization of *satoyama*, or rural communal woodlots that are shared and maintained by local residents, that could resolve various issues that not only Japan, but the international community faces.

Our Satoyama Consortium was established to support these efforts. The consortium aims to be a platform that connects relevant parties who can learn from each other and share their efforts.

Through carrying relevant articles in The Japan Times in English, we’d like to let the world know that there is a concept of “*satoyama* capitalism” in Japan as an alternative and more sophisticated version of monetary capitalism.

We would like to ask for your participation and cooperation with the consortium, as well as invite you to join in our efforts.

Satoyama symposium municipalities' session

TOURISM 'FLAVORED WITH HISTORY'

At the inaugural Satoyama Consortium symposium organized by The Japan Times on May 16 in Tokyo, municipal leaders discussed the possibilities of economic activities stemming from efforts involving "satoyama capitalism," a concept recently promoted in Japan to take advantage of natural resources in satoyama, which are rural communal woodlots that are shared and maintained by local residents. A similar concept in relation to the ocean is called satoumi.

At the session, Hidehiko Yuzaki, governor of Hiroshima Prefecture; Eikei Suzuki, governor of Mie Prefecture; and Gen Nakagawa, mayor of Nara, shared their thoughts on this topic. Hiroki Kuriyama, head of strategic business development and in charge of the 2020 Project at NTT Corp., moderated the discussion.

The following are translated excerpts from the discussion.

Kuriyama: Let me ask two questions to start with. Firstly, we will be talking about satoyama, but it is essentially the same as discussing the symbiosis of humans and nature. So could you introduce some of the policies related to the theme that you are focusing on as a municipality?

Secondly, can you please tell us about some policies particularly designed to deal with satoyama and satoumi?

Yuzaki: Almost all policies related to people and nature are about satoyama and satoumi. Above all, our main focus is on human resource development. To be honest, we are facing the dilemma of how to promote the idea of satoyama capitalism as a local government. I feel that too much involvement of the government is likely to result in failure. Things usually don't go well when the government takes the lead and tries new things, one after another. For example, offering subsidies, creating frameworks, introducing ordinances and so on. But doing nothing also raises questions about our role, putting us in a very difficult position.

What is the appropriate level of involvement? I think it is to offer help in human resource development, and build a network among different projects dealing with the field. For instance, facilitating the exchange of examples and introducing projects through various means, including the internet. We have already been trying these things.

"Hito Yume Mirai Juku" (roughly, "Workshop for the future: people and dreams") organized by Hiroshima Prefecture is one of the examples. It is a series of seminars in which participants actually plan and carry out projects to use the resources of satoyama and satoumi in business activities or regional revitalization. We also held "Satoyama Miraihaku" (approximately, "Expo on the future of satoyama"), an exposition to promote the future of satoyama last year. Many projects were launched in various parts in Hiroshima in connection with the expo serving as platforms for human resource development.



Municipal leaders discuss their *satoyama* and *satoumi* policies and engagements in their respective prefectures and cities at a session during the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium symposium in Tokyo on May 16. YOSHIKI MIURA

These kinds of activities help us find people with networking abilities, business talents and other qualities as leaders. So, what we are working on next is Hiroshima Satoyama Team 500, a project to find 500 such people, offering them opportunities to interact with each other and help them become regional leaders. They will be the core for the future activities in each region.

Suzuki: I would like to talk about *ama*, professional female divers who harvest marine products, because I think their way of life is a typical example of the symbiosis of humans and nature, and the activity to produce new economic values using natural resources.

"*Nihon Shoki*" ("Chronicles of Japan"), an old history book written more than 1,000 years ago, contains a description of *ama* as fishing divers. There are about 1,500 *ama* divers in 17 prefectures in Japan, with Mie Prefecture having the largest number of them. About half of the *ama* divers in Japan are in the Toba and Shima areas of Mie.

What is respectable about our *ama* divers is that they have their own rules to prevent themselves from overfishing. For example, there is a village that only lends out one wet-suit set per family, even if there are three *ama* divers in the house. If all divers in the area start fishing at the same time, they may end up depleting resources. The fishing area is also divided into six zones that are used in turn each year. *Ama* divers are practicing a sustainable use of resources by themselves.

