

# Rural Tourism and the Preservation of Landscapes in Japan: A Spotlight on Satoyama in the Noto Peninsula

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**Abstract :** That tourism has potential for the preservation of local landscapes and communities in rural areas is now generally recognized (Ashley, 2000; Lee, 2008; Tao and Wall, 2009). Rural tourism, if well managed, can contribute to the wellbeing of local populations through social and economic development and environmental conservation. Tourism enterprises in rural areas are becoming more and more important in economic diversification through the creation of jobs and support of the agricultural sector in income generation, as well as their function as potentially important actors in environmental conservation. Importantly, the effective development of rural tourism in the 21st Century is identified as benefiting from a bottom up approach and a community-based strategy that plays an important role in the retention of local control over a community's socio-economic destiny. Therefore, the essential feature in any rural revitalization plan based on tourism is the establishment of a systematic approach that allows local priorities to lead development. The preservation and revitalization of rural socio-ecological landscapes through the concept of local area self-management or Satoyama is one such approach in Japan, and this paper discusses the extent to which tourism combined with Satoyama can contribute to the revitalization of local communities and the conservation of natural and cultural resources and biological diversity in rural areas. The case study that the paper is based on has a particular focus on the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture (Japan Sea coast) as a typical Satoyama landscape where rural livelihoods are presently affected strongly by depopulation and aging, leading to the underuse of natural resources. It concludes that tourism activities, if well organized and managed, can make a significant contribution to the revitalization of local community and local livelihoods and facilitate the conservation of rural social and ecological resources.

**Key Words:** Rural Development; Tourism; Resource Management; Satoyama in Japan.

## Introduction

Rural development strategies generally rely on the continued promotion of primary industries such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries or similar activities that are highly dependent on natural resources, their situation and availability (Ban et al, 1980; Harris, 1982; Misra, 1985; Khatkar, 1989; Galston, 1995; World Bank, 1997). These industries are generally also labor-intensive, especially in agricultural villages where smallholder

farmers are in the majority. In this context the availability of manpower plays a very significant role in the continued use of the landscape (Galston & Baehler, 1995). Rural development strategies can also vary depending on the nature of and access to ecological resources as well as the existence of human (social) capital and investment (economic) capital in the rural area. In turn, the use of these local assets is affected by socio-economic and environmental trends at the national and international level, such as globalization, climate change and financial crises.

Peasant households in Japan before the Second World War were generally poor, but had developed great skill over time in exploiting the environmental resources around them. People learned and practiced how to manage and live in harmony with the natural resources surrounding their settlements, such as secondary woodland, water irrigation channels which fed the paddy fields, the paddy fields themselves, pastures and grasslands. The result was that the traditional rural landscape based on secondary grasslands and woodlands adjacent to human settlements became even more rich in cultural and biological diversity than the untouched forests, mountains and rivers or woodland further away. This type of managed rural area has recently been characterized as a *Satoyama* landscape in Japan (see Takeuchi et al, 2003; Yanagi, 2007).

However, an aging population and rural depopulation are also common patterns among many industrial and post-industrial societies in the beginning of the twenty-first century and Japan is no exception. Rural decline in many parts of Europe and North America attracted much attention in the literature as a socio-economic phenomenon of the 20th century (Ban et al, 1980; Galston & Baehler, 1995; Long & Lane, 2000). More ecological concerns have been raised recently in similar rural studies on industrialized societies in Asia such as Japan (JSSA, 2010). In this situation rural communities are more affected than urban areas, and with increasing depopulation the level of public and social services available is rapidly decreasing in small towns and villages, making life even more difficult for the remaining rapidly-aging residents (Makino & Wa, 2008). In fact, the population in many rural and remote areas in Japan is currently only being maintained by the increasing life expectancy among the elderly. Today 60% of Japanese farmers are aged 65 and over and the decline of the rural population will increasingly be caused by lack of ability to undertake labor and death rather than outmigration (MAFF, 2008). And as a result it is difficult or sometimes

impossible to keep such landscapes managed and conserve agricultural land and woodland, except in those areas near the big cities or along the major transport routes in Japan without a significant boost from an external source such as tourism.

