

OUIK Research Column

One of the focal themes for research at OUIK is "Cities and Biodiversity". Dr. Asami Shikida, a visiting professor of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) and Professor at Hokkaido University, leads the research activities under this theme.

OUIK
Research Activities
Satoyama and Satoumi (SAS)
Sustainable Primary
Industries (SPI)
Cities and Biodiversity (CAB)

Cities and Biodiversity: Suggestions for urban design using the concept of biocultural diversity in Kanazawa City

Asami Shikida
Professor, Hokkaido University/
Visiting Professor, UNU-IAS

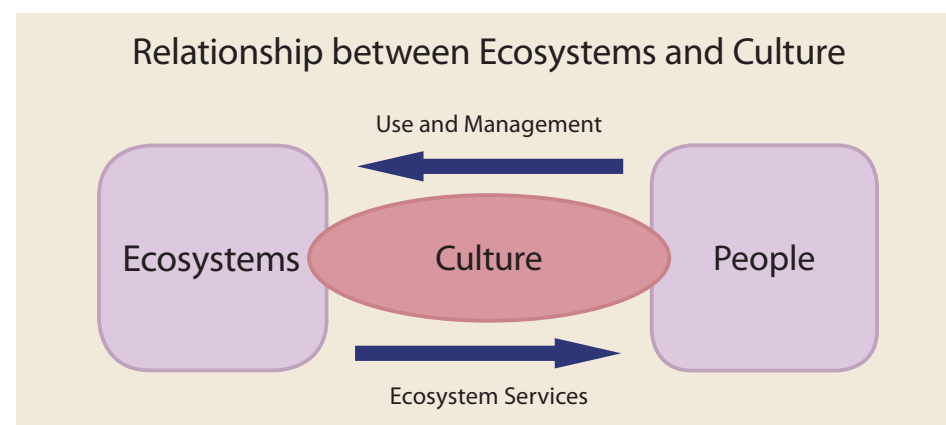
Have you ever thought about biodiversity in cities? In fact, developed cities do not seem to be rich in biodiversity when compared to *satoyama* and *satoumi* ecosystems. Some types of ecosystems, however, are dependent on the urban environment. For instance, urban parks, even though they may seem artificial at first glance, are home to flora and fauna, including a number of insects, birds, and animals. Kanazawa Castle Park is located in the centre of Kanazawa City and is neighbored by Kenroku Garden, one of the most famous gardens in Japan. These areas are important habitats and rich ecosystems filled with grass, trees, ponds and canals, which constitute key elements of the urban environment that people enjoy in their city lives. Some outdoor events held at such parks and gardens are unique to the culture of Kanazawa City, and the historical architecture gains greater beauty in the shade of the trees.

Ecosystems in rural and suburban areas may be larger and richer in biodiversity when compared with city ecosystems. Large cities are often home to a wide range of unique cultural facilities. We tend to have the impression that rural areas are rich in biodiversity while cities are cultural and creative, and consequently pay little attention to the relationship between rural and urban areas.

However, cities play a significant role in biodiversity conservation. Cities may undertake ecosystem conservation efforts, but as high consumption areas, they may also have a major impact on communities surrounded by *satoyama* and *satoumi*. Urban consumption of products is critically important for local primary industries, and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices cannot be achieved without consumers. Therefore, cities play an important role for biodiversity.

On the other hand, biodiversity contributes to the creation of urban culture. In Kanazawa, "Kaga vegetables", which are specific to the area and have been cultivated since before the 1940s, are a key element of the local food culture, and original recipes matching local tastes have been passed down from generation to generation. In addition, arts and crafts, as well as literature, are sometimes inspired by the local cuisine. Thus, urban culture is certainly also influenced by biodiversity.

OUIK has started to work on "biocultural diversity" as a concept that interweaves biodiversity with cultural diversity in order to elucidate the interaction between rural areas and cities. Kanazawa City will be an important model for rebuilding the relationship between cities and rural areas based on this new concept of "biocultural diversity".



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United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa (UNU-IAS OUIK)
Siinoki Cultural Complex, Ishikawa Prefecture 3F 2-1-1 Hirosaka, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, JAPAN 920-0962
Tel: 076-224-2266
Fax: 076-224-2271
E-mail: unu-iasouik@ias.unu.edu
<http://www.ias.unu.edu>

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What OUIK can achieve: Our expectations

Kazuhiko Takeuchi
Vice-Rector
United Nations University



Prof. Kazuhiko Takeuchi is Vice-Rector of UNU, Director of UNU-ISP, and Director of the Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S) at the University of Tokyo. He has served as Advisor to the Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture, Chairman of the Central Environment Council Committee on Nature Conservation, and a member of the Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies Council, Government of Japan. His specialties are landscape ecology and planning and sustainability science. While engaged in revitalization of *satochi* and *satoyama* in Japan, he is deeply involved with the *Satoyama* Initiative, which promotes international collaboration supporting various efforts to restore traditional land use.

