

Green Tourism in Japan: Opportunities for a GIAHS Pilot Site

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Abstract: Numerous studies have looked at sustainable tourism as the key to balancing environmental conservation and development in agricultural heritage sites. A microcosm of the traditional rural productive landscape, the *Noto Satoyama Satoumi* landscape has been designated as a pilot site for the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) in Japan. This paper discusses the challenges and opportunities of green tourism, focusing on the GIAHS program. The secondary objective is to explore the features of green tourism in Japan. First, the historic development and current state of green tourism in Japan is reviewed. The case in study is a typical green tourism project concerning an organization of farmers in the Noto Peninsula—the Shunran-no-Sato group. The question of how to develop green tourism in the context of the GIAHS project and considering the sustainable development of rural society and its farming systems by increasing incomes of rural households, is investigated. The study combined literature review and in-depth interviews with farm inn owners to investigate tourism development in the depopulated rural areas of Japan, examine its challenges, and present this information to international readers.

Key words: experience-based tourism; rural revitalization; interaction between rural and urban residents; farm inns; sustainable farming

1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, population loss in rural areas of Japan has led to the degrading of ecosystems, which has become an urgent issue, particularly in the mountain communities. The sharp drop in prices of rice and other agricultural products has driven rural laborers to seek work in cities. The central government has been considering tourism development as a strategy to regenerate rural economies (Hong *et al.* 2003).

Revitalizing rural communities has been one of the most urgent issues concerning all levels of authority. Previous studies regarded environmentally friendly tourism to be the key to balancing environmental protection and economic development in rural areas (e.g., Sharpley 2002; Yuan *et al.* 2009). In less developed countries, tourism is perceived to be an effective tool for rural development (Briedenhann and Wickens 2004; Su 2011). It has been reported that tourism in rural communities has economic as well as demographic effects (Su 2011). Immigrant workers have even returned to rural communities to start small business.

Green tourism in Japan encourages urban residents to stay at a mountainous or coastal village to recreate in

a rural environment and participate in farming activities. Both farmers and fishermen, and urban dwellers enjoy the interaction at the platform of the rural scenery. The development of green tourism throughout Japan was officially incepted under the advocacy of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 1992.

Two decades have passed since the official development of green tourism in Japan, and it is currently necessary to assess its growth process, problems, and challenges. In addition, the secondary objective of this study is to explore the features of green tourism in Japan. This paper first addresses the historical development of green tourism and then presents findings on the state of green tourism in Japan.

The Noto region, a microcosm of *satoyama* (a Japanese term for landscapes that comprise a mosaic of different ecosystem types including secondary forests, agricultural lands, irrigation ponds, and grasslands, along with human settlements), was officially designated as one of the first two pilot sites by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) project in an industrial country in 2011. To achieve the goals of the GIAHS project, it is crucial

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and vital to develop strategies for dynamic conservation and adaptive management of local agricultural biodiversity, knowledge systems, food and livelihood security, and cultures.

Humans have inhabited the Noto region for thousands of years by utilizing the natural resources, from both the mountain forest and the sea. The *satoyama* in the Noto region in Japan has hundreds of useful wild plant species (Gulay 2009; Chen and Qiu 2011), which people have used for thousands of years.

Min and Sun stated that tourism has been considered as an alternative industry to achieve the goals of the GIAHS strategy for promoting the local economy and increasing the awareness of local communities about ecological and environmental conservation (Sun *et al.* 2009).

This paper discusses opportunities for green tourism combined with the GIAHS program as a way of rural revitalization. Because of its location in a remote hilly area far from megacities, Shunran-no-Sato, an organization of farmers in the Noto Peninsula, offers a good case for exploring the characteristics of green tourism in rural Japan.

This article discusses a new way of developing green tourism in the setting of the GIAHS, to achieve sustainability in a rural society and a farming system and increase household incomes in rural areas. Initiatives taken by NPOs and local governments were examined. A methodology, combining a literature review and in-depth interviews with farm inn owners was adopted to illustrate a case of tourism development in a depopulated rural area in Japan, and to call attention to the current challenges in the context of a global network (GIAHS.)