Our support as a local government includes the promotion of fishery and tourism, and the preservation of *ama* culture as a cultural heri-

tage. To increase *ama* divers' income from catching abalone, we are planning to introduce a way to grow abalone larger so they are easier for the divers to catch. We have been helping them generate revenue by accepting tourists at *amagoya*, or *ama* huts. These places used to be only for the divers to rest and get warm, but now tourists can enjoy seafood caught by the divers. The preservation of the *ama* culture as a cultural heritage is exactly the kind of thing that can only be achieved with the involvement of the public administration. The traditional freediving fishing method has been designated a cultural property by the prefecture since I took office as the governor of Mie. It has recently become a national cultural property as well.

Nakagawa: In our case in Nara, a city known for the Great Buddha and deer, the key industry is tourism in areas with World Heritage sites. About 15 million people visit the city of Nara annually.

However, the problem is that tourists visiting Nara tend to stay for only short periods of time. We are trying to use the resources of satoyama in a bid to increase the length of tourist stays. There are about seven old settlements that can be reached within about 20 minutes by car from the center of the city. We are in the process of promoting the use of farmhouses as *minpaku* (private lodging services) in collaboration with local farming families. We already have 36 families that are willing to accept visitors.

Looking at the global trend, tourism demand will undoubtedly increase. In participating in the global tourism market, it will be of great value for Japan to further appeal its

colorful charms to the world. I believe that satoyama resources can be used effectively in diversifying the values of Japan from global perspectives.

Kuriyama: Now the keyword "minpaku" has been mentioned. Gov. Yuzaki, I hear that Hiroshima is quite aggressive in promoting it.

Yuzaki: To be precise, we want to promote it more aggressively. Various kinds of laws and regulations, such as the minpaku law, the Hotel Business Act, the Fire Service Act and the Building Standards Act got in the way in the process of promoting minpaku business, so we appealed to the national government to be more flexible. I think our claims have been accepted to some extent.

Mayor Nakagawa has just used a wonderful word. I think "colorful" means "diverse." Most cities have the same shops and they look the same. I want people to see various places that are more real and flavored with history, but I don't think those who are in the actual field are sharing the same awareness yet.

Kuriyama: What do you mean by "those who are in the actual field?"

Yuzaki: I mean those who have the vacant houses. They are having a hard time making those spaces useful. It costs money and effort to rent them out, so they tend to become reluctant. We need someone who leads and motivates them. This is exactly where human resource development is needed.

There are some successful examples in urban areas. In Onomichi, Hiroshima, a woman started the restoration of *kominka* old traditional houses. The project grew bigger and

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Scenic view overlooking the Seto Inland Sea from the top of Mount Ryuo in Mihara, Hiroshima Prefecture. CITY OF MIHARA



Ama divers serve seafood to visitors in *amagoya* (ama huts) in Toba, Mie Prefecture, which is home to about half of *ama* in Japan. MIE PREFECTURE

Satoyama symposium municipalities' session

LOCAL INVOLVEMENT VITAL TO SATOYAMA EFFORTS

Continued from page 2
involved a lot of people. Dozens of such houses have been renovated as shops and accommodations, as well as residences for migrants.
Kuriyama: Gov. Suzuki, how are the regional leaders fostered in Mie?
Suzuki: The water of the Choshi River in the town of Kihoku is extremely pure. It's so clean and clear the leader of a local nonprofit organization (NPO) is committed to introducing this beautiful river to more people.
I think it is important to support the people who stand up with the sense of urgency and pride in their hometown. The support should be provided in a way that they can continue their activities even after government assistance ends.

Kuriyama: May I have a comment on this from you, Mayor Nakagawa?
Nakagawa: Just as Gov. Suzuki mentioned, the best way is to put administrative resources where there is a sense of urgency and pride. In Nara, we devote resources to where there are possibilities, then observe for a certain period of time to see if they work, and withdraw if they don't. We should take the risk of failures as the government following trial and error efforts.
Yuzaki: It is indeed important to help the regions that have passion and pride. The realization of satoyama capitalism is an economic activity to produce the cycle of economy by using the resources of satoyama, and to prevent outflow of economic values. So it does not work without the involvement of regions and people. All successful examples show a great deal of engagement from the regions.
Suzuki: Satoyama capitalism, satoyama and satoumi work well with themes such as diversity and active social participation of women.
There is an NPO named Mother's Life Supporter in Suzuka, Mie. It is an organization that consists of mothers who have children from newborn to four years old. The mothers are divided into three groups: the work team, the child care team and the