The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa (UNU-IAS OUIK) has focused on "*Satoyama/Satoumi*", "Sustainable Primary Industries", and "Cities and Biodiversity" as its focal themes since April 2012, and has developed research activities in these fields. First of all, the outcomes of the JSSA (Japan *Satoyama Satoumi* Assessment) implemented under OUIK's leadership have significantly contributed to forming the concept of the *Satoyama* Initiative, which was launched at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/COP 10) held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture in 2010. As a co-chair of the JSSA together with Prof. Koji Nakamura, Kanazawa University, I hope to continue contributing to this field.

Secondly, in June 2011, the Noto area, including four cities and four towns in Ishikawa Prefecture, was designated as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) site along with Sado City in Niigata Prefecture. These are the first GIAHS sites in a developed country, and have attracted attention from both inside and outside of Japan. OUIK is expected to contribute to the global network of GIAHS through its research activities on traditional agricultural practices and adaptive management in *satoyama* areas on Noto Peninsula.

Furthermore, OUIK's research outcomes regarding "Cities and Biodiversity" are expected to contribute to the "Cities and Biodiversity Outlook" project that has been promoted by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and other stakeholders with cutting edge research groups around the world.

The United Nations University also anticipates OUIK's further progress in these research areas while pursuing its objective of contributing to international efforts through local activities.

I believe that OUIK will play an important role in disseminating the outcomes of local efforts to the international community, and the CBD/COP 11 in Hyderabad, India is an excellent opportunity for sharing these outcomes.

OUIK's Objectives:

1. To contribute to international research activities, in collaboration with local partners, towards a sustainable society, and
2. To develop communication and networks with local stakeholders through public outreach and capacity building, while sharing information on international trends.

First CBD/COP 11 Seminar Series “*Satoyama* and *Satoumi* in Ishikawa/Kanazawa” Seminar Report

In October 2012, the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/COP 11) will be held in Hyderabad, India. The United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies Operating Unit Ishikawa/Kanazawa (OUIK) organized a CBD/COP 11 Seminar Series as an opportunity to increase public understanding of global trends and local efforts towards biodiversity conservation, as well as CBD/COP 11. The first seminar, “*Satoyama* and *Satoumi* in Ishikawa/Kanazawa”, was held on the second of July with 75 participants.

Keynote Lectures

Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Deputy Director of the International Partnership for the *Satoyama* Initiative (IPSI), introduced IPSI activities and the background of the partnership's launch. He referred to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which include sustainable use and management of fishery resources, and he introduced a *satoumi*-oriented activity that IPSI is supporting in the Urato Islands in Shiogama, Miyagi Prefecture. He also reported on a side event titled “The *Satoyama* Initiative and the Green Economy”, which was held during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). At the side event, it was confirmed that IPSI can function as an information platform to promote cooperation during the transition to a green economy and towards society in harmony with nature, by making full use of underutilized resources.

Prof. Koji Nakamura, Kanazawa University, presented the contribution of Ishikawa/Kanazawa to efforts relevant to *satoyama* and *satoumi*. He introduced the following key activities: the Japan *Satoyama Satoumi* Assessment (JSSA), which was conducted from 2006 to 2010, designation of the Noto area as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) site, and the “Noto *Satoyama* Meister Training Program” of Kanazawa University, and described their backgrounds, features, outcomes and challenges.



Mr. Takemoto, Director of UNU-IAS OUIK

Prof. Nakamura also pointed out that the changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services in *satoyama* and *satoumi* caused by globalization, depopulation and population aging had become common issues in Japan as well as other parts of the world. According to Prof. Nakamura, other serious challenges facing the Noto region include a lack of human resources, funds, and a biodiversity information database. He emphasized the importance of additional studies in Ishikawa/Kanazawa and international dissemination of information about local activities relevant to *satoyama* and *satoumi*.



Panel Discussion Presentations

Mr. Taisuke Watanabe, Director of the *Satoyama* Creation Office, Environment Division, Ishikawa Prefecture, mentioned the process for designating “Noto’s *Satoyama* and *Satoumi*” as a GIAHS site and related measures by Ishikawa Prefecture. He also referred specifically to the establishment of the tentatively named *Satoyama* Initiative Network in Japan and an international GIAHS forum as future activities of Ishikawa Prefecture.