2 Methods

The analytical approach includes a literature review in Japanese, using the key words ecotourism, green tourism, and “nouka minshuku” (“a farm inn”, usually in a private traditional house). Data were collected from research papers, governmental documents, and policy reports. Research papers and reports in Japanese were searched in the academic database of CiNii (<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/>) and J-Stage (<http://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/-char/ja>). Government policies regarding green tourism were retrieved mainly from the home page of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (<http://www.maff.go.jp/>) and its Regional Agricultural Administration Offices in Hokuriku and Tohoku.

Definitions of *ecotourism* and *rural tourism* are based on the study of English literature references. The concepts of “ecotourism” and “rural tourism” were first introduced to Japan in the 1990s. Chinese literature referring to “rural tourism” was also searched, using the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CKRID), an academic research database.

A case study of farm inns in the Noto Peninsula was used as an input for a discussion on the challenges, potential, and opportunities for green tourism in a remote area designated

as a new pilot site in 2011. The in-depth interviews with “*minshuku*” (farm inn) owners were conducted in the study area in the Noto Peninsula. The head of the Shunran-no-Sato group, and the farm inn operator were interviewed, face to face. Additional interviews were conducted by phone.

3 Survey site

Ishikawa Prefecture is located in the center of the main island of Japan. The hilly Noto Peninsula, also usually called the Noto Region, is located in the north of Ishikawa Prefecture, which juts out into the Sea of Japan. A long, narrow peninsula extending from the south to the north, the area is characterized by a configuration of closely knit together *satoyama* and *satoumi* landscapes, with their associated land uses and diversified livelihoods based on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and distinct lifestyles, customs, and biodiversity. The earliest archaeological evidence of rice cultivation in the region dates back to the mid-Yayoi period (300 BC–250 AD).

Shunran-no-Sato was set up by a group of elderly people to help keep their villages alive. The Shunran-no-Sato group is located in the hilly areas almost at the center of the Noto Peninsula (Fig. 1). In the villages of Miyachi and Sakeo in Noto Town, there is a distinguishable rustic landscape, and architecture, with combining black roof tile and white walls. Here, the project offers ecotourists guestrooms in the villagers’ homes and an opportunity to take part in traditional agricultural activities of rice harvesting and mushroom picking.

4 Green tourism in Japan

4.1 Defining green tourism and rural tourism

In Japan, the three terms “green tourism”, “rural tourism”, and “ecotourism” are used alternatively to refer to tourist

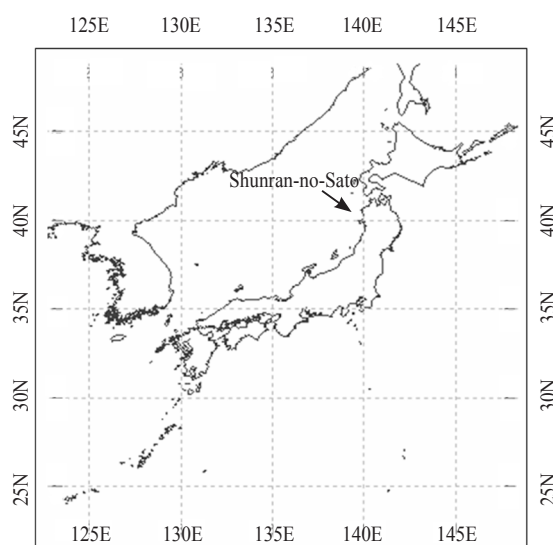


Fig. 1 Location of Shunran-no-Sato in Noto Town, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan.

activities in rural areas (Arahi 1998). “Green tourism” is probably the most used term in Japan for referring to tourism conducted in mountainous or coastal villages.

The government adopted top-down policy-making process and green tourism in Japan has been conducted in rural areas with emphasis on farm inn establishment and farming-based experience (Yokoyama 2002). The definition of “green tourism” by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF 2011a) is based on leisure activities, and appreciating nature, local culture, and interacting with local people in a mountain or coastal village. Further illustration of green tourist activities are classified into two categories, according to stay period: the day trip and the overnight stay. Green tourism includes an extensive package of experience-centered tourism (e.g., purchasing of products from the farmers’ market, harvesting fruits or vegetables, participating in agricultural activities). In this review, most of the discussion of green tourism has been limited to overnight visits. Yorimitsu and Kurisu discussed that typical Japanese green tourism is classified into three categories of activities (Yokoyama 2006): (i) those that promote the interactions between rural and urban areas by establishing “*Furusato*” or “hometown” villages; (ii) those that develop tourism and set up farm inns for the purpose of conserving the rural landscape; and (iii) those that provide tourists with opportunities to participate in farming activities.