The effectiveness of tourism as a rural development strategy in relation to the traditional agricultural resources of Japan is the focus of this paper. The paper suggests that the provision of rural accommodation for use by tourists who are seeking a taste of the rural lifestyle is possible and important. Many older rural properties are suitable for conversion into *minshuku*, small hotels run by local people offering a taste of Japanese rural life. The Satoyama landscapes are used in this study to explain how empty properties in rural Japan can be rehabilitated rather than abandoned to form the basis of a flourishing rural tourism industry, and accordingly help with revitalization of rural livelihoods. The examples used in the paper come mainly from the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture (North- Western Japan), where community-based initiatives in tourism activities have been taking place effectively during the past few years. Local community leadership has played a significant role in training local residents, encouraging them to support and develop tourism skills, and building up the necessary partnerships through which the local people can find new livelihood opportunities and adopt tourism as a new development strategy.

## **Background to the Development of Rural Tourism and the Satoyama Movement in Japan**

As a result of these demographic and lifestyle changes there has been a considerable growth of interest in the future of traditional landscapes of Japan in recent years. Its roots go back to 1970s when rapid industrialization and urbanization were remaking the settlement patterns on the Japanese archipelago, but at the same time citizens were protesting against the spread of pollution related diseases such as Minimata. Communities began to realize that in spite of economic development, heavy industries cause environmental pollution that can damage people throughout their life. Later, this rapid economic growth led to the overuse of natural resources and the environment but also brought such tremendous wealth as the world's second largest economy to the country that it could afford environmental protection activities.

A shift from construction and heavy industry to leisure and tourism and the demands for cleaner environment went together in the 1980s and 90s to

bring Japan into a new era of an environmentally responsible leisure society. Heavy investment in hotels and resorts, a boom in golf and winter sports, and suburban expansion stimulated by private railways all paved the way to an expanded domestic travel and tourism market by introducing new interests, among which was the revival of rural areas through *Furusato* (return to the ancestral area; Wolfgang, 2006). At the same time concern about the environment was spreading and the bursting of the 'bubble economy' slowed down the high speed growth of the economy. Further, on the rural side, the damming of rivers began to be questioned and monoculture tree planting criticized in the light of the need for rural revitalization and protection of the natural resources of the *Furusato* landscapes.

In 1992 Japan signed up to biodiversity at the Rio Convention and implemented the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* process across the country shortly thereafter (Eades, 2009). This program has been carried out worldwide over the last ten years, funded by the United Nations Development Program together with other organizations, and aimed to survey the world's ecosystem at global, regional and sub-regional levels. The final stage of the assessment is the completion of sub-regional surveys, and in Japan, the Satoyama and Satoumi (the coastal landscapes version of Satoyama) concepts were built into this process, focusing on rural and coastal landscapes and their changes in response to socio-ecological and economic changes domestically, and to climate change internationally (Nakamura, 2010).

