

The Role of Sustainable Management of Traditional *Satoyama* Landscape Elements: A Case Study from the Ecological Viewpoint

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Satoyama landscape typically combines various types of environments including rice paddies, grasslands and woodlands. The focus in this presentation is on the locality and its significance in the conservation of a landscape in which the relationship between people and nature has a long history. Distribution, function, management and change over time of a *satoyama* landscape on the west side of Lake Biwa, Shiga, Japan are examined based on field surveys. The area between the lake and the mountains is almost completely covered by farmed landscape that includes agricultural areas, residential areas and forests. Dominant tree species include oak and pine species. Until the early 1960s, most people in the study area made their living from rice farming and the production of firewood and timber. Since the 1970s, however, socio-economic conditions in rural areas have improved, resulting in drastic changes in the agricultural ecosystem and the rapid decrease of many *satoyama* elements that play an important ecological role in the landscape such as networks of narrow linear habitats provided by traditional hedges. Places where traditional land use and management are remaining have become fewer and fewer. Today, in order to conserve both the local ecosystem and the cultural diversity of *satoyama* landscapes, the history of land use must be understood and the lifestyle of the local people investigated.