The purpose of green tourism as defined by researchers has evolved over time. For example, emphasis has been put on contribution to local community (Yamazaki *et al.* 1993), conservation of the natural environment (Yamazaki 1994), and sustainable community development (Aoki 2008). It is worth noting that a recent study stated that green tourism differs from the other forms of tourisms, as it usually does not have distinguishing tourist resources; and the purpose of green tourism should increase the interaction between rural and urban residents (Kurisu 2011).

Ecotourism is considered to be closely related to green tourism, and the term is commonly used to denote natural resource-based tourism. Based mostly on the works of Blamey (1997, 2001), the definition of “ecotourism” that is near consensus (Weaver and Lawton 2007) is that it should satisfy three core criteria. It should be natural, educational, and ecologically sound and sustainability focused. Put another way, in ecotourism, attractions should be predominantly nature-based; visitors’ interactions with those attractions should be focused on learning or education; and the visitor experience and product management should follow principles and practices associated with ecological, sociocultural, and economic sustainability.

In summary, Yamazaki argued that the green tourism developed in Japan is part of rural tourism (Hara 2005), and Shibasaki and Nagata said that it is different from ecotourism (Kurisu 2011), however, the two terms are used alternatively in Japan. The primary purpose of promoting green tourism is (i) rural revitalization by enhancing the interaction of rural and urban sectors; (ii) conserving the

natural environment; and (iii) developing sustainable rural community, all at the same time (Hara 2005).

4.2 Development of green tourism in Japan

Tourism in the rural areas started in the 1970s, alongside the urbanization that followed WWII (Yamada 2008). Next, large resorts were constructed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in order to solve the problem of decreasing population in rural areas, especially, in mountainous regions (Arahi 1998; Yamada 2008). However, most of the large resorts shut down due to the breakdown of the bubble economy in Japan. These pre 1990s tourism projects were established with external capital investment, although they were developed in the rural areas. Some small-scale farm inns, which were managed by rural families, appeared sporadically in Hokkaido Prefecture and some other prefectures, in the 1980s (Yokoyama 1998). Green tourism is considered a responsible form of tourism that is different from mass tourism (Yamazaki *et al.* 1993).

Green tourism was promoted in Japan in the 1990s. As listed in Table 1, the Agricultural Structure Improvement Division of the Management Improvement Bureau of the MAFF presented the interim report “Green Tourism Seminar,” which is considered the first publication to use the term “green tourism” officially. In the report, the definition of “green tourism” was given as “recreation to receive relaxation and enjoyment in the rural areas, which are rich in scenic green landscape, natural resources, traditional cultures, and by interacting with local people”. The Act on Promotion of Development of Infrastructures for Leisure Stay in Rural Areas was then established by the MAFF in 1994. A registration system of farm inns was started by the Association of Participatory Activities in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 1995. The state promoted rural areas as providing urban citizens with places for relaxation, in addition to the functions of providing food, land conservation, and watershed protection (Yamazaki *et al.* 1993).

In 1999, the Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas Basic Act was enacted; among which, Article 36 stated that necessary measures such as encouraging interactions between urban and rural areas should be taken to enhance public understanding and awareness of agriculture and rural areas. In the early studies, many researchers criticized the strict regulations of farmers’ new businesses (e.g., Arahi 1998). An act with less regulation related to the opening of farm inns managed by families engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries was introduced in 2002. This act directly contributes to the increase of farm inn numbers in Nagano Prefecture (Takemoto *et al.* 2010).