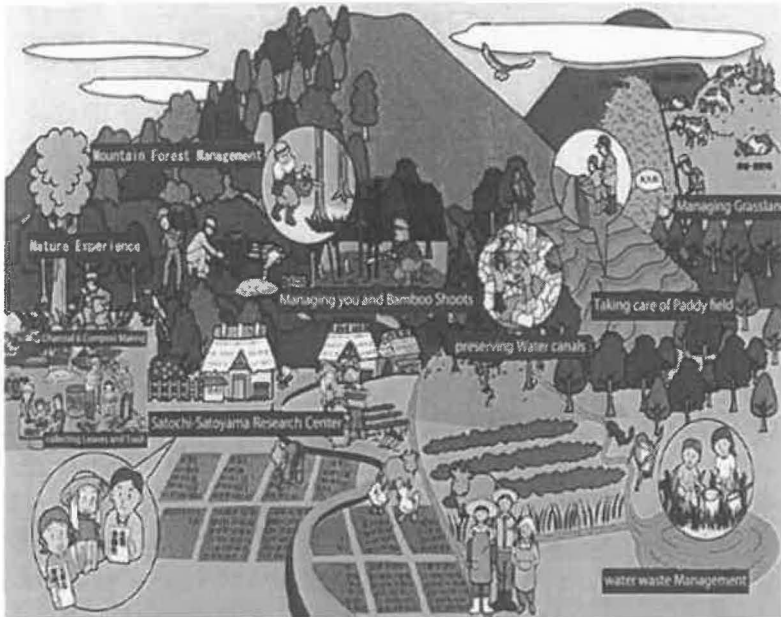
## ***Satoyama***

Many rural areas in Japan have been sustainably managed over thousands of years to allow agriculture, forestry and fisheries to flourish. With the decline of the rural population and shifting patterns of settlement after industrialization (Sorensen 2002), these rural landscapes are threatened, but there is no reason why a sustainable development approach based on rural tourism could not be used to rehabilitate rather than abandon rural communities and their agricultural base. Abandonment to wilderness and accordingly losing their cultural and biological diversity is their fate without strong action though. In this context, the key requirement is to make the rural lifestyle attractive enough in order to persuade young residents to stay or to attract new ones through creating new livelihood strategies such as a managed level of rural tourism activities based on local capacities and priorities.

The term Satoyama has been used since 1759 to describe the traditional cultural landscape of rural Japan (Takeuchi, et al 2003). However, a clear image and understanding of Satoyama within Japan is still a challenge.

Sato, which means 'Community' in Japanese, is the main part of this descriptive term, and refers to the social aspects of the rural landscape. Various functions have been defined and considered in categorizing Satoyama landscapes; such as their cultural, social, ecological and economic values which contribute to human well-being (Nakamura, 2010). In essence the term means the "lifestyle of human settlements" in rural Japan, including the patterns developed by people in order to utilize the natural resources of the landscape. Satoyama is thus considered as a model type of interaction between human beings and nature in this context. Satoyama also evokes a romantic nostalgia for those urbanites that remember or wish to understand their families' former lifestyle in rural Japan. In this context the previous emphasis by the Government on the images of *Furusato* in the 1990s and the *Chikizukuri* projects in the 2000s reflect the concept of Satoyama (Eades, 2009).

**Figure 1:** Model Image of a Managed Satoyama Landscape (Courtesy of the Japan Ministry of the Environment)



## **Rural Tourism, Satoyama and the Noto Peninsula**

Tourism as a rural preservation strategy is under focus in this paper.

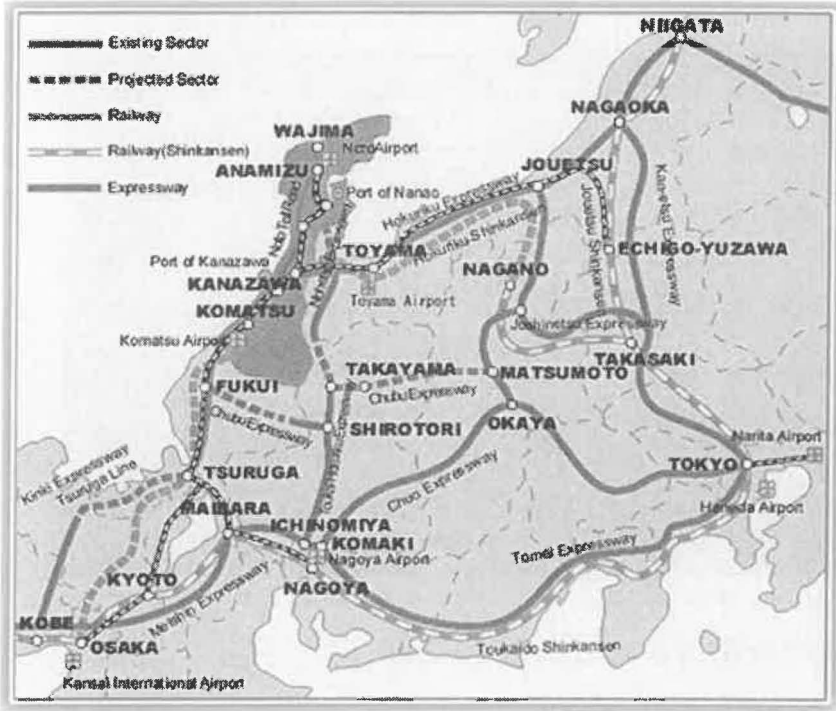
Facilitating this is the idea that a rural lifestyle is the main attraction or the essence of rural tourism in the tourism literature (Butler 1999; Garrod et al 2006). People in urban areas are said to be seeking chances to make connections with rural communities and the natural environment to take them out of their everyday urbanized life to a place where they can find a relaxing environment (Olah 2008). Rural tourism has been synonymously defined as agro-tourism and village tourism, implying that there is a significant role for the two concepts of 'community' and 'agriculture' in rural tourism enterprises, with the community itself as a tourist attraction and tourists participating in the rural lifestyle. Tourism enterprises are thus increasingly seen in the context of a rural revitalization strategy in many industrial societies (Garrod *et al* 2006); one required by rural communities as a result of the mechanization of agriculture in modern times that requires much less manual labor in the rural sector and the decline in community services that follows this. Tourism may also help to offset the concomitant aging of the local population as younger people and families leave to find work outside the agricultural sector.