Hidehiko Yuzaki

standby team. While the work team farms in the field near the mountain, the mothers of the child care team look after the children of their own and those of the women on the work team in a vacant house nearby. The standby team can substitute for whoever needs to leave due to the health conditions of their child.
The number of farming populations are decreasing in general. This is a model in which women of child-rearing age create economic values by participating in farming while their children are taken care of by their colleagues who are also mothers. Moreover, they are even making a vacant house useful again. I think it is a good idea to look at the resources of satoyama from the perspective of women, or in the context of diversity to produce new and sustainable economic values.
Nakagawa: The important point is that multiple themes are dealt with at the same time. In other words, it is about how to multitask. In Nara, the administrative services, such as water and sewerage in the mountainous regions, is unprofitable, so we are studying the possibility of using the national government subsidy in operating the water and sewerage on a concession basis. For example, one person would collect garbage in the morning, drive a school bus and operate a gas station in the afternoon, and provide plumbing services when necessary. I think there are many tasks that can be performed by one person both in communities and public sectors that would make management ideas easier.
Kuriyama: All three of the leaders have World Heritage sites in each city or prefecture. How are you going to use those assets in boosting the pride and motivation of the local people or as tourism and cultural resources?
Nakagawa: Nara's Great Buddha is an overwhelming symbol of the city, but it is attracting so much attention that a variety of other tourism resources we have are hardly appre-



Elkei Suzuki

ciated; this is our dilemma.
We, as a local government, often wonder what the purpose of tourism could be. People tend to start seeking mental contentment when they already have enough of everything in life. In that sense, the effect that satoyama can have on people's minds seems to have the quality to satisfy the needs in tourism. Instead of coming to see a building or a Buddha statue just because it is the oldest or the biggest in Japan, we want visitors to understand the underlying concept of the place.
At the time when the Great Buddha was built (completed in 752), an epidemic had spread, wars had occurred and there was societal unrest. Why would anyone want to spend a vast amount of money to make a statue in a time like that? What were his feelings and how was the leadership of Emperor Shomu, who instructed the creation of the huge Buddha in just a decade? These kinds of themes are universal and inspiring to all people, regardless of nationality.
So, the way to make the best use of World Heritage sites is to share the understanding of why they are there, and to learn from the way of thinking, philosophy and life of the people who have preserved those assets until today. The concept of the Great Buddha had originally been the creation of the world where all living things, including animals and plants, prosper together. If you translate it into the modern world, it is the life of satoyama itself. Trips with such revelations will offer awareness and learning that international travelers can bring back to their own lives.
Suzuki: In terms of World Heritage sites, we have the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes. There is the Magose Pass, Matsumoto Pass and other well-known spots on the routes leading into mountains, and at the same time, Shichiri Mihama Beach and the Kumano River that form part of the routes are also designated as World Heritage sites. I think the whole series of the World Heritage sites of the Kumano Kodo is



Gen Nakagawa

like a combination of all elements of satoyama and satoumi.
Our current focus is on building a closer and deeper network of people and helping the transition of generations. We want to increase the number of people who make a deep commitment to the region: those who love the Kumano Kodo, walk the routes again and again and put effort into their preservation. The people who can tell old tales of the Kumano Kodo are aging, so we also want to help them hand down the role to the younger generation.
Yuzaki: We have the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, or the Genbaku Dome, and Itsukushima Shrine, which is on the island of Miyajima. I don't think the Genbaku Dome is part of satoyama (because it is located in the middle of the city), but Miyajima is an island blessed with abundant nature. However, the island is not categorized as part of satoyama or satoumi because it is considered a sacred island and no human intervention is allowed. It is totally different from satoyama, which is kept beautiful with the involvement of people.
Still, of course we want people coming to see these sites to enjoy their visits. I hope that they really get to know the real and diverse Japan, and regions with thousands of years of history.
Kuriyama: Lastly, may I have a concluding comment from Gov. Suzuki who is also the vice-chairman of the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium management committee?
Suzuki: Finding many partners will draw more attention to satoyama and satoumi, promoting deeper understanding that will then lead to sustainability. That is what I want the society to be like.
Kuriyama: Japan will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic games in 2020. The Rugby World Cup and the G-20 summit will be held in 2019. These coming years are full of opportunities for our movements to expand and reach out to the world. Thank you very much.