Since 2003, the Japanese government promoted a tourism-oriented-country strategy, with an aim for becoming an international tourism destination with its cultural properties. In 2004, the beauty of rural landscapes was promoted as an attraction to foreign visitors. Foreign visitors were considered as the new potential for green

Table 1 Modern chronology of green tourism in Japan

Year	Event
1992	<i>Agricultural Structure Improvement Division, Management Improvement Bureau of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</i> presented Interim report of Green Tourism Seminar, which was considered to be the first time to use the term of Green Tourism officially
1992	<i>Basic Direction of New Policies for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas</i>
1994	<i>Act on Promotion of Development of Infrastructures for Leisure Stay in Rural Areas</i>
1995	<i>A Registration System of Farm Inns at Rural Communities</i> started by Association of Participatory Activities in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
1999	<i>Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas Basic Act: Article 36.</i> The state shall take necessary measures such as encouraging exchanges between urban and rural areas, and promoting improvement of allotment gardens, in order to enhance public understanding and awareness of agriculture and rural areas and to contribute to healthy and comfortable life
2000	<i>Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas</i> was enacted. To achieve the exchanges between urban and rural areas, green tourism and participatory experience in the rural areas should be promoted
2002	Less-Regulation related to the open of a Farm Inn Managed by Families Engaged in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
2003	A Tourism-Oriented Country strategy was promoted with an aim for becoming a tourism destination and a nation that makes full use of its cultural properties
2004	A Tourism-Oriented Village strategy was promoted. Beautiful rural landscape was promoted to attract green tourists and foreigner visitors

Note: This table was summarized with reference to *Understanding Green Tourism with Figures* published by The Organization for Urban-Rural Interchange Revitalization (2004); and Japanese Law Translation retrieved from http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail_main?vm=&id=102 on Dec. 5, 2011.

tourism development (Tsutsui and Sawabata 2010).

According to the statistical data by the Rural Development Bureau, the total number of farm inns in the rural areas, including the mountainous and coastal areas, accounted for 3671 in 2004, and it slightly decreased to 3638 in 2009 (MAFF 2011b). The number of green tourists has steadily increased in recent years (Fig. 2). The number of overnight visitors grew to around 8.5 million in 2009.

4.3 What has green tourism brought to rural communities?

Development of green tourism has attracted urban dwellers to rural areas, and has contributed somewhat to farmland conservation and a slowdown of land abandonment (Haruna and Kuroda 2010). Some case studies also reported that volunteers from cities have provided work labor by participatory farming activities (Takemoto *et al.* 2010). Some mountainous communities in remote areas were also in face of the threat of being deserted. It has been reported

that the starting of farm inns has contributed to sustain the communities by slowing down the population loss (Kurusu 2011).

One critical transformation that green tourism has led to is a change in the role of women's labor. Green tourism obviously increases rural women's involvement in business, and it has enhanced their social consciousness and status in traditional communities (Shibuya 2007). Studies in Japan, and other countries as well, mentioned that green tourism caused gender-oriented reform in rural communities. Women have played a critical role in the day-to-day running of tourist businesses. Women or women's groups have made efforts to sell agricultural products or locally processed food to the tourists (Arahi 1995, 1998; Park and Takahashi 2009). Women are actively involved in agribusiness (Yamazaki 2004). Through a study on female staff at farmers' markets, it was found that they have strong influence on pricing decisions and on what commodity varieties are sold (Uratani and Sato 2010). Some studies also mentioned that female farmers are ageing, and, therefore, it is critical to train younger female farmers (Shibuya 2007).

4.4 What are the limits of green tourism in Japan?

Researchers stated that direct economic benefits from green tourism were limited (Tanaka *et al.* 2000; Kajiwaki and Hara 2006; Tsuchiya 2006; Takemoto *et al.* 2010).

Regeneration of rural communities and conservation of rural landscapes have been the two targets of green tourism in European countries. In contrast, the target of green tourism in Japan has been rural regeneration, while, landscape conservation was not included (Shibuya 2007; Urai and Kuroda 2010). Since 2004, the Japanese government promoted rural areas to attract domestic

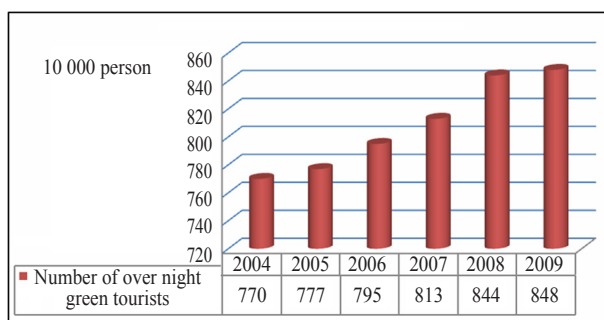


Fig. 2 The steady growth of green tourist number in Japan. Data source: MAFF Rural Development Bureau (2011).

visitors, as well as those from abroad, and issues of sustainability and the environmental burden brought with tourism should be further examined (Wakamatsu *et al.* 2005; Tsutsui and Sawabata 2010).