How to restore sustainability to the rural sector has therefore attracted great attention in the context of rural tourism. According to the existing literature on sustainability and tourism, sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development in the host communities in rural areas, ensuring viable, long-term economic operations while making the optimal use of environmental resources (Butler, 1999; Hardy *et al*, 2002; Garrod et al, 2006). There is a general consensus that rural tourism if well managed can contribute greatly to the wellbeing of local communities by generating supplemental income, reducing out-migration and increasing quality of life. However, a lack of understanding of the requirements of tourists and an inadequate capacity to adopt rural tourism as an externalized livelihood strategy on the part of the aging rural population as a whole is a common problem (Alexander and McKenna, 1998). This is where the concept and practice of Satoyama as practiced in Japan becomes crucial to the establishment and progress of rural tourism.

The examples used in this paper to illustrate both the concept of Satoyama and the importance of tourism to it come from the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture (Figure 2), where community-based initiatives in

tourism activities have been effectively put into place during the last few years. In this area, local community leadership has played a significant role in training local residents, encouraging them to support and develop tourism skills, and in building up the necessary partnerships through which local people could find new livelihood opportunities and adopt tourism as a new livelihood strategy.

Figure 2: Map of the Noto Peninsula



Source: The Author

The research reported on below suggests that the provision of rural accommodation for tourists who are seeking a taste of rural lifestyle, and the turning over of production to demonstration and participation are critical variables in the process of revitalization. Fortunately, many older rural properties are suitable for conversion into Minshuku, small hotels run by local people offering a taste of Japanese rural life, and can thus be rehabilitated rather than abandoned to form the basis of a flourishing rural tourism and accordingly help with the revitalization of their communities.

## Objectives and Methodology

The objective of the research was to study the role and potential of tourism in the revitalization and improvement of rural livelihoods in the socio-ecological landscape of a declared Satoyama area, Shunran-no-sato, a village located in the Noto peninsula, about 150 km to the north of Kanazawa city, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture (Figures 2 & 3).

• **Figure 3 :** Area Map of Noto-Cho, Noto peninsula



(Courtesy of Google Maps)

### ***Specific research objectives were to:***

- Assess the resource base and functions of the Satoyama landscape and its tourism potential;
- Examine the effects of tourism development on rural livelihoods in Satoyama; and
- Analyze the effects of tourism development on resource conservation in Satoyama landscapes in the *Noto-cho* (Noto Peninsula).

The research employed a mixed-method approach. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews and direct observation in the 51



households. The author stayed in the local community periodically during the period 2009-2011, participating in farming activities, local events and other programs in order to build up the necessary human network to ensure local participation in the study and increase the quality of data collection. Consultative and participatory workshops with local community were also used to access primary data. In general, the field studies for this research relied on direct observation to assess the natural, human, economic, social and physical capital of the Satoyama landscape and the impact of tourism on them. This analysis did not study the reactions of the 3000+ tourists that now visit the area. The analysis of the village was based on the *Sustainable Livelihood Approach* (DFID, 1999; Solesbury 2003; Mikano and Wa, 2008; Shen *et al*, 2009; Tao & Wall, 2009) model of the development of various forms of development capital in local communities. To ensure the maximum support of the residents in this analysis, local community members were given the chance to participate in but also take educational advantage of the research at the same time.