Hiroyuki Kuriyama



Nara visitors take part in rice planting as part of a farmhouse *minpaku* (private lodging services) program organized in May 2017. CITY OF NARA



NTT Docomo, Inc. provides technical support for rice farmers' efforts for sustainable farming in the Iriya district of Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture. NTT DOCOMO, INC.

Satoyama symposium practitioners' session

WOMEN'S PANEL SHARES INSIGHTS

Maiko Muraoka
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Three women practitioners engaging in *satoyama* and *satoumi*-based activities discussed their thoughts during a panel discussion at the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium symposium in Tokyo on May 16.

The term *satoyama* has evolved to refer to caring for, and capitalizing on, natural resources in rural communities, while *satoumi* is the cultivation of the sea by area residents.

The speakers were Chie Ishino of Ishino Suisan, a fishery company in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture; Chika Tsubouchi from the Ghibli-Hagi Oshima Sendanmaru fishing fleet in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture; and Naoko Oshima from Youbi Co., a wooden furniture and architecture company in Nishiwakura, Okayama Prefecture.

All three hold leadership roles in their respective fields, and of all the qualities and ambitions each one has in leading their businesses, the discussion revealed three things that they have in common: the passion to connect with, and hand things down to, the next generation, communication skills and the ability to handle multiple tasks and roles.

The session was moderated by Tadashi Matsushima, owner of Setouchi Jam's Garden in Suo Oshima, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Ishino had originally left Kashima Island where her family runs the company producing small dried sardines called *chirimenjako*, to receive higher education in search of a better future than what she could expect in her hometown.

However, after having built a successful career in various cities far from home, she



Participants discuss their activities and roles in their respective *satoyama* and *satoumi* fields on a panel at the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium symposium in Tokyo on May 16. YOSHIKI MIURA

returned to the island to improve the sales of Ishino Suisan by introducing ways to sell their products directly to end consumers instead of wholesaling to fish markets.

One of her motivations is that she wants to pass down the beautiful sea and fields to her children's generation.

"These assets will be gone if we don't continue to engage with them," she said. "I want my children to be proud of what they have here."

Meanwhile, Tsubouchi binds together the local fishermen of Hagi in Yamaguchi to form Hagi Oshima Sendanmaru, a fishing company that also engages in the so-called sixth industry, the combination of the primary industry

with processing and retailing.

The fishermen put prices on the fish they catch and deliver them directly from the ships to restaurants and individual customers.

Before she led the group, they had only followed the conventional approach of selling fish to the local fishing cooperative where the prices were determined. However, the overall fishing business was shrinking due to a combination of different factors, including a decline in individual consumption.

Fishing in general has a long history of being a male-oriented industry. "So the fishermen had always been focused on providing what was wanted at the already existing exit. But now we are drilling holes in a wall

that has no exits," Tsubouchi said.

The fishermen's community is fully aware that there is need for change, but typically they are not keen on trying something that has not ever been done before.

"Without changes, we cannot keep the younger generation from giving up fishing," she said.

In the meantime, Oshima was the only speaker who represented entrepreneurs from a mountainous area. She is a furniture designer and carpenter at Youbi. The motto of the company is "Crafting things that will make beautiful scenery in the future."

"It takes 50 years for a tree to grow before

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Satoyama symposium practitioners' session

HANDS-ON APPROACH FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Continued from page 4

it can be used to make a piece of furniture, and we expect the customer to use the furniture for the next 50 years," she said. "We, as a maker, act as a go-between as if handing down the scenery itself."

Oshima also suggested that communication plays an important role in running a sustainable business in rural areas. Youbi's first studio completely burned down several years ago.

As the rebuilding project started, it was not only the nine staff members who got involved. The communication and connections they had built, not only with their customers, but also with the people inside and outside of the local community, brought 600 volunteers to the construction site in Nishiawakura, which only has a population of around 1,500.

The new studio that opened in May also plans to start accommodating overnight visitors from July. This will further stimulate communication between the makers and consumers.

"A piece of quality furniture is a big purchase. It takes time to make a decision. So we would also like to facilitate a relaxing time for our customers to think or speak with family members," Oshima said.

Ishino also values interactions with customers. Selling chirimenjako directly to consumers at trade fairs, department stores and the like was a new trial for her family.

"We needed to think about how to get the attention of the people who had no idea who we were," she said. "So we used transparent cups and heaped them with chirimenjako. Moreover, we talked to the people walking past our shop and offered them a chance to taste a spoonful."

Ishino Suisan has also started to accept short visits from the passengers of guntu, a cruise ship run by Setouchi Cruise. The visitors can see the processing factory and the



Chie Ishino

surrounding area as part of their off-ship activities.

"Honestly, I don't like (conventional) tourism," said Ishino. "People drop by and just leave trash behind. So we treat our guests as if they are our close friends."

Tsubouchi agreed with Ishino, stressing that the sense of involvement is important in accepting visitors from outside. Hagi Oshima Sendanmaru is also starting a fishermen's guesthouse from June. Guests will wear the same uniform as the fishermen during their stay and experience life at the fishing port.

To conclude the discussion and find clues as to how the society can encourage more women to use their abilities to revitalizing satoyama and satoumi, Matsushima asked the speakers if there are things that could be improved.

Oshima pointed out that it is short-sighted to think that forestry-related governmental support is the only thing that is needed by the people in the forestry region.



Chika Tsubouchi

A wider range of support can allow multiple projects to go on at the same time. Such support includes a good water and sewerage system to be able to accept visitors, a reliable internet infrastructure to help create new business opportunities through connections with the rest of the world, among others.

"To expand the business to the field of hospitality, nurseries that can look after our children on weekends would help, too," she said.

Ishino stressed that it is important to gain a better understanding about their work style from the labor market to attract more new workers.

"We are working with nature. We take a day off when a typhoon hits our area. Working hours vary depending on the season. Our routine is not the same all throughout the year," she said.

Matsushima concluded the session by saying that they are living a fusion of work and life, playing multiple roles and creating new values.



Naoko Oshima



Tadashi Matsushima



Chie Ishino (center) of Ishino Suisan in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture, during a company cooking class. ISHINO SUISAN



Chika Tsubouchi (center) with her Ghibli-Hagi Oshima Sendanmaru colleagues in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture. GHIBLI-HAGI OSHIMA SENDANMARU



Youbi Co.'s new facility serving as a furniture studio, showroom and company headquarters opened in May in Nishiawakura, Okayama Prefecture. YOUBI CO.



Employees at Setouchi Jam's Garden in Suo Oshima, Yamaguchi Prefecture, harvest apricots. SETOUCHI JAM'S GARDEN

Satoyama symposium advocates' session

CO-AUTHORS DISCUSS SATOYAMA PUSH

Masaaki Kameda
STAFF WRITER

Five years after the release of the book “Satoyama Capitalism,” its co-authors spoke about the background behind its publication and shared their thoughts on the ensuing developments at a symposium in Tokyo on May 16.

The authors — Kosuke Motani, chief senior economist at the Japan Research Institute Ltd., and Kyosuke Inoue, executive producer at NHK Enterprises, Inc. — were invited to speak at the opening session of the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium symposium, under the title “Why was *satoyama* capitalism introduced to the world?”

Satoyama originally described woodlots adjacent to agricultural communities, but has evolved to refer to a natural environment that remains stable because of usage and maintenance by area residents. *Satoumi* and *satokawa* feature similar concepts, referring to those of seas and rivers, respectively.

Published in July 2013, the book from Kadokawa Corp. has sold more than 400,000 copies, according to the publisher, and is said to have helped popularize the idea. The concept capitalizes on natural resources in satoyama and seeks to create a sustainable society that aims to complement conventional capitalism.

Inoue began by explaining that the book was based on a series of TV programs from 2011 that he produced while he was in the public broadcaster’s Hiroshima bureau. The term “satoyama capitalism” was coined by the producer, whose unique angle came from his past experience of producing programs probing the cause of the 2008 financial crisis triggered by the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy.

“While I was still working in Tokyo, I came to wonder what monetary capitalism was all about. Through a series of related coverage for the programs, I keenly felt a sense of uncertainty,” Inoue said.

Following his transfer to Hiroshima in the Chugoku region, Inoue realized there might be things that could replace monetary capitalism. He sensed potential in people’s energetic activities, despite their communities facing population decline and advanced aging.

“As you may know, the Chugoku region is where the term ‘depopulated’ was created,” he noted. “But people there have vigorously implemented various things utilizing resources at hand. So, I felt we might be able to find fresh ideas that (could be an alternative option) to monetary capitalism.”

In creating the programs on satoyama, Inoue approached Motani, who is well-versed with local municipalities across Japan.

“I asked Motani to appear in the programs as a facilitator and commentator, as well as to play a role in picking up future-oriented themes,” Inoue said.

Focused on the relevant activities in the region, the programs featured interviews with people in the field of satoyama. They also introduced various examples in the field, including how to utilize deserted cultivated lands that would lead to creating benefits and situations



Kosuke Motani, chief senior economist at the Japan Research Institute Ltd., (left) and Kyosuke Inoue, executive producer at NHK Enterprises, Inc. speak in the opening session of the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium symposium in Tokyo on May 16. YOSHIKI MIURA

surrounding the increasing number of young people moving there from urban areas.

Motani said the locally aired, six-part series, which received viewership rates of more than 10 percent, was very successful and suggested many people were impressed and profoundly affected.

“Usually, the impact ends there, but thanks to Inoue’s persistent follow-up efforts, the programs evolved into the publication,” Motani said. This enabled the concept to reach a wider audience.

Inoue noted he felt the groups of people engaged on the satoyama front and connections among them have become larger and stronger over the past five years.

“We have seen certain progress and now reached a stage where we should further promote the progress,” Inoue said.

In the meantime, Motani recalled there was much unreasonable criticism toward the book upon publication from people who obviously didn’t understand the essence of the concept.

He said some criticized him, asserting that he deceives young people and leads them to rural areas where, they claimed, they couldn’t make a living.

Responding to Motani’s comment, Inoue said the point of the book is not seeking to completely replace monetary capitalism.

Motani once said at a Japan Times lecture that this alternative capitalism is “more sustainable and resilient” and considered as “a subsystem of the modern economy.”

“While satoyama capitalists earn and spend cash, they place emphasis on non-monetary convertible value, pursuing a better balance between dependence on money and other factors in their lives,” the renowned economist stated in that lecture.



Kosuke Motani

Contrary to such strong opinions, Motani and Inoue agreed that they were surprised to receive warm receptions from the practitioners actually working in the satoyama field.

The term “satoyama capitalism” works quite well in finding common ground and establishing connections among the practitioners who might work in different fields from each other, but share a similar will and vision, according to Inoue.

As one example of the impact on the international community, Motani noted the book went on to be translated in South Korea and Taiwan, adding that he was invited to a forum on satoyama in Taiwan.

Additionally, Inoue and NHK’s group of reporters published — through Kadokawa — another book on satoumi titled “Satoumi Capital” in 2015, based on another series of programs from the broadcaster.

Wrapping up the dialogue, the two shared their thoughts on what needs to be done to further promote the concept.

Inoue stressed realizing a sustainable society is the key in dealing with various issues, including climate change and creating a healthy economy.

“We need to accurately recognize the resources on Earth, or those that humans can use, are limited,” Inoue said. He added that people need to understand that the younger generation would like to make contributions toward a sustainable society.

Meanwhile, Motani called for each individual’s effort, pointing out no single factor could solve problems.

“Don’t think that everything will be all right if you just follow satoyama or market economy principles or innovations,” he said. “The key here is to seek balance with each individual’s effort to that end within their own capacity.”

The inaugural annual symposium was sponsored by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of



Kyosuke Inoue

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Ministry of the Environment, the National Governors’ Association, the Japan Association of City Mayors and the National Association of Towns & Villages.

Prior to the session by Motani and Inoue, Minako Suematsu, chairperson and representative director of The Japan Times, said the newspaper hopes to be of help to the people in the world through introducing the activities of satoyama practitioners in English.

“The Japan Times has a mission to inform Japan’s satoyama, satokawa and satoumi situations in English,” Suematsu said. Efforts in these fields possibly contain hints to solving various issues that Japan and the world face, she said.

Also speaking at the onset of the symposium, Fumiaki Kobayashi, concurrently serving as the parliamentary vice-minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Cabinet Office, stressed that Japan has a role to set agendas for the international community.

“Japan is said to confront various issues ahead of other countries,” said Kobayashi, who pointed out such things as decreasing population, longer-living society and overwhelming progress of technologies. “I feel Japan can set agendas in the coming new era to define what the world should aim for.”

In setting those agendas, the consortium led by The Japan Times needs to serve as a platform for satoyama practitioners and send out relevant information to the world, he added.

The four-hour symposium attracted an audience of about 140 people.

At the closing of the symposium, Masataka Ota, chief consultant at JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co. who serves as a vice-chairman of the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium management committee, said that the consortium would further promote the activities of satoyama practitioners.



Fumiaki Kobayashi, concurrently serving as the parliamentary vice-minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Cabinet Office, speaks at the beginning of the symposium in Tokyo on May 16. YOSHIKI MIURA



Masataka Ota, chief consultant at JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co. who serves as a vice-chairman of the Japan Times Satoyama Consortium management committee, addresses the audience at the symposium’s closing on May 16 in Tokyo. YOSHIKI MIURA

Satoyama Consortium activities

STUDY TOUR ISLAND COMMUNITY DRAWS VISITORS

The Japan Times Satoyama Consortium has been engaged in various activities to promote municipalities and local companies representing the beauty and excellence of deep Japan.

The forerunner of the consortium held such activities, hosting a two-day study tour from Oct. 22 at Suo Oshima Island, also known as Kingyoshima Island for its resemblance to a *kingyo* (goldfish).

Usually a description for the nature and woodlots adjacent to rural communities, *satoyama* now encompasses a movement where local residents cultivate these areas for the sake of business and environmentalism.

Participants from the satoyama capitalism practitioners' gathering visited the scenic island in Yamaguchi Prefecture to meet and learn from the satoyama practitioners who live and make the most out of the surround-



Setouchi Jam's Garden shop offers around 180 kinds of jam throughout the year. SETOUCHI JAM'S GARDEN

ing community in real-world examples of satoyama capitalism.

Of the 12 aspiring members of the study tour from various backgrounds and communities were two college students from Ehime University who were impressed by the book "Satoyama Capitalism" during their senior year in high school; two participants from Ise-Shima, Mie Prefecture; two local teachers working in Yamaguchi Prefecture; and one person from Osaki-Shimajima Island, another island community in Hiroshima Prefecture.

Although the group was not blessed by good weather, the group visited Setouchi Jam's Garden, a small self-owned jam shop, and talked with the owner, Tadashi Matsushima. Among the topics discussed were the best work-life balance, and revitalizing the local community with the local temple serving as a hub.

The group then had lunch at Samurai Chaya, run by the local Chidori group. This locally owned and focused eatery is known for its signature dishes *mikan nabe* (citrus hot pot) and *tachiuo no kagamimori* (mirror-like cutlassfish) sashimi. The menu of the day was *iriko* soba, with Japanese buckwheat noodles dipped in a broth made from dried anchovies.

After lunch, the tour visited Kasahara Honey, a honey farm operating on the island. The owner, Takafumi Kasahara, spoke on Japan's current beekeeping situation and the strengths and strategies of Kasahara Honey. The group learned the importance of continuing the production of value-added goods while maintaining sound business practices.

The group was reminded of "Satoyama Capitalism" co-author Kosuke Motani's theme where making part of one's livelihood self-sustaining results in becoming less depen-



Kasahara Honey in Yamaguchi Prefecture has a shop and cafe featuring locally made honey. KASAHARA HONEY

dent on money. Individuals the group met and talked with taught a firsthand lesson on making the best of community, taking good care of it and handing on the assets of satoyama to future generations.

Overall, the group felt it was a helpful and important two-day trip on finding out how the bonds between people become a community asset. Each member will take what they learned to develop their localities based on their community's resources. As the trip wound down, the group thanked the people of Suo Oshima Island for their hospitality and generosity, promising to visit the beautiful island again.

On the previous day, the group organized a symposium where Motani delivered a speech to Suo Oshima High School students, introducing a project involved in identifying challenges facing the island and proposing public policies addressing them. The students also delivered presentations of their projects on developing new local products and establishing a company.

In the panel discussion that followed, the student president joined a satoyama capitalism practitioner from the island and a researcher to discuss satoyama capitalism that could last generations.

SATOYAMA CAFE OCEAN RESTORATION ROOTED IN SEAWEED

The fourth Satoyama Cafe, titled "Message from the Satoumi: Promoting Satoumi and Satoyama brands," was held March 2. The keynote speech was made by Takehiro Tanaka, executive director of Satoumi Zukuri Kenkyu Kaigi (or the Nonprofit research council on building *satoumi*).

Satoyama historically refers to an agricultural community's shared woodlots and nature, but can now describe a movement involving these communities' cultivation of natural environments for sustainability and profit. Several variations exist, with *satoumi* being the oceanic equivalent.

Tanaka was a fishery specialist in Okayama Prefecture, serving as the section chief of fisheries before retiring. Naturally, Tanaka has deep insight on the promotion of fisheries and revitalizing the *satoumi* of the Setonaikai region. His experiences span staying at fishery camps and going on fishing boats to experience a real catch, to spending 28 hours on the open sea on a fishing boat, and then going to the government office of Okayama Prefecture for his regular shift. Following his years as a public servant, Tanaka has definitely focused on the local side, where things are actually happening.

The one-hour lecture started with an elaboration of *satoumi*. As defined by Kyushu University professor Tetsuo Yanagi, it is "an ocean that has better biological balance and production through having artificial changes made by humans." According to Tanaka, this is



Takehiro Tanaka, executive director of Satoumi Zukuri Kenkyu Kaigi, speaks at the Satoyama Cafe in Tokyo in March. JAPAN TIMES SATOYAMA CONSORTIUM

common knowledge among fishermen.

However, modernization changed the sea and human's role in connection with it. In modern days, people have seen the reduction of catches and variety of species. Tanaka focused on *amamo* (eelgrass) to revitalize the ocean.

He worked with the residents of Hinase in Okayama Prefecture, namely the members of the Hinase Fishery Association, adding to a history of cultivation that stretches back to 1967 when the creation of value and management of fishery assets first came about thanks to the opening of the *Gomi no Ichi* fish market.

Other projects throughout the years include

cleaning the ocean floor, the *amamo* field revitalization technique policy, a plan between 11 prefectures to increase the Japanese Spanish mackerel population, the creation of an ocean farm, as well as various efforts regarding oysters and their properties.

Amamo are known as the "cradle of the sea," often serving as a feeding spot and bed for fish to spawn. The seaweed also helps maintain a lower water temperature, creates oxygen while maintaining carbon dioxide levels and absorbs chemicals that cause red tide.

The *amamo* fields that stretched for 590 hectares in Hinase just after World War II were reduced to less than 5 hectares because of rapid modernization. The Satoumi Research Council brought this number back to 250 hectares over 20 years. This work was possible because of the leadership and commitment of

the fishery association.

The prefecture, municipalities, NPOs, corporations and researchers all worked together to revitalize the *satoumi*. The movement began with 19 members from the fishery association and grew into a group effort of 83 members of association and municipal staff.

Oyster shells also buoyed Hinase's revitalization. Okayama Prefecture is Japan's second-largest producer of oysters, meaning there is an abundance of leftover shells. Instead of using money to dispose of these shells, they were scattered across the *amamo* fields. The shells were a natural, cost-efficient solution to revitalize *amamo*. The shells kept the sea water from getting muddy, but more importantly, they held down the *amamo* roots and prevented them from floating away.

Preservation of the *amamo* fields also has an educational effect in the community. Previously, the seaweed was an enemy to fishermen and the community because it got caught in boat propellers and would wash up on beaches. Tanaka worked with local children to resolve these issues. As drifting *amamo* have seeds in them, the children learned how to collect drifting *amamo* and seeds. These practical education experiences were presented at the National *Amamo* Summit, helping connect the younger and older generations of the community.

Tanaka's feelings toward the Hinase waters has connected those protecting Okayama's sea to the *satoumi* and *satoyama* of the area. In the eyes of *satoyama* advocates and practitioners, this interconnectivity impacts all parties, human and otherwise, stretching from nature to city.



Left: Amamo (eelgrass) harvesting. Right: Amamo growth has stabilized in Hinase. SATOUMI ZUKURI KENKYU KAIGI



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