Numerous studies mentioned that the shortage of public subsidies (Yamazaki 2004) and the Japanese holiday system (Ohno *et al.* 1998; Inoue 2002) were two major factors that have hindered the development of green tourism in Japan. Green tourists stayed around 5 to 7 days in Europe, in contrast, visitors stayed around 1.7 days on average in Japan (Ohno *et al.* 1998). The Tohoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office (MAFF 2003) reported the results of a survey on urban residents that indicated that half of the green tourists only attended a day trip, and the majority of those who stayed overnight (80% of all who stayed overnight) stayed one night and two days.

Another criticism of subsidies, in addition to being too small in terms of subsidy amount, was that public subsidies were usually used to build facilities. Wakamatsu *et al.* (2005) argued that public subsidies should be spent on training workers instead of on facilities.

5 New opportunities of green tourism in a GIAHS site in the Noto Peninsula

The “*minshuku*” group of the Shunran-no-Sato consisted of 30 houses distributed in 12 communities, with the first four farm inns established in 2003. Shun-no-Sato group was set up in 1996 as a local level committee. It now catered for more than 5000 visitors in 2011.

The Shunran-no-Sato group established three types of accommodations, traditional houses, the *Kobushi* (a deserted primary school that was reformed), and a lodge in the mountains, to fit at wide range of budgets. The deserted local primary school was remodeled in 2006 to cater to tourists. A lodge, without modern facilities or electricity was built in the mountains, for the tourists to experience the real old ways of life.

Tourist numbers in the Shunran-no-Sato group facilities have grown sharply (Fig. 3). The visitor number increased from around 1200 in 2006 to about 5000 in 2011. The number of visitors staying in the traditional

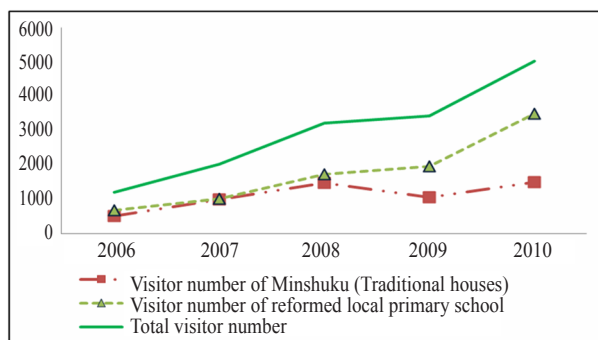


Fig. 3 The fast growth of green tourists in Shunran-no-Sato group.

houses increased from about 527 in 2006 to 1514 in 2011. The group of Shunran-no-Sato has 30 traditional houses providing accommodation for the visitors. Mr. Matsui, who is the owner of one inn house, the Mansaku noYado, said that the number of visitors is too small, because the Noto Peninsula is far from the metropolitans. He stressed that his farm inn needs to accommodate at least 80 people per month, on average, in order to make a living for him and his wife on green tourism alone.

The features of typical farm inn management were briefly summarized based on face-to-face and telephone interviews with Mr. Matsui and Mr. Tada (Table 2). Moreover, Mr. Matsui told us that the primary attraction of his farm inn was that urbanites, in particularly the elderly, were yearning for their nostalgic time passed in the rural environment. The benefit that he obtained from managing the farm inn was the interactions with the guests.

We found that only a minor share of the tourists in the Shunran-no-Sato area participated in farm work. Case studies in Japan also had similar findings (e.g., Saruishi and Furusaki 2000). According to a survey by the *Nippon Koutsu Kousha* (Japan Transit Authority), the best three reasons for green tourism included: enjoying a slow lifestyle, relishing foodstuffs produced in rural areas, and enjoying tasty cuisine (MAFF 2011). Obviously, just as the other parts of Japan, participation in farm work is not a major attraction.

The Shunran-no-Sato group farm inns have endeavored to provide local food, edible wild plants, and organic vegetables to the tourists. The inn owner Mr. Matsui told us that he picked edible wild plants from the mountains and planted vegetables without pesticides. However, rice was still produced by conventional farming because of the extremely small parcels of land in the Noto Region.