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) was developed in the late 1980s and was quickly developed during the following two decades (Eagles, 2002; Shen *et al*, 2009). Its focus is on rural development and poverty reduction through assessing and reinforcing various forms of capital in local communities. This framework for cataloguing and then expanding local capital gained considerable popularity among development practitioners and researchers, especially those with an interest in sustainability studies and human wellbeing (DFID, 1999; Solesbury, 2003), because although it was developed to aid research on the rural poor in developing countries, it has been flexible enough to be adopted in rural studies of industrialized societies such as Europe and Japan (Mikano and Wa, 2008). Essentially, the method involves tabulating and assessing livelihood assets in the following categories: Human Capital (H), Social Capital (S), Natural Capital (N), Economic Capital (E), Institutional Capital (I), and Physical Capital (P), within a framework of uncertainty (vulnerability). Any shortfalls in the various forms of capital can then be examined and programs put in place to change this situation (Tao & Wall, 2009). In the case of rural tourism, an assessment of the attractive power of the community in the form of Attractions Capital (A) is added to the framework in order to account for the impact of this activity.

For a more detailed exposition of the SLA development methodology see DFID (1999) and Shen et al (2009).

## ***The Study Area***

The village of *Shunran-no-Sato* is located on the western coast of Japan in Ishikawa Prefecture. It is in the Noto peninsula and is about 150 Km to the north of Kanazawa city, the capital of Ishikawa Prefecture. One of the geographical advantages of the area is being close to the Noto airport, which is a major facilitator for rural tourism in the region (Figure 3). The airport is a new one, with good facilities such as free parking areas and a community managed taxi service from airport to the region that attract more customers.

The area is distinguished for its rich mountain forest, which is a habitat for various species of edible plants and mushrooms. "*Ran*", which the name *Shunran* comes from, is the name of a flower (a kind of Orchid) that grows in that region, and the villagers have expertly applied this name as a brand for their tourism enterprises. Smallholder farmers are the majority of households with growing rice as their main agricultural product. There are 51 households living in the area with a total population of 127. The average age of the population is more than 62 years, which means elderly people are living in this area without the support of a younger generation, as is often the case in rural Japan. The only school has been closed and accordingly a school bus comes to pick up the few children who are still living in the village to take them to school in neighboring areas. There is a feeling that the village has no hope to attract new population from outside as there are not enough jobs available that can support a sustainable livelihood.

The village *Shunran-no-Sato* was purposely selected for this study among its many equivalents in the Noto peninsula for several reasons. Firstly, the significant role and abilities of the local community leadership and community-based tourism enterprises in this village was a factor mentioned by many experts in preliminary survey conducted by the author for this research. Secondly, *Shunran* is unique among the villages in Noto Peninsula in that

the majority of households have registered their residents as a guesthouse (*Minshuku*) during the past few years. Thirdly, the local community has been rather successful in building 'a sense of place' by developing their own model of rural tourism enterprise using local products only.

## **Research Findings**

The results of the research are presented in terms of the major forms of capital included in the Sustainable Livelihood Approach framework. Figure 4 is a pictorial depiction of the types of capital found in the area.

### ***Human Capital***

The demographic decline in rural Japan is a common inconvenient truth throughout the country. In the case of *Shunran-no-Sato* there are 51 households with an average number of 2 persons per household. These are essentially the grandparents living in their Satoyama house next to the farm (the rice field) as the younger generations have left for the city. As a result the average age of the local population is over 60 and the number of children and young adults are very few, resulting in the closure of the schools in the neighborhood. This is an important problem because the ability of an individual to supply labor and their good health is considered as the essential human capital in livelihood strategies. While it is often the case in rural Japan that elderly generations can continue working on the farm as the result of increases in the Country's life expectancy, and *Shunran-no-Sato* or *Noto-cho* is no exception, this ability is going to reach its limit for the local population very soon (Figure 5).