Dr. Ryo Kohsaka, Associate Professor at Kanazawa University, presented global biodiversity trends, including different situations of developed and developing countries on the Convention on Biological Diversity and reasons why the world has failed to meet its target, set at CBD/COP 6 in 2002, to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. He pointed out that the lack of biodiversity data in the Noto region should be addressed by assessing the current situation and analysing trends. He also appreciated the possibility that the Aichi Biodiversity Targets with their specific target values could be a tool for addressing this issue. Dr. Kohsaka mentioned green tourism in the Noto region and developing communication among the elderly as examples of efforts related to Aichi Target 7, and highlighted the analysis of local issues and value adding activities as future challenges.

Discussion

(1) Noto *Satoyama* Meister Training Program

According to **Prof. Nakamura**, many of the trainees who completed the Noto *Satoyama* Training Program have since been involved in agricultural industries, including collective farms, associated corporations and internships, although only a few of them have started their own businesses. He therefore emphasized the importance of a subsidy from local governments to support those who try to start farming. He also introduced the Post Meister Program, which has successfully increased financial support from the local governments and activity sites, and suggested that it is critical to show these results when fundraising.

Mr. Watanabe mentioned specific efforts by Ishikawa Prefecture, including subsidies for the Post Meister Program and support to new farmers through the Ishikawa Agriculture Human Resource Organization.

(2) Levels of biodiversity in the Noto region

Regarding biodiversity in the Noto region, **Prof. Nakamura** pointed to a lack of comprehensive and quantitative data. For instance, some endangered species have been found only in the Noto region, while habitats of amphibians and small animals that constitute prey for the Japanese crested ibis (*Nipponia nippon*) and oriental stork (*Ciconia boyciana*) have not been identified. He emphasized the necessity of conducting field surveys like the ones Sado City and Toyooka City have done for the Japanese crested ibis and oriental stork. To collect data, he suggested that Ishikawa Prefecture and local governments should cooperate to build an information database.

(3) Gaps between developed and developing countries at CBD/COP 10

Mr. Suzuki explained that negotiation regarding Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing (ABS) was one of the major issues at CBD/COP 10. In this case, there was disagreement between developing countries, which demanded funding and technologies, and developed countries, which were reluctant to respond to the request. He also mentioned that mainstreaming of biodiversity in the society and economy was recognized as an important challenge by both developed and developing countries. In addition, he referred to the role of local communities and companies, which became part of the agenda at CBD/COP 10.

Dr. Kohsaka compared the current global situation, which could be interpreted based on the ABS negotiation at CBD/COP 10, with the situation in the Noto region, in order to highlight the need for equity when addressing environmental issues. He introduced case studies in China about organic farming and capacity building in terms of the green economy as discussed at Rio+20, and emphasized the importance of value adding activities in Japan.

(4) *Satoyama* Initiative Network (tentative name)

Mr. Watanabe introduced the tentatively named *Satoyama* Initiative Network. This network would encourage NPOs or companies located in urban areas that share an interest in biodiversity conservation to connect with local governments with conservation needs. In addition, the network will stimulate local communities that are confronted with depopulation and population aging.

(5) International dissemination of information on *satoyama* and *satoumi* in Ishikawa/Kanazawa

Prof. Nakamura emphasized the significance of recognizing and being proud of *satoyama* and *satoumi* in the surrounding environment. He also mentioned the importance of quantitative research and dissemination of the respective outcomes in order to properly raise appreciation for *satoyama* and *satoumi*.

Mr. Suzuki commented that the local food and culture in Ishikawa/Kanazawa, nurtured by *satoyama* and *satoumi*, contributed to the success of CBD/COP 10 and the Closing Event for the International Year of Biodiversity. He emphasized the significance of appreciating and sharing these cultural and environmental values.

Mr. Watanabe pointed out that the concept of biodiversity might vary among communities based on different livelihoods, and emphasized the importance of understanding the relationship between society, economy and biodiversity as well as the need to pass the unique characteristics of the local communities on to the next generation.

Dr. Kohsaka suggested holding international conferences as an opportunity for capacity building for young professionals and highlighted the significance of community development strategies by taking into consideration both domestic and international trends.

The seminar ended with a closing address by **Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto**, who emphasized the potential of local communities, and expressed his expectation that next time there would be active discussion about other research topics such as Cities and Biodiversity, and GIAHS.



From left: Dr. Kohsaka, Mr. Watanabe, Mr. Suzuki and Dr. Nakamura