The head of the Shunran-no-Sato group, Mr. Tada, was aiming at rebuilding the surrounding rural landscape. He stated that his group planned to recover the abandoned land to rebuild the rural scenery, starting in 2012. The group of

Table 2 Operation of a typical farm inn in the group of Shunran-no-Sato.

Accommodation	The owner's private house
Food	Breakfast and dinner are provided. Fresh vegetables and wild plants harvested in local community and cooked in a traditional way
Home residence of the visitors	Majority of the visitors are from the nearby metropolitans of Tokyo, Yokohama and Chiba, etc.
Attraction to the visitors	Visitors enjoy the interactions with the owner. Specially, the elderly visitors feel nostalgic towards old days
Attraction to the farm inn owners	Enjoy the interactions with the guests

Note: This table was summarized based on the talk with a farm inn owner, Mr. Matsui and the head of the Shunran-no-Sato Group, Mr. Kiichiro Tada.

Shunran-no-Sato has applied for a series of public subsidies (Table 3) to improve the natural environment around the villages. The total amount accounted for around 7 million JPY in 2011. However, no subsidy was directly related to the support of green tourism.

Mr. Tada considered the designation as a GIAHS site to be an opportunity to catch the attention of the international tourism market, in particular, that from the East Asian region. He expressed his wish that the administration support tourism promotion, both domestically and abroad.

6 Discussion

GIAHS sites in the world were selected for their sustainable agricultural systems, rich biodiversity, and traditional cultures. Rural regions in Japan were threatened by continuing depopulation and aging, resulting from accelerated urbanization. It is important to explore ways to build local adaptive capacity to cope with climate change and socioeconomic stress, and, ultimately, to contribute to biodiversity conservation and reversing the dramatic global loss of biodiversity. The green tourism officially promoted beginning in the 1990s could serve as an effective way to improve sustainability in rural areas by mitigating the depopulation trend.

Since the official launch in 1992, green tourism has steadily developed in Japan. It has contributed to activating interactions between rural and urban residents, and, to some extent, the sustainability of rural communities (MAFF 2006). Green tourism has greatly enhanced the role of women in small agribusinesses: women play a key role in developing green tourism. Studies also indicated that female farmers were more highly motivated to develop agri-tourism entrepreneurship than their male counterparts were (McGehee *et al.* 2007). An early study in Spain found that women have contributed to income resources and conservation of the countryside environment (Ramon *et al.* 1995).

The ultimate goal of developing green tourism is to improve the socio-cultural well-being in rural communities. Farm inn operation has increased the chances of social interaction between elderly rural residents and urbanites. In contrast, rural tourism in China (Sun *et al.* 2009; Guo and Han 2010) has been strongly related to economic returns.

Public subsidies have been paid to support facility construction, while labor capacity building is badly needed to further develop green tourism in Japan.

The conventional farming that has been conducted since the 1960s has led to excessive input of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers that have caused numerous environmental problems, including the loss of biological species. Environmentally friendly farming is essential for green tourism, in order to provide tourists with clean air, and water and safe food (Inoue *et al.* 1996). Funds for supporting agriculture help tourism indirectly (Fleischer and Tchetchik 2005).

Tourists visit GIAHS sites for delicious natural foods and scenic landscapes, and although, the global branding of GIAHS does not advertise attractions in sites in particular, the case study in the Noto Peninsula revealed that “a living farming and agricultural landscape” is essential to the promotion of green tourism. The leader of the Shunran-no-Sato group realized the importance of traditional farming and rural charms, at landscape level. Local food should be integrated in green tourism, including wild edible plants harvested from the nearby mountains and vegetables without pesticides. According to the interview with the farm inn manager, rice is still produced by conventional farming, using chemicals, and rice paddy fields account for 84% of the total cultivated land in Ishikawa Prefecture.

Efforts are needed to sustain the quality of rural landscape, infrastructures, and human power. Ecologically sound farming should be promoted as a primary factor.