Nevertheless, the majority of residents in *Noto-cho* are natives with at least half a century of experience living in harmony with nature (as defined in the Satoyama concept) in the locality. And their traditional knowledge, skills and the lifestyle itself are attractive to visitors from urban areas (Figure 6). In return the community obtains education opportunities and an enhanced feeling of wellbeing in the village from the tourists (Table 1).

**Figure 4 :** Pictorial Depiction of Livelihood Assets  
in Shunran-no- Sato



Source: The Author

**Table 1:** Development Impact Assessment of Tourism on Human Capital

Question	% of Respondents with positive views
Tourism provides education opportunities in rural areas	72
Tourism enhances the psychological atmosphere of village	80

**Figure 5: A 93 year old man grows small fish in his paddy field for guesthouse market (left) and old women are working in paddy field (right) in the Shunran**



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

**Figure 6: City children learn how to play traditional music in their visit to Shunran**



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

## **Social Capital**

The evaluation of social capital in this study was based on women's status, trust and the social networks which most local households rely on to persuade a better livelihood. Community leadership plays a significant role here for utilizing social capital in the local community (Figure 7). The key person in Shunran who has been carrying the leadership responsibility (Mr

*Rural Tourism and the Preservation of Landscapes in Japan...Kazem Vafadari Tada*) owns one of the Farm Guesthouses (*Minshuku*). Table 2 gives the overall approval rating of the 51 households (127 individuals) to a series of questions on the impact of tourism on the development of social capital in the village. While the high rates of approval may be partly a reflection of the small numbers of respondents and tourists involved, they do suggest that rural tourism in the Satoyama context is viable from the point of view of the local community. The least favorable impact assessment was on the revival of local culture, which is perhaps understandable given different cultural backgrounds even with domestic tourists.

**Table 2: Development Impact Assessment of Tourism on Social Capital**

Question	% of Respondents with positive views
Tourism raised level of trust among community members	72
Tourism increased social interaction in the community	80
Tourism empowered the community through decision making responsibility	75
Tourism helped with reviving cultural events	68
Tourism increased happiness, no more lonely village	90
Tourism improved sense of place and enhanced leadership	70

**Figure 7: Local community have their regular meetings (left) where they discuss their livelihood problem and plans. One of the local community members who has recently obtained a license to change his house to Minshuku is being trained in the community leaders house (right)**



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

The results of interviews with the local community also emphasized the role of community leaders in developing tourism as a livelihood strategy for Shunran. Among 18 guesthouse owners who were interviewed for this study, 16 guesthouse owners (88%) mentioned that they have been encouraged by Mr. Tada to for the first time to utilize their residential farmhouse as a *Minshuku*. The networks he developed play a substantial role for the local people who were in need of assistance to maintain their livelihoods.

## Natural Capital

Natural capital refers to the natural resources that are accessible to the local community for their utilization in achieving livelihood strategies (Dowling *et al*, 2009). This can be either by direct use like demonstrating the planting of rice in a paddy field or indirectly as a source of cash income through selling products and accommodation to tourists. *Satoyama* natural resources that are utilized by the local community in Shunran for tourism are basically found in 3 categories: mountains (forests), rivers (fish), and farm land (generally wet rice agriculture). Of these, the rich forestland in the Noto-cho area provides various kinds of rural tourism activities such as mountain trekking, camping, and collecting edible mountain plants and mushrooms. The area is also famous for a kind of expensive mushroom (*Matsutake*), which attract many people to Shunran in the autumn (Figure 8).

**Figure 8:** Utilizing Satoyama Mountain forest for Tourism. Mushrooming (left) is a favorite activity in Shunran. Tourism also makes it profitable to keep the mountain road in repair and manage the forest and prepare it for tourist activities (right)



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

Rivers are also attractive especially in summer and for fishing. The local community in Shunran found it also profitable to utilize Satoyama river resources for rural tourism and forest management (Table 3). River management activities funded by tourism revenues during the last few years have also increased the number of fireflies and biodiversity along the river and these changes attract a substantial number of tourists to the village. The tourists who come to watch fireflies in summer usually stay overnight using village accommodation. Thus tourism is a favored activity for the local environment.

**Table 3:** Development Impact Assessment of Tourism on Natural Capital

Question	% of Respondents with positive views
Overall: Tourism is good for the natural environment	95
Tourism has increased biodiversity in the area	65
Tourism helped with river management	75
Tourism helped with forest management	75
Tourism polluted our village	10

## **Economic Capital**

Economic capital is the most tangible livelihood asset for a rural community. Financial capital is considered very necessary and important by local community as mentioned in the interviews. The income portfolio of Shunran includes both farming and non-farm businesses. Remittances and pension payments from external sources are the main income stream but others have been recently introduced by tourism activities. So, although agriculture is of course the most basic and popular household livelihood asset and is the basis of traditional rural lifestyles, it does not now contribute much of overall family income. According to the community leader in Shunran, those households who run a Minshuku were able to earn almost 400,000 Yen extra a month in 2010. Thus, in the Satoyama concept tourism



activity as a source of direct farm stay income helps *Minshuku* families to overcome their financial problems (Table 4).

**Figure 9: Local food is one of the popular attractions of Shunran especially for aged visitors. Here a *Minshuku* is utilized as a local restaurant when tourists come from the same region or within Ishikawa prefecture**



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

To service this demand women professional cooks in Shunran have intelligently developed local recipes in which they use only materials produced in the local area such as edible wild grass, leaves, river fish and other agricultural products. On one hand this guarantees the authenticity of their production and on the other, minimize the costs. The food is sugarless and even the salt is made in the Noto Peninsula. They advertise and explain these facts to visitors when serving the food.

In summary then, the local community believes that tourism improves the livelihood of the village, helps them raise funds for agricultural purposes as well as for tourism, provides employment opportunities, brings new infrastructure and investment helps them use existing facilities more effectively (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Development Impact Assessment of Tourism on Economic Capital

Question	% of Respondents with positive views
Tourism improved our livelihood	72
Tourism raised funds for agriculture	80
Tourism provided employment opportunities for the local community	75
Tourism brought new infrastructure and investment	90
Tourism uses the extra capacity in our house and facilities	70

## Physical Capital

In the case of physical capital, rural Japan is rather rich compared with other countries. Shunran no Sato is only 15 minutes away by car from Noto Airport that allows visitors from Tokyo to have their breakfast at home and enjoy regional ethnic food at lunchtime in Shunranafter an hours flight from Haneda airport to Noro-cho. Local innovations have made this better by taking advantage of existing unused infrastructure for tourism enterprises. 'Kobishi', the old primary school in the village, has been renovated as tourist accommodation withthe support of the Ishikawa Prefecture government. The School accommodated 1500 visitors in 2009 and about 2000 in 2010 and is a good source of shared income for the local community (Figure 10).

**Figure 10:** Koboshi used to be an elementary school in Shunranbut is now a tourist accommodation with 10 rooms that can accommodate up to 50 persons per night



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

## **Institutional Capital**

Institutional capital is an important promoter of tourist market access, the system under which the community shares the benefit of tourism enterprises, and a determinant of the extent to which local people are willing to participate in tourism policymaking and actually take part in the development process. Institutional capital was evaluated by interviews and direct observation for this study. The market sharing process is achieved by the Shunran website where all guesthouses (Minshuku) are introduced and advertised to the market. The guesthouses are yet to make a logo or their own advertisement materials but the village is advertised as a whole in Shunran pamphlets.

The community leader's guesthouse plays the role of a central office in distributing the customers when they are introduced through a travel agency such as JALAN or Rakuten. These two travel agencies are among the most famous and professional tourist marketing agencies in Japan with their own websites, but in this case act professionally as local agents. Nevertheless, once a customer is introduced through a travel agency or directly from their website, a charge will be imposed on the farmer by the travel agency. This is to a certain extent offset by direct marketing and contact by each Minshuku, which makes the job even more profitable. The number of direct contacts is a good indicator for evaluation of the guesthouse service and marketing strategy because the customer is either a repeater or has been introduced through another customer.

## **Attraction Capital**

The livelihood assets that have been analyzed so far are all dependent on the attraction of visitors as tourism resources in Satoyama landscapes. Therefore, the local community should capitalize on authentic resources among the five assets outlined in this paper in order to utilize 'attraction' as a livelihood asset for tourism. This can however often be easier than it seems because it is often the case that tourists can teach people in rural communities about appropriate attraction capital. In this context tourism development itself enhances attraction capital (Table 5; see Figure 4 and Figure 11). This observation is borne out in the results given in Table 5,

where the help that tourism gives to sense of place, branding, enhancing the attractiveness of housing, and to the improvement of food in the local area is looked on very favorably by the local population.

**Table 5:** Development Impact Assessment of Tourism on Attraction Capital

Question	% of Respondents with positive views
Tourism enhanced attraction of Satoyama houses	72
Tourism improved our ethnic and local food recipes	80
Tourism created a sense of place and branding	75
Tourism increased the functionality of the use of our natural environment as an attraction	90

## The Vulnerability Context

The Sustainable livelihood Approach has a built-in feedback mechanism formulated as the vulnerability context for each of the capital assets. This is the risk associated with the introduction of new income streams as much as it is about the difficulties associated with traditional forms of enterprise. From the interviews carried out in Shunran, the first and most important vulnerability was a concern over the sustainability of Human Capital. Almost everybody's first concern in Shunran is what will happen to their community in the future, as there is no successor in the local community. The average age is over 60 in the village and younger generations have left the place and in the near future there will be no one to continue farming.

Concerns about preservation of Satoyama natural resources such as forest and agricultural land are another vulnerability issue that goes back to the lack of human capital. Agriculture and forestry work in the small farm-lands of Satoyama is highly labor intensive and it is impossible to keep the situation managed as the past without new manpower. In this context, volunteers who visit the farm to help with planting or harvesting rice were considered by the farmers in the area as a big help but not a sustainable or reliable solution. The tourist is considered to be a better bet in this regard as they can be persuaded to come back regularly.

**Figure 11: The famous and expensive lacquerware (Urushi) crafts from Wajima City, Noto Peninsula are used to serve food in Shunran restaurants, bringing more satisfaction for the customers. To see the large number of Urushi sets in a farm house is an attraction in itself**



(Photo courtesy of the Author)

Local people also raised a lot of concerns about lack of medical care and public transportation services that are categorized as Physical Capital in the assets framework. When people get older they have more concerns about health and medical support. The fear of being left alone in a farm house with no help and the rich medical support that is available for elderly people in urban areas encourages even the older local people to leave Satoyama and move to urban areas. So, Satoyama vulnerability concerns are mainly the results of population trends in Japan and in this context, rural tourism if it provides enough economic benefit for a sustainable rural livelihood strategy could be a savior in many areas.

## Conclusions

The impacts of rural tourism development may vary between communities. It is not always possible to generalize either positive or negative experiences from one place to another and Satoyama landscapes are no exception to this. Nevertheless, this study has shown that rural tourism in the Satoyama context is considered by local communities in the Noto Peninsula as one of the livelihood strategies that can help with diversification of income streams without destroying the dominant role of traditional

agriculture. However, the successful use of tourism requires a significant role for local people in decision making for it to mesh with local needs. In this context the Sustainable Livelihood Approach as used in this paper provides a participatory approach that allows local people to determine their main concerns and expectations based on which tourism development policies should be adopted. In this approach, tourism development is in part a broader concept of rural development and a facilitator of particular activities.

Considering that rural landscapes in Japan at present have depopulation problems and aging communities as major concerns, rural tourism is expected to introduce new residents to the Satoyama context. But this will only happen if tourism can produce enough livelihood success to add sufficient attractive power to the Satoyama lifestyle. As a case study location for this problem, Shunran no sato is part of a Satoyama landscape and is where a local community has succeeded in attracting 3000 people to the village in the few years since they adopted rural tourism, creating new source of income for local people. The biggest challenge for Shunran is the pioneer of Satoyama revitalization through tourism in the Noto Peninsula is how to keep the newly introduced tourism enterprises sustainable and then to attract new population to move into the area by creating enough job opportunities within this new sector of the economy.

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