Since GIAHS refers to a global framework, the Shunran-no-Sato group expected to use the opportunity of branding

Table 3 A list of subsidies of Shunran-no-Sato Group received in 2011

Project	Activities
Coastal forest/satoyama forest management project	Forest management (forest thinning of a total area of 14.44 ha)
Measures to reuse the abandoned Land	Recover abandoned land of an area of 1.2 ha. Plant the crop for the honey bee industry
Subsidy to promote wide-range cooperation, coexistence and interactions	Invite the university students to recover the traditional cultures, e.g., kiriko
Subsidy to support pioneering satoyama conservation activities	Field survey to the successful cases of green tourism; information exchanges for farm inn management
Terraced paddy field conservation project	Participatory farming, utilization of abandoned land or fallow land; organization of workshops for local reconstruction
Satoyama/satoumi museum creation project	Print around 10 000 copies of flyers
Kudzu root picking project	Kudzu root picking
Ishikawa satoyama attraction enhancement activity support project (employment increasing project)	Weed mowing at the abandoned land

Note: A *kiriko* is a big, long and rectangular-shaped sacred lantern carried on the shoulders. It is a ritual for getting rid of bad luck during hot summers and appreciating plentiful harvests and fishing catches. Data source: Provided by Mr. Tada from Shunran-no-Sato.

a pilot site to attract domestic visitors as well as those from abroad. However, recently, the domestic tourist market has stagnated because of the continuing economic depression and the Great Tohoku Earthquake in March 2011.

7 Policy implication

Tourism is in a critical position regarding rural development policies and economic restructuring. The attraction of green tourism is rooted in the physical and cultural environment. It has been emphasized that sustainable use should be part of any effective development strategy, as well as the empowerment of the local people (Pearce 1994; Cawley and Gillmor 2008). The development of green tourism should have a focus on sustainability (Yokoyama 1998). Green tourism can indeed benefit from agricultural activities and from a living agricultural landscape. Green farming adds value to green tourism. GIAHS activities enhance awareness of the value of rural life and of conserving the agricultural landscape and sustaining an “improved” natural environment for green tourism.

A rural community within a natural landscape and an ecologically sound farming system is crucial for green tourism in Japan. Agriculture can lay a solid foundation for green tourism in rural areas and support direct subsidies for small-scale farmers (Shimada 2008). A holistic approach to green tourism development should be ecologically responsible, socially compatible, and economically viable for the host community. It was argued that a sustainable community based tourism should contribute to a better social, economic and environmental future at the local scale with the needs of local communities as a center (Saarinen 2006).

The findings in this paper suggest the implications for GIAHS-related policies; tourism should be considered a critical issue in rural development planning. Green tourism organizers should be subsidized directly.

Public funding support should change from facility building to green tourism management and relevant labor training (Wakamatsu et al. 2005). It was criticized that the public subsidy was majorly used for “hardware” construction (Yamazaki 1994). Female farmers, in particular those in their 40s and 50s, should be considered when efforts are made to train professional labor.

Combined with the GIAHS project, green tourism in the Noto Peninsula needs governmental support for promotion, in addition to financial support. Given the limited and stagnant tourist market in Japan, promotion of the attractions of the Noto Peninsula to the international market, and in particular in East Asia, is what the green tourism managers expect.

This study has its limitations; further survey and in-depth interviews with the visitors are needed to explore the demands and expectations regarding green tourism in this type of traditional rural area. It is recommended for future research, to include farm inn operators when exploring local attractions and building environmentally sound green tourism.

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日本绿色乡村旅游发展综述及农业遗产地绿色乡村旅游模式的初步探讨

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摘要: 众多研究认为可持续旅游 (Sustainable Tourism) 可在平衡保护环境和开发农业遗产地双方利益方面起到关键作用。能登里山里海景观作为日本传统农村景观的一个缩影, 在2011年被认定为“全球重要农业文化遗产 (GIAHS)”在日本最早的试点地之一。本文先通过分析文献总结了二十几年来日本绿色乡村旅游发展的历史和现状, 并结合农业文化遗产项目的发展目标讨论了在农业遗产地发展绿色乡村旅游的问题和新的机遇。本文以能登半岛一个由农民自发组织运营的农家民宿组织“春兰的故里”作为案例分析。主要的研究问题包括: 如何充分利用国际项目来开发日本的绿色乡村旅游; 如何在注重经济收入的同时兼顾生态农业的可持续开发? 本文采用的研究方法包括文献的分析并多次采访了民宿主人。本研究成果亦提供在偏远地区发展绿色乡村旅游的思路。

关键词: 体验型旅游; 农村振兴; 城乡交流; 农家民宿; 可